

HONORING AVERY WISE FOR HIS  
OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO OUR  
COMMUNITY

**HON. EUGENE SIMON VINDMAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 16, 2026*

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Avery Wise, a fearless 17-year-old leader from Woodbridge, Virginia, who has already committed his life to serving others.

At just 17 years old, EMT Wise volunteers weekly with the Occoquan-Woodbridge-Lorton (OWL) Volunteer Fire Department, where he responds to 911 emergency calls, provides medical assistance to patients, and administers appropriate medical treatments.

Last year, his passion for service was put to the test in a profound and life-changing way. While in class learning about air management, EMT Wise was dispatched to an emergency involving a 73-year-old woman who had stopped breathing. Without a doubt, he went into action, performing an intubation procedure and attaching a ventilation device to restore her breathing. After successfully stabilizing the patient, he remained by her side during transport, carefully making sure her chest continued to rise adequately. Thanks to his quick actions and composure under pressure, the patient was released from the hospital in good health.

This experience did not deter him, instead it strengthened his commitment to public service and deepened his understanding of what it truly means to serve, no matter how big or small the call could be.

EMT Wise's dedication to serving his community doesn't stop when he is off the clock. He has been a member of the Trail Life USA scouting program for over 11 years, serving in multiple leadership roles, including First Officer and High School Chaplain, taking on the responsibility of assisting the Troop Master in troop management and communicating with the Committee Chair to discuss ways to improve the organization.

In addition, EMT Wise is an extraordinary varsity basketball player with the Northern Virginia Homeschool Athletic Association. He also earned the Passion for Public Service Scholarship from the National Society of High School Scholars.

In want to personally thank EMT Wise for his dedication to serving his community, and I wish him continued success as he works toward becoming a crew leader within his EMT team. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing EMT Wise for his courage.

HONORING THE LIFE OF  
REPRESENTATIVE ELIOT ENGEL

**HON. BETTY McCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 16, 2026*

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the life of my colleague, Representative Eliot Lance Engel of New York. Congressman Engel passed away on April 10, 2026, in New York City at the age of 79. My condolences are with his loved ones during this difficult time.

Prior to his political career, Congressman Engel worked as a teacher and guidance counselor in the Bronx. Eliot and I often shared stories over our similar experiences as teachers of social studies. After teaching, he was elected to the New York State Assembly representing the 81st District. During his tenure in the New York State Assembly, he concurrently pursued his Juris Doctor at the New York Law School.

In Congress, Congressman Engel was a dear colleague. I worked closely with him on issues related to foreign affairs, travelling around the world together from Iraq to India together. In his time in Congress, Congressman Engel played an instrumental role in passing key international development and humanitarian legislation such as the re-authorization of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) which included his Stop Tuberculosis Now Act. He also championed efforts here in the United States and around the world to protect and expand LGBTQ+ rights. Congressman Engel was also a strong advocate for healthcare reform including the Affordable Care Act, and the Partnering to Improve Maternity Care Quality Act which improved maternity care both for mothers and newborns.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating the life and work of Congressman Eliot Engel.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR BENJAMIN  
"BEN" COHEN

**HON. TOM COLE**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 16, 2026*

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and pay a special thank you to a truly exceptional American, and U.S. Army officer, Major Benjamin "Ben" Cohen.

Major Cohen served with distinction as a Defense Fellow in my office from January 2023 to December 2023 in which his professionalism, expertise, candor, and team-centric attitude was paramount to my staff's success in the FY24 Appropriations Cycle. His contributions during this time were instrumental in shaping budget and policy related discussions and advancing legislative priorities.

Following his tenure in my office, Ben served as a Congressional Budget Liaison in the Secretary of the Army's Financial Management and Comptroller's Budget Liaison (SAFMI-BUL) office, representing the Missile Procurement, Army (MiPA). Procurement of Army Ammunition (PAA), and Procurement of Wheeled Tracked Combat Vehicles (WTCV) appropriations portfolios. As a Liaison, Ben supported 25 staff delegation trips and 5 congressional delegation trips and expertly worked with the appropriations staff to ensure the United States Army's priorities were supported, cared for, and realized. His professionalism, dedication, and expertise have greatly benefited Members of Congress and their staff, leaving a lasting impression on all who have had the privilege of working with him.

Born and raised in Barnstable, Massachusetts, Major Cohen graduated from Norwich University in 2014 with a bachelor's in criminal justice and was commissioned Active Duty as a Field Artillery Officer.

Major Cohen began his military career with the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, where he served as a Company Fire Support Officer, Maintenance Control Officer, Platoon Leader, Executive Officer, and Brigade Adjutant. After completing his Captains Career Course in 2018, Ben returned to Alaska—Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Anchorage, Alaska, where he served as a Battalion Fire Support Officer for 3-509th Infantry (Airborne), Commander for HHC, 3-509th Infantry (Airborne), and Commander for B Battery, 2-377th PFAF. Upon completing his command time at JBER, Ben was accepted into the Army's Congressional Fellowship Program.

Major Cohen's academic achievements include earning a Master of Professional Studies in Legislative Affairs from George Washington University in 2023, and a Master of Public Administration from Norwich University. Additionally, Ben is a graduate of United States Army's Ranger School, Jumpmaster Course, Basic Airborne Course, Air Assault School, and the Army's Cold Weather Leaders Course.

In addition to his military duties, Major Cohen volunteers his time as a Coach for youth sports (hockey) in the local area, providing development and mentorship opportunities to local youth athletes. This year, Ben's St. James Hockey Team won the Atlantic Hockey Federation's (AHF) 16U Lemieux Division in dominant fashion, culminating a massively successful season with an overall record of 34-18-5.

Major Cohen's exceptional career is a testament to his unwavering dedication, leadership, and commitment to selfless service and excellence. His contributions to the Army and our Nation are truly commendable.

