

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER FIVE BERNARD AGUON

HON. JAMES C. MOYLAN

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 12, 2026

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Warrant Officer Five Bernard Aguon of the District of Columbia National Guard, a proud son of Guam, for a lifetime of extraordinary service to our Nation.

With more than 34 years of collective service across all three components of the United States Army, CW5 Aguon represents the very best of what it means to serve. His career is defined not only by longevity, but by impact, by a steadfast commitment to solving problems, building systems, and ensuring that the men and women who serve our country are supported with professionalism and care.

Most recently, CW5 Aguon served as the sixth Command Chief Warrant Officer of the District of Columbia National Guard. In this role, he was the top Army Warrant Officer advisor to the Commanding General, the Adjutant General, and the Land Component Commander. He was relied upon as a trusted counselor to commanders at every level, called upon to bring clarity to complex challenges and to guide decisions that affect the force.

Before assuming this role, he served at the highest levels of the National Guard as the G1 Senior Personnel Advisor within the Human Resource Information Systems Division. There, his work helped shape the future of how the Army manages its people, a responsibility that reached far beyond any single unit or command.

Throughout his career, CW5 Aguon served in an extraordinary range of positions. From Engineer Platoon Sergeant to Warrant Officer Recruiter; from Unit Administrator to Army Band Commander; from Education Services Manager to Personnel Systems Advisor—his service reflects rare breadth and depth. He supported Engineer, Infantry, Personnel, and Recruiting commands, and in each role, he brought the same steady leadership and technical mastery.

Perhaps most notably, CW5 Aguon was inducted into the U.S. Army Adjutant General Corps Wall of Fame in 2023 as a Distinguished Member of the Corps. This honor recognized his pivotal role in developing, testing, deploying, and sustaining the Army's Integrated Personnel and Pay System. This platform now supports Soldiers across the entire force, ensuring accuracy, accountability, and efficiency in how the Army manages its people.

That contribution alone will shape the Army for generations. His decorations, including the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Combat Action Badge, and Army Staff Identification Badge, reflect a career defined by excellence. But as with all great leaders, his true legacy is not

found in ribbons or medals. It is found in the systems he built, the soldiers he guided, and the trust he earned.

Beyond the uniform, CW5 Aguon has continued to serve. He has been a leader within the Adjutant General Corps, a life member of multiple professional associations, and the President of the Guam Society of America, remaining deeply connected to the island he proudly calls home.

Born and raised on Guam, he now resides in Northern Virginia with his wife Jennifer and their four children: Rocco, Rio, Aurora, and Andre. His journey from our small island in the Pacific to the highest levels of the National Guard is a powerful reminder of the reach and resilience of those who come from Guam and choose to serve something greater than themselves.

CW5 Aguon's career stands as a testament to quiet leadership, technical excellence, and unwavering dedication.

He has strengthened our Army, supported countless soldiers, and brought honor to his family and his island.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, and with great pride, I thank him for his service, his sacrifice, and his enduring legacy.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN H. RUTHERFORD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 12, 2026

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, due to an illness in my family, I missed the following Roll Call votes on January 7, 2026. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 2; YEA on Roll Call No. 3; and NO on Roll Call No. 4.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHESTER ROBERT KROPIDLOWSKI

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 12, 2026

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Chester Robert Kropidowski of Chicago. Chester was a veteran, a man of public service, and above all, a devoted brother, uncle, great uncle, and friend.

Before Chester began serving our city and country, he attended the University of Illinois where he obtained a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and was also an accomplished collegiate wrestler. He went on to earn a master's degree in science from Depaul University in Chicago.

Chester served our country by enlisting in the United States Army in 1964. His devotion to his community continued throughout his life, where he served the City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation for many years.

Chester possessed a philanthropic spirit as a donor to several organizations and causes, including Misericordia Heart of Mercy.

A loyal Chicagoan and proud Lakeview resident, Chester was deeply involved in his community. He was a long-time condo board member, assisted in planning the Chicago Marathon, and could often be found watching a Cubs game with his buddies at Murphy's Bleachers. Chester will be most remembered for the joy he brought into other people's lives. He cherished his traveling adventures with Lenore, his late significant other, and enjoyed fishing and golfing with family and friends.

