

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING BOCCIA DAY

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise national awareness of the sport of boccia and the profound impact it has on individuals with significant physical disabilities across the United States. As we look ahead to April 13, the date recognized as Boccia Day in the USA, it is fitting that we honor a sport that embodies accessibility, excellence, and the unyielding spirit of American athletes. Boccia is a precision-based Paralympic sport designed specifically for individuals with severe physical impairments. It is one of only three Paralympic sports without an Olympic counterpart. Unlike many adaptive sports that modify existing games, boccia was created from the ground up with accessibility at its core. Athletes compete by propelling leather balls toward a target, known as the jack, using their hands, feet, or assistive devices such as ramps. This design ensures that individuals with the most complex physical challenges have a pathway to compete at the highest levels of athletic achievement. For youth, adults, and disabled American veterans, boccia is far more than a game. It is a pathway to independence, confidence, and community. It cultivates strategic thinking, discipline, and resilience. It strengthens both physical and emotional well-being. And for many athletes, particularly those who may otherwise face limited recreational or competitive opportunities, boccia becomes a source of identity, empowerment, and belonging.

As we approach April 13, the inaugural celebration of Boccia Day in the USA, it is important that we elevate awareness of this remarkable sport and recognize the extraordinary skill and determination demonstrated by its athletes. Their precision, strategy, and perseverance reflect the very best of the American spirit. We must also honor the leadership and contributions of disabled American veterans who participate, coach, and serve as ambassadors within the sport. Their continued service—on and off the court—strengthens communities and inspires future generations. We should encourage schools, rehabilitation centers, veterans' organizations, and community programs to expand inclusive recreational and competitive opportunities. Accessibility and inclusion are not optional ideals; they are essential components of the American promise.

Americans with disabilities are valued, supported, and deserving of every opportunity to thrive. Sport—one of the great unifiers of our society—must remain accessible to all. I commend USA Boccia and Boccia United States for their leadership and dedication to growing this inclusive sport nationwide. I also recognize the athletes, families, coaches, volunteers, and advocates whose commitment makes boccia possible in communities across the country. Let us reaffirm our commitment to

accessibility and the limitless potential of every American as we celebrate Boccia Day in the USA on April 13.

HONORING BEENIE MAN IN CELEBRATION OF REGGAE MONTH

HON. SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Beenie Man in Celebration of Reggae Month. I include in the RECORD the following proclamation:

Whereas, reggae and dancehall music stand as powerful global expressions of Jamaican culture, resilience, and creativity, celebrated annually during Reggae Month in recognition of the artists who have shaped and elevated the genre worldwide; and

Whereas, Beenie Man, born Anthony Moses Davis in the Waterhouse district of Kingston, Jamaica, began his musical journey at an early age and rose to become one of the most influential and enduring figures in dancehall history; and

Whereas, known as the “King of the Dancehall,” Beenie Man has defined generations of music with international hits such as “Who Am I,” “Girls Dem Sugar,” “Dude,” and “King of the Dancehall,” earning the DJ of the Year Award for eight consecutive years and solidifying his dominance on both Jamaican and global charts; and

Whereas, his twelfth studio album, *Art & Life*, earned the Grammy Award for Best Reggae Album in 2001, further establishing his reputation as a global ambassador of Jamaican music and culture; and

Whereas, through decades of artistic excellence, international collaborations, and cultural influence, Beenie Man has helped expand reggae and dancehall into mainstream global markets, inspiring new generations of artists and music lovers across continents; and

Whereas, his legacy reflects perseverance, evolution, and an unwavering commitment to the vibrancy and global advancement of Jamaican sound; and therefore, be it

Resolved, that we, Florida's 20th Congressional District, proudly honor Beenie Man in celebration of Reggae Month, recognizing his extraordinary contributions to reggae and dancehall music, his cultural impact, and his enduring role in shaping the global sound of Jamaica.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF AVEL GORDLY

HON. MAXINE DEXTER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Ms. DEXTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a dedicated public servant and a beloved leader in Oregon.

I rise to honor the life and legacy of a trailblazer, a mentor, and a fierce champion for justice in Oregon, State Senator Avel Gordly.

A lifelong Portlander, Senator Gordly made history as the first Black woman elected to the Oregon Senate. For seventeen years in the Oregon Legislature, she served with compassion, intention, and an unshakable commitment to her community.

