

One thing Sam told me that I will never forget is: "No matter how difficult it sometimes is for you, please remember that many of us stand behind you and count on you." Sam was a true freedom fighter. Sam was the proud father of three children, a devoted grandfather to eight, and the loving husband of his wife, Laurie. Sam made his home with his family in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, where his presence will be dearly missed but his impact will never fade.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Sam Paredes and extending heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.

HONORING KHADINE "MISS KITTY"
WILKINSON

HON. SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Khadine "Miss Kitty" Wilkinson and include in the RECORD the following proclamation in celebration of Caribbean-American Heritage month:

Whereas, Khadine "Miss Kitty" Wilkinson is considered one of the most influential voices in the Caribbean, exemplifying excellence as an attorney-at-law, media personality, keynote speaker, and advocate for social change; and

Whereas, through her dynamic presence across radio, television, and live events, Mrs. Wilkinson has consistently used her platform to inform, educate, and uplift audiences, while promoting Caribbean culture, identity, and values on a global scale; and

Whereas, as a cultural ambassador and media icon, "Miss Kitty" embodies the vibrant spirit, resilience, and innovation of the Caribbean people, and serves as a beacon of inspiration to the Caribbean diasporic communities around the world; and

Whereas, through her philanthropic work, she has awarded scholarships to fourteen students at The University of the West Indies, promoting educational advancement and opportunity for the next generation of Caribbean leaders while also organizing critical health initiatives, particularly voluntary blood donation, that in turn provide high-impact support to public health in Jamaica and the wider region; and

Whereas, her contributions have earned her prestigious accolades, including the Governor General's 30th Anniversary Award for Community Development and The UWI 75th Anniversary Outstanding Volunteer Award, as well as the distinction of serving as Patron of the inaugural European Union-Jamaica 5K Road Race in 2023; and

Therefore, be it resolved that we, Florida's 20th Congressional District, in celebration of Caribbean-American Heritage Month, do hereby recognize and honor Khadine "Miss Kitty" Wilkinson for her unique contributions to the preservation, celebration, and elevation of Caribbean heritage, and commend her for her enduring service to culture, education, and community.

HONORING BILL SWEET ON BEING
NAMED VETERAN OF THE YEAR
BY THE GRAND TRAVERSE AREA
VETERANS COALITION

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Mr. Bill Sweet on being named Veteran of the Year by the Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition. This well-deserved distinction reflects his steadfast dedication to his fellow Servicemembers, the communities throughout Northern Michigan, and our Nation.

In May of 2025, Mr. Sweet embarked on an extraordinary 116-mile walk over the course of ten days to raise awareness for Veterans' mental health in partnership with Reining Liberty Ranch, a local Veterans nonprofit. Inspired by fellow Veteran, Travis Snyder, who was unable to complete his annual walk around Lake Michigan promoting awareness for Veterans' mental health and suicide prevention, Mr. Sweet chose to carry forward the mission by walking the M-22 stretch from Manistee County to Traverse City.

With a sturdy pair of walking shoes and an American flag resting on his shoulder, Mr. Sweet set out to accomplish what he humbly described as "a little bit of a selfish goal." Yet his journey was anything but selfish. As he traveled along the M-22 highway, he reflected on his family and friends and on the greater purpose of his walk: drawing attention to the challenges Servicemembers face long after their time in uniform has ended.

His efforts embody the very best of American values: selflessness, determination, and an unwavering commitment to community. His walk serves as a powerful reminder that service does not end with one's final military contract; it continues in our dedication to supporting those who have sacrificed for our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, let us all join in recognizing Mr. Bill Sweet for being named Veteran of the Year by The Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition. I thank him for his enduring commitment to our Veterans, his community, and our great country.

RECOGNIZING THE TRINIDAD
"TRINI" GARZA EARLY COLLEGE
HIGH SCHOOL AT DALLAS COLLEGE
MOUNTAIN VIEW CAMPUS

HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the ribbon cutting of the Trinidad "Trini" Garza Early College High School at Dallas College's Mountain View Campus.