We remember and honor Chester Robert Kropidowski not just as a veteran, but as the kind of American we should all aspire to be. May his memory be a blessing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask everyone to join me in recognizing Chester Robert Kropidowski for his service to our country and honoring his legacy.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF WHITNEY HUTSON

HON. ZACHARY NUNN

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 12, 2026

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the exceptional service of Whitney Hutson, who served with distinction as Director of Operations in my office over the past year. Her tireless work, sound judgment, and steady leadership played a vital role in ensuring our team delivered results each day for the people of Iowa's 3rd District.

From her very first day on Team Nunn, Whitney stepped into one of the most demanding roles in any congressional office and excelled. She managed our daily, weekly, and long-term schedules—both in Washington, D.C. and across Iowa—ensuring every meeting, event, and engagement reflected our shared priorities and unwavering commitment to Iowans.

As Director of Operations, Whitney prepared schedules and briefing materials that kept our office moving forward—even through the longest shutdown in U.S. history, shifting legislative demands, and the day-to-day unpredictability of public service with exceptional skill.

Her calm under pressure mindset and ability to anticipate challenges kept us mission-ready in every circumstance and focused on what matters most: delivering for Iowans back home.

Equally important, Whitney brought warmth and creativity to our team culture. She mentored junior staff, supported colleagues through busy weeks, and brightened the office alongside her Cavalier companion, Lady the dog. When things moved fast, Whitney stayed focused. When the pressure mounted, she delivered. Her professionalism, reliability, and example set a high standard for our entire team.

A graduate of Western Kentucky University, a Nashville, Tennessee native, and a trusted

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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.

colleague to all, Whitney's service to the people of Iowa reflects the character and work ethic that define Team Nunn. I am grateful for her contributions and confident she will continue to lead and succeed in the next chapter of her career.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Ms. Whitney Hutson for her contributions to Iowa's 3rd Congressional District and wish her continued success in all that lies ahead.

RECOGNIZING DR. MARY OKADA

HON. JAMES C. MOYLAN

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 12, 2026

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Mary Okada as she concludes a remarkable chapter of service as President of Guam Community College, after many years dedicated to education, workforce development, and the people of Guam.

Dr. Okada's leadership at Guam Community College has been historic. She became the first woman to lead the institution and went on to serve longer than any president before her. That continuity mattered. It provided stability, direction, and trust at a time when higher education was facing rapid change and increasing demands.

Long before becoming president, Dr. Okada served Guam Community College in key financial and administrative roles. She also brought experience from the Guam Department of Education.

Because of that background, she understood the institution not only from the classroom level, but from the operational side—how to manage resources, plan responsibly, and make decisions that would stand the test of time.

Under her leadership, Guam Community College strengthened its role as Guam's primary engine for workforce training and career education. Programs expanded to meet the real needs of the island, preparing students for skilled trades, healthcare, public service, and emerging technical fields. These were not abstract academic offerings; they were pathways to stable jobs and stronger families.

Dr. Okada placed a strong emphasis on financial responsibility and accountability. Through careful planning and disciplined management, Guam Community College maintained long-term fiscal stability and earned consistent confidence from auditors, policy-makers, and the broader community. That kind of stewardship is not always visible, but it is essential to an institution's success.

She also understood that education cannot exist in isolation. During her tenure, Guam Community College strengthened partnerships with government agencies, private employers, and regional organizations to ensure that training programs aligned with workforce demand. As a result, students left GCC better prepared to step directly into the workforce and contribute to Guam's economy.

Dr. Okada served as a respected voice for Guam and the Pacific in national and regional education discussions. She represented the interests of island communities in conversations about access, opportunity, and workforce development, ensuring that Guam was not overlooked in broader policy discussions.

Her leadership extended beyond a single campus. She served on accreditation bodies, education councils, and advisory boards, helping shape policies and standards that affect students well beyond Guam. Through this work, she elevated career and technical education and reinforced its importance as a respected and viable pathway.