Raised in Northeast Portland, she felt the pull toward justice early in life. At just sixteen years old, she attended a civil rights march protesting the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. She often spoke of that moment as formative—a turning point that deepened her lifelong commitment to social justice and collective liberation.

Appointed to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1991, she served three terms before her election to the State Senate in 1996, where she served until 2009. Throughout her tenure, she advanced police accountability, strengthened mental health services, championed environmental justice, and fought for equitable education. She did not simply speak about change, she delivered it for Oregonians across our state.

Education was central to her life's work. She established multicultural curriculum requirements in Oregon schools, served as faculty in Black Studies at Portland State University, and coordinated the Black United Front's Saturday School. She understood education as a pathway to dignity, influence, and opportunity.

Senator Gordly's deep love and commitment to our community grounded her work. She saw people, and for Oregon's African American community, that led to a level of mentorship, inspiration and empowerment that was deeply impactful. Her legacy lives on, and Oregon is stronger because of her and her service.

May we honor Senator Gordly not only with our words, but with action. May we pursue our goals with determination, speak with authenticity, and seize every opportunity to serve our neighbors with selflessness and courage.

Her legacy calls us forward.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF MR. ANDREW BOHN

HON. ZACHARY NUNN

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an individual who has been an indispensable member of Team Nunn since the very beginning—Andrew Bohn, whose dedicated service strengthened both our office and Iowa's 3rd Congressional District.

A proud son of West Des Moines and a graduate of the University of Iowa, Andrew brought Iowa common sense, sound judgment, and an unwavering commitment to every role he held in our office. From Legislative Aide, where he established our constituent mail program and mentored younger staff, to Legislative Assistant, where he drafted his first

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

bill, the CLARITY Act, to strengthen our national security and counter China. These efforts built the foundation that culminated in his promotion to National Security Advisor, where he became one of the most trusted voices in our office on some of the most consequential issues before Congress.

Andrew played a central role in advancing our national security priorities, helping us secure more provisions in the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act than any other Member of Congress. He helped lead on several marquee pieces of legislation, including the AI Plan Act and the Maximum Pressure Act to expand Iran sanctions, both topics that remain top of mind today. His diligent work strengthened our national security, supported our servicemembers and their families, and ensured that Iowa's voice was clearly represented in shaping America's defense policy.

Yet Andrew's greatest contributions extend beyond legislative achievements. He approached every responsibility with steadiness, humility, and a deep sense of duty to the people of Iowa's 3rd District. Whether navigating complex policy challenges or welcoming visiting Iowans to the Capitol, Andrew exemplified professionalism and kindness. My own family experienced this firsthand, as he was often the first to go on a scavenger hunt or take my daughters for ice cream—small gestures that reflected his character and genuine commitment to service.

Through long hours, demanding negotiations, and pivotal legislative moments, Andrew remained focused on delivering results for Iowans and upholding the trust placed in our office.

Andrew Bohn strengthened our team and advanced our mission to serve Iowa's 3rd Congressional District with integrity and purpose. We wish Andrew success in his next endeavors and have no doubt he will continue to lead and serve with excellence in the next chapter of his career. The distinctive accomplishments of his service greatly reflect himself, the people of Iowa, and the United States.

RECOGNIZING MS. MARTHA
MANER

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary contributions of a remarkable community leader in my district, Ms. Martha Maner. As an original member of the YMCA Togetherhood Program, Martha has been a driving force behind its spirit of unity, service, and action. From the very beginning, her positive and energetic attitude has set the tone for collaboration and meaningful community impact. Martha brings enthusiasm to every meeting, encourages participation from every voice, and approaches each initiative with a "let's make it happen" mindset. Whether organizing outreach efforts, supporting families in need, or mobilizing volunteers, her optimism inspires others to step forward and serve. Through her leadership and vibrant energy, she has helped shape Togetherhood into not just a program, but a movement of compassion and community pride.