This milestone represents an important investment in the future of our students and our community. Early College High Schools provide a powerful pathway for young people to earn both a high school diploma and college credit simultaneously, helping them graduate with the skills, experience, and confidence is needed to succeed in higher education and in the workforce. Programs like this open doors

of opportunity for students across Dallas by reducing barriers to college access and creating new pathways to economic mobility.

The Trinidad "Trini" Garza Early College High School is named in honor of former Dallas City Councilmember Trinidad "Trini" Garza, a dedicated public servant and long-time advocate for education and opportunity in the Oak Cliff community. His leadership and commitment to uplifting young people and strengthening neighborhoods left a lasting legacy in Dallas. It is fitting that a school designed to expand educational opportunities bears his name and continues his vision of empowering future generations.

The partnership between Dallas College and the Dallas Independent School District demonstrates what can be achieved when educational institutions collaborate to support students and families. By expanding access to early college opportunities, this initiative will help students build strong academic foundations while preparing them for careers in the rapidly evolving economy of North Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the educators, administrators, community leaders, and partners who made this project possible and who continue to invest in the success of our students. Their dedication ensures that young people in Dallas have access to the tools and opportunities they need to thrive.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the ribbon cutting of the Trinidad "Trini" Garza Early College High School at Dallas College's Mountain View Campus and in recognizing the positive impact this institution will have on students and families for generations to come.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ELIJAH
BILES

HON. AARON BEAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Elijah Biles, a young man whose life was only just beginning. At 22 years old, Elijah had earned his associate degree and was looking ahead with hope and determination toward the future. By day, he worked at UF Health Jacksonville. By night, he poured his heart into what he loved most: gaming, drawing, and streaming alongside his dad, uncles, friends, and the online community he was building.

He was a devoted son, an incredible big brother, and one of the most compassionate souls you could ever meet. Elijah found joy in the steady rhythm of work, family, creativity, and connection.

Then, in June of last year, everything changed. Elijah was diagnosed with Grade 4 glioblastoma, an aggressive and inoperable brain cancer. One of his earliest symptoms was the loss of use of his right arm, devastating for someone whose passion was art and gaming. As the cancer progressed, weakness spread, and he faced severe cognitive decline and difficulty communicating.

His father, Robert Biles, a Navy veteran of 24 years, set aside his own plans to become Elijah's full-time caregiver, rearranging his work, traveling for treatments, and standing by his son every step of the way.

On February 24, 2026, Elijah was placed in hospice care on Amelia Island, surrounded by loved ones, with his father and mother constantly at his side enduring something no parent should ever have to face. On March 1st, Elijah passed away, succumbed to his illness, bringing an end to a beautiful life. He left behind a family and community who loved him deeply.

I extend my heartfelt condolences to the Biles family and to all who were touched by Elijah's life. May we remember his creativity, his kindness, and the light he brought into the lives of others.

HONORING THE DEERFIELD BEACH BLACK HISTORY MONTH BANQUET HONOREES

HON. SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the outstanding achievements and enduring contributions of a remarkable group of individuals at the City of Deerfield Beach Black Heritage Banquet, which took place on Saturday, February 28, 2026, at the Johnny L. Tigner Center.

This annual celebration recognizes the leadership, dedication, and cultural impact of community members whose work uplifts and strengthens the City of Deerfield Beach. It is a testament to the power of Black heritage, civic engagement, and the unifying strength of community.

Following a review process, this year's honorees were selected by the African American Heritage Board for their significant contributions and leadership within the city. These distinguished individuals exemplify service, mentorship, and advocacy, setting a standard for excellence and inspiring others to give back.

I include in the RECORD the following 2026 Community Honorees:

Retired Deputy James Nichols, Jr.—Recognized for his lifelong dedication to public safety and mentorship within the community.

Dorothy Gregory—Honored for her steadfast advocacy and unwavering commitment to community service.

Nyla Knowles—Celebrated for her emerging leadership and contributions to the local cultural landscape.

Sandra Jackson—Distinguished for her tireless efforts in community development and social impact.