Those who worked with Dr. Okada describe her as thoughtful, steady, and deeply committed to students. She led with consistency and care, focused not on short-term recognition, but on building systems that would continue to serve students long after her tenure.

As she steps away from her role at Guam Community College, her impact is evident in the thousands of students whose lives were shaped by the education and training they received. Her legacy is reflected not only in programs and facilities, but in opportunity created and futures strengthened.

Mr. Speaker, Guam Community College plays a vital role in our island's success, and Dr. Okada's leadership helped ensure that a role was carried out with purpose, responsibility, and vision. I thank Dr. Okada, for her years of service and for the lasting contributions she has made to Guam and its people—past, present, and future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAXINE DEXTER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 12, 2026

Ms. DEXTER. Mr. Speaker, there was a shooting in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 12, H.R. 5184.

HONORING THE LIFE OF UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS VETERAN AND TULLYTOWN FIREFIGHTER MATTHEW "MATT" WALLACE HAINES

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 12, 2026

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life and legacy of Matthew "Matt" Wallace Haines, a man whose journey through this world was defined not by ease, but by extraordinary service, resilience, and a deep devotion to others.

Born Michael Stephan LaVallee on May 13, 1971, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Matt passed away on December 19, 2025, at the age of 54. His early life was marked by challenges that demanded uncommon strength and perseverance. Rather than allowing those hardships to define him, Matt transformed them into a source of empathy, grit, and compassion. These are qualities that he carried with him to shape the man he became, the way he lived, the way he served, and the lives he touched.

Matt was a proud United States Marine and a volunteer firefighter for more than 20 years, serving with distinction as a Captain with the Tullytown Fire Company, Station 33. The residents of Tullytown knew that when the sirens

sounded, someone who genuinely cared was on the way. In dangerous situations which others would run from, Matt would courageously and instinctively run towards the emergency to aid and assistance. Service was not something Matt took lightly nor was it just a word to him. It was the heartbeat of who he was. His leadership, courage, and quiet dependability set a standard for what it truly means to live a life of civic duty.

Above all, Matt Haines was a family man. He leaves behind those who loved him, including his wife, Alyssa Renee (Grayson) Haines; his sons, Casey Ryan Haines and Jonathan Tomczyk; his daughter, Audrey Lightner, and her wife, Corine Lightner; his grandchildren, Alysia Dennis, Ayden Lightner, and Evan McFarland; his beloved mother and father, Jane LaVallee and Glen Papin, and his younger brothers, Stacey Schinold and Shelby Schinold. He is also remembered fondly by the many friends who became family over the course of his life.

Mr. Haines was also deeply loved by Alyssa's family, whom he embraced as his own. He is remembered by Christine (Albertuzzi) Grayson, whom he often said was the first true mother he had ever known; Lon Grayson, whom he proudly called "Dad"; his wife, Judy (Sindelar) Grayson; Jared Grayson; Melody Salvero Grayson; and his nieces, Chelsea and Taylor Grayson.

Mr. Speaker, we also pause with solemn reverence to remember that Matt was preceded in death by his beloved son, Matthew Tyler Haines. This heartbreaking loss forever shaped his life, yet even in grief he chose love, carrying his son's memory in every step he took.

Matt Haines will be remembered as someone who lived boldly and authentically. His friends and family will remember him as the "watch this" kind of guy. Matt was someone who made people laugh, pushed limits, and brought energy and humor into every room he entered. His larger-than-life personality, fearless spirit, and sharp sense of humor left an indelible mark on all who knew him.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Matthew Wallace Haines. He was a United States Marine, a Fire Captain with Tullytown Fire Company Station 33, a husband, a father, a grandfather, a son, a brother, and a friend. We recognize a life that burned brightly in service, in love, and in courage. May his legacy endure, and may he now rest in eternal peace.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS AND PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 12, 2026

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Courts and Public Defender Service Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would provide for coverage of employees of the local D.C. courts and the D.C. Public Defender Service (PDS) under the D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977 (DCHRA). In 2022, the D.C. Court of Appeals