For more than three decades, Martha has exemplified servant leadership and transformative community impact. A proud and active member of the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World (IBPOEW) for over 30 years, she has served with integrity and grace as Exalted Ruler and Daughter Ruler of Frederick Kelley Elks Lodge No. 1270 and Kelley's Temple No. 1004. Her leadership extends statewide and nationally as President of the Florida Women Deputies of Elks, a member of Emma V. Kelley Council No. 61, a member of the National Presidents Council of Elks, and State President of the Women's Auxiliary of the IBPOEW. Her impact goes far beyond titles. Martha helped establish the Frederick Kelley Lodge's weekend breakfast program, coordinated nightly meals during the COVID-19 lockdown, and continues to host an annual community Thanksgiving dinner. She supports young mothers, assists families during bereavement, helps coordinate celebrations, and contributes to civic initiatives, including the South Brooksville Tax Redevelopment Advisory Committee, the Community Redevelopment Agency, and the YMCA Togetherhood Program.

In recognition of her extraordinary service, Martha was honored as the 2025 Brooksvillian of the Year and received the 2025 Melissa Rogers Humanitarian Award—distinctions that reflect the depth of her influence and her dedication to improving the lives of others. Her legacy is one of compassion, commitment, and courageous service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Martha Maner for her decades of leadership and transformative contributions to her community. For her tireless dedication to families, neighborhoods, and civic life, I am proud to honor Martha Maner as a 2026 Heroes Among Us recipient for Florida's 12th Congressional District.

HONORING LEOLA HARRIS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable servant, Leola Harris.

Leola Harris, a native of Natchez, Mississippi, is a graduate of Sadie V. Thompson High School and attended Natchez Junior College. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and a Master of Science in Special Education, along with 30 additional graduate hours, from Alcorn State University.

Mrs. Harris dedicated fifty-one years to serving as an Exceptional Education teacher. Throughout her distinguished career, she has been a steadfast advocate for youth and an active supporter of organizations committed to strengthening the community. She is the founder of the MLK, Jr. Youth Program, an initiative designed to provide young people with opportunities to showcase their talents, and the Isaiah Harlis Memorial Scholarship Program, which assists students in pursuing higher education. As a respected community spokesperson, she remains committed to inspiring hope and empowering the next generation. She affirms, "Our children are the mothers and fathers of our tomorrows, and their future is in our hands."

Her longstanding commitment to service began during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s in Mississippi, where she participated in voter registration drives, boycotts, marches, and other efforts promoting equality and progress. She takes pride in the role those efforts played in expanding employment opportunities in Natchez.

Guided by the words of Cornel West—"You can't lead the people if you don't love the people," and "You can't save the people if you don't serve the people"—

Mrs. Harris continues to exemplify principled leadership and dedicated service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Leola Harris for her actions and achievements in the Natchez, Mississippi community.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE
LORING A. GRAY, JR.

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, Jr.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with profound sorrow to pay tribute to The Honorable Loring A. Gray, Jr., a devoted public servant, a beloved judge, a Navy veteran, and a man whose life was defined by service, compassion, and quiet dignity. A service to celebrate his remarkable life was held on February 28, 2026, at the St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Albany, Georgia.

Born at Portsmouth Naval Hospital on June 8, 1947, Loring Gray answered his country's call as a young man, serving aboard the USS Kitty Hawk in the Gulf of Tonkin during the Vietnam War. He returned home and pursued law, graduating from the University of Georgia School of Law in 1976. From the moment he took the oath of office as an assistant district attorney in Dougherty County, to his decades as a distinguished Superior Court judge—including many years as Chief Judge—Judge Gray exemplified the very best of our justice system: fairness, firmness, and an abiding respect for the human dignity of every person who stood before him.

Judge Gray's influence reached far beyond the courtroom. He guided the remodeling of the Dougherty County Courthouse with a steward's care for institutions that bind communities together. He mentored young lawyers, supported the Mock Trial program, and served the broader judiciary as a Senior Judge and Mediator after retirement. Those who knew him recall his formidable presence on the bench balanced by an unexpected and gentle wit—a man who could be exacting in law and tender in life. His devotion to Adoption Days, where he helped give new families legal and spiritual beginnings, revealed a judge whose justice was always married to mercy.

He was a faithful member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Albany—teaching Sunday School, serving as an usher, and serving on the vestry—living the church's call to love and to serve. His life was guided by the Latin motto he cherished, not for yourselves—"Sic vos non vobis." That principle shaped everything he did: his law practice, his public service, his friendships, and the hospitality he shared—from orchestrating UGA tailgate gatherings to welcoming friends at his table.