On behalf of the U.S. House of Representatives and a grateful Nation, I join my colleagues today in recognizing and commending my good friend, Major Benjamin "Ben" Cohen for his service and sacrifice.

RECOGNIZING APRIL AS SECOND  
CHANCE MONTH

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 16, 2026*

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize April as Second Chance Month, a time to reflect on and celebrate the growth and successes that emerge from giving people with records new opportunities. Second chances help justice-involved individuals better themselves, reduce recidivism, make communities safer, and grow the economy.

As I prepare to retire at the end of 2026, I am deeply proud of my work to advance opportunities for people with records, be the reforms in the areas of criminal justice, health, tax, or education. Today, I wish to focus on how giving second chances by expanding access to higher education makes our country stronger. We know that education is one of the most effective ways to support reentry—strengthening communities, closing racial and economic equity gaps in postsecondary education and workforce participation, and disrupting the cycle of incarceration that continues to target and limit opportunity for people of color and those from low-income backgrounds.

For decades, I worked to expand educational opportunities to those with criminal records, with two key bills becoming law in 2020 as part of P.L. 116–260, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. The Restoring Education and Learning (REAL) Act restored Federal Pell Grant eligibility for incarcerated individuals for the first time in nearly 30 years. Research clearly demonstrates that individuals who enroll in postsecondary prison programs see higher earnings and reduced recidivism when they return home. After Congress stripped Pell Grants from incarcerated students in 1994, correctional education plummeted, directly hurting the ability of incarcerated individuals to gain the skills and education needed to secure quality employment post-release. I support and applaud the Northwestern Prison Education Program that offers undergraduate degrees to men incarcerated at Sheridan prison in Illinois. I am proud that my work helps these students get Pell grants so that they can earn a bachelor’s degree from a top university.

The FAFSA Act removed the prohibition on federal student aid for people with felony drug convictions—a policy that inappropriately applied a mandatory minimum sentence beyond that deemed appropriate by the judicial system. Removing financial aid from students forces low-income students to leave or forego higher education, undermining economic security. Further, given that African Americans account for only 13 percent of drug users but 55 percent of drug convictions, the prohibition unfairly targeted poor and minority students. Now, students can attend higher education and complete the FAFSA without fear of losing eligibility due to a past drug conviction.

Unfortunately, more still needs to be done to improve educational access for incarcerated individuals. My Eliminating Discrimination and Creating Corridors to Expand Student Success Act (ED ACCESS) would help remove the lifetime ban on the American Opportunity Tax Credit for individuals with felony drug convictions. This ban actively makes it harder for these individuals to afford higher education and get their lives back on track. Similarly, my Demonstrating that Empowerment Makes Opportunities (DEMO) Act would help those with a record obtain successful health careers. This bill is modeled on the amazing work of John Hopkins and the Safer Foundation that created intensive training programs for workers in hospitals coupled with legal services, support services, technical assistance for businesses, and job placement services.

The value of higher education is clear: it increases employment rates; decreases reliance on public assistance; strengthens communities; reduces taxpayer dollars spent on prisons; and reduces recidivism. In today’s society, where postsecondary credentials are necessary to access well-paying jobs, helping those with criminal justice involvement earn credentials and degrees which improves their lives as well as their communities.

As we celebrate Second Chance Month, I recognize our successes and commit myself to continuing to help those who have made mistakes get the opportunities to turn their lives around.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF HAL MARCUS

**HON. VERONICA ESCOBAR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 16, 2026*

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a remarkable artist, musician, and proud El Pasoan, Hal Marcus.

For decades, Hal Marcus helped shape the artistic spirit of El Paso, leaving an indelible imprint through his creative works and the countless individuals and institutions he uplifted along the way. Hal brought joy, imagination, and a sense of possibility to those around him. His artistic contributions captured the essence of the borderland region with a distinctive and enduring style.

As a steward of history, Hal was deeply devoted to preserving and promoting early regional art, helping elevate awareness of El Paso’s rich cultural heritage, and ensuring future generations could learn from and be inspired by it.

The passing of Hal Marcus is a profound loss for El Paso. Yet his legacy lives on in his beautiful and loving family, the vibrant cultural landscape he helped shape, the artists he inspired, and the community he brought together. May he rest in peace, and may his memory continue to inspire us all.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF STEVEN ALFRED ROBERTI

**HON. MARK DeSAULNIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 16, 2026*

Mr. DeSAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and service of Steven Alfred Roberti. Throughout his life, Steven demonstrated his commitment to service and advocacy. Steven was a lifelong member of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 302, where he honed his passion for serving his community and supporting the labor movement. He then went on to serve as manager of the Contra Costa Labor Council from 1988 to 1996. Steven was recognized by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors for his outstanding leadership and significant contributions to Contra Costa’s economic and social wellbeing. In 1996, the U.S. Department of Labor appointed Steven the regional manager for Region IX, overseeing labor affairs across the Western United States. His wealth of knowledge of infrastructure and transportation policy was critical to his success in this role.

Steven also worked with many community groups including United Way, Shelter Inc., the Labor Project for Working Families and Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation. Steven’s work as a political consultant supported regional projects focused on improving transportation throughout the county and supporting economic development throughout the region. Additionally, Steven was a California history enthusiast, avid Bay Area sports fan, holding

season tickets for the San Francisco 49ers, Giants, and Golden State Warriors and supporting UC Berkeley’s women’s softball as a Cal Booster, and developed a passion for genealogy, tracing his family’s history and eventually organizing an annual family reunion.

Steven is survived by his wife, Diane Roberti; daughters Christine Collins (Barry), Sherri Roberti, and Gina Roberti (Jeff); grandchildren Ryan Collins, