

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.

The defunding's latest horror: The Department of Homeland Security's Office for Bombing Prevention just canceled a training class on how to handle IEDs.

Actually, it's unthinkable: Airport misery and flight safety are bad enough, but defunding bomb prevention—at a time like this?

Dems are holding the nation's security and air travel hostage in a purely symbolic protest to prove their hatred of ICE to their base.

The funding cutoff doesn't even hit ICE, which already got ample cash in last year's Big Beautiful Bill Act.

It's well past time for Democrats to end the games and think about everyday Americans for a change.

Appreciated former House Foreign Affairs and Homeland Security Committee Chairman MIKE MCCAUL has correctly warned that Democrats are being irresponsible by shutting down the Department of Homeland Security during an increased threat from Iranian terrorists, and that they will have "blood on their hands" by not preventing attacks.

Provocative insightful Sean Hannity stands with Trump exposing isolationists as either dumb or evil.

Coordinating with determined Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, destroying the capability of eleven nuclear bombs boasted by Iran to Envoy Steve Witkoff is existential for Western civilization. Iran building intercontinental ballistic missiles puts all of Europe and South and Central Asia at risk with drone attacks already our valued NATO member Türkiye, along with Azerbaijan.

In conclusion, God Bless Our Troops as the Global War on Terrorism continues. Trump is reinstating Peace Through Strength, revealing war criminal Putin lies, insulting and mocking Trump as Putin provides targeting directions to Iran to murder Americans.

RECOGNIZING MR. THOMAS
"MUCKA" McGRATH

HON. STEPHEN F. LYNCH

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Mr. Thomas "Mucka" McGrath, President of the South Boston Citizens Association, a steadfast steward of Boston's history and a tireless champion of community in South Boston, Massachusetts.

For years, Tom McGrath has stood at the center of some of our city's most meaningful traditions, including the annual Evacuation Day commemorations at Dorchester Heights. As organizer and guiding force behind this and many other events, Tom has worked diligently to ensure that the legacy of March 17, 1776—the day British forces evacuated Boston following General George Washington's successful fortification of the Heights—is duly honored and celebrated.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of that historic moment. It is a milestone in the history of Boston, and in the founding story of our great Nation. Through Tom's leadership, the Evacuation Day ceremonies have grown into a fitting tribute to the courage and sac-

rifices of those who secured one of the first major victories of the American Revolutionary War. He has helped transform remembrance into renewal by bringing together veterans, elected officials, students, families, and neighbors in a shared celebration of American independence and Boston pride.

Tom's work extends far beyond event planning. As President of the South Boston Citizens Association, he has dedicated himself to strengthening civic life in our community. He understands that history is not simply something we commemorate once a year; it is something we live out in how we serve one another. Under his leadership, the South Boston Citizens Association has continued its longstanding mission of promoting civic engagement, neighborhood pride, and respect for the traditions that define South Boston. In a rapidly changing city, Tom McGrath has been a steady hand, ensuring that progress does not come at the expense of memory and that future generations understand the sacrifices that built today's community. His commitment reflects a deep love of neighborhood and country, and an abiding belief that local traditions are the foundation of our national identity.

Mr. Speaker, it is often said that our freedom was secured at Dorchester Heights. Thanks to leaders like Tom McGrath, the spirit of that victory endures 250 years later.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Thomas "Mucka" McGrath for his service to South Boston and to the City of Boston, and in thanking him for preserving and honoring the legacy of Dorchester Heights for generations to come.

HONORING STATE SENATOR LORI
BERMAN

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Florida State Senate Minority Leader Lori Berman and congratulate her on her retirement after 16 years of exceptional public service in the Florida Legislature.

A proud voice for Palm Beach County, Senator Berman has been a fearless advocate—fighting for the fundamental priorities her constituents care about: reproductive freedom, voting rights, strong public schools, affordable health care, economic growth, climate action, and commonsense gun safety.

Born in New York, Senator Berman graduated magna cum laude from Tufts University and went on to earn advanced degrees from George Washington University and the University of Miami School of Law. She built a successful legal career in South Florida before bringing her talents and tenacity to public service.

From her first election to the Florida House in 2010 to her election to the Senate in 2018, Senator Berman has led with integrity, purpose, and heart. Her colleagues recognized that leadership when they unanimously elected her Senate Democratic Leader in 2025. Her long list of honors—from Legislator of the

Year to Champion of Florida's Middle Class—reflects not just achievement, but impact.

But titles alone do not capture who Lori Berman is. She is a principled leader. A relentless advocate and a trusted voice for fairness and opportunity. As she retires, we honor not only her years of service, but the values she has carried into every fight—integrity, compassion, and a deep commitment to justice.

Please join me in thanking Senator Lori Berman for her extraordinary contributions to Florida and wishing her continued success in the years ahead.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF WILLIAM HUSTON GNODTKE

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of William Huston Gnodtke, a steadfast public servant, devoted husband and father, and a tireless advocate for the State of Michigan, who passed away on February 16, 2026, at the age of 87.

Prior to starting his long career in politics, Mr. Gnodtke proudly served our Nation for two years as a communications specialist in the United States Army. His military service reflected the same sense of duty, patriotism, and discipline that would define his commitment to public service.

After his military service, Mr. Gnodtke became a respected fixture in Michigan politics, spending 18 years on staff with the Michigan House Republican Caucus, including a two-year stint as executive director. He later served as finance director for the Michigan Republican Party. In each of these roles, he worked diligently to shape policy and strengthen Northern Michigan leadership in Lansing. In 1988, he founded Gnodtke & Associates, a fundraising and political consulting firm that supported Republican candidates and conservative causes across our great state.

Mr. Gnodtke's involvement with the Republican Party ran deep. He served as a Michigan presidential elector for President Gerald Ford in 1976, state party treasurer, and for more than 30 years as a precinct delegate and county party officer in Ingham and Clinton counties. In addition to his party leadership, he served on the Michigan Board of State Caversers and as a Clinton County commissioner, always seeking to improve the communities he called home.

After retiring to Northern Michigan in 1997, Mr. Gnodtke began what would become an impressive 21-year tenure on the Mackinaw Bridge Authority, including 16 years as chair. His steadfast and principled leadership ensured that the Bridge's operational and financial independence remained firmly intact.

Mr. Speaker, let us join in recognizing Mr. William Gnodtke, whose life was marked by service to his country, his party, and fellow neighbor. On behalf of Michigan's 1st Congressional District, I extend my deepest condolences to the entire Gnodtke family.