These honorees represent the heart of Deerfield Beach. Their service, leadership, and dedication ensure that Black heritage and culture remain vibrant and celebrated in our community. Their achievements inspire current and future generations to embrace civic responsibility, cultural pride, and the pursuit of a more inclusive society.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating these remarkable individuals for their leadership, contributions, and commitment to the City of Deerfield Beach. Their work exemplifies the strength, resilience, and enduring legacy of Black heritage.

Their dedication and accomplishments not only enrich the City of Deerfield Beach but also serve as a lasting example of the impact

one can have through service, leadership, and a commitment to community. By honoring these individuals, we celebrate the enduring legacy of Black heritage and the vital role it plays in shaping a more vibrant, inclusive, and connected society.

COMMENDING JAMES AND WENDY FALKNER ON THE PURCHASE OF KILWINS IN TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate James and Wendy Falkner for their many years of dedication to Kilwins Chocolates, Fudge, and Ice Cream, and to commend them on their recent purchase of the Kilwins store in Traverse City, Michigan.

James and Wendy's story is one that is rooted in hard work, perseverance, and a deep appreciation for their community. James began working for Kilwins in 1994 as a summer employee at the Mackinaw City store while pursuing a degree at Michigan Technological University. A year later, Wendy began working at the Mackinac Island Kilwins store as a summer employee while pursuing her studies at Kuyper College in Grand Rapids. What began as a summer job would later turn into a lifelong calling.

After completing their college education, James and Wendy initially went to work in their respective fields of study. However, their passion for selling ice cream, making fudge, and spreading joy throughout their community quickly brought them back to Kilwins in Holland, Michigan, as part time employees. Another opportunity soon followed when they took full-time positions managing the Kilwins of Frankenmuth. Later, they co-operated a Kilwins in Charleston, South Carolina, where they honed their skills in leadership and business.

In 2015, James and Wendy took the next step with the Kilwins franchise by purchasing their very own store in Mackinaw City, and a few years later, they proudly restored Kilwins presence on Mackinac Island. Recently, they have expanded their business ventures with the purchase of the Kilwins in Traverse City. Under their leadership, Kilwins stores have become gathering places for celebrations of all kinds, such as wedding anniversaries, family vacations, academic achievements, and victories after a baseball or softball game. In an era defined by technology and automation, James and Wendy have managed to preserve something fleeting: genuine human connection.

Mr. Speaker, let us all join in congratulating James and Wendy Falkner for their outstanding service and continued commitment to communities across the great State of Michigan.

SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC SECURITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2026

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 3971, the Small Business Innovation and Economic Security Act.

S. 3971 reauthorizes the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs to unleash American innovation. SBIR and STTR provide federal Research & Development (R&D) funding to small technology companies. These programs are collectively called "America's Seed Fund" because they help startups develop their ideas and grow their businesses, bringing them to market.

This bill provides these companies with vital research and development grants from federal science agencies that support their work while also having robust research security provisions in place to safeguard from malicious actors.

I am happy that the Small Business Committee has successfully coordinated with the Science, Space, and Technology Committee—both majority and minority—on this legislation and that we all support it. These past few months have left this vital program unauthorized, leading to devastating real-world impacts for small businesses that desperately need funding and stability to thrive.

The entrepreneurial spirit is a quintessentially American tradition, and it has helped make our Nation great. Supporting small businesses is as American as it gets. It also keeps our economy competitive, which is critical for the United States to stay ahead of foreign adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party that seek to dominate the global marketplace.

This bill will empower small businesses, support this age of American innovation, and help entrepreneurs continue developing the ideas of tomorrow. I urge all of my colleagues to support S. 3971.

HIGHLIGHTING THE DEMOCRAT SHUTDOWN CHARADE

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, due to weather-related flight cancellations, the following is a one-minute speech I was unable to deliver in-person.

I include in the RECORD the following editorial The New York Post correctly editorialized yesterday:

The United States saw four terror attacks on its soil in just the two weeks since the Iran war began, yet Democrats voted yet again last week to #Defund Homeland Security.

Are they trying to help the terrorists? They also seem to hate TSA workers and flight passengers: Chaos has reigned at airports around the nation, with hours-long security lines; the shutdown has prompted 300 agents to quit and others to take unscheduled leaves rather than work without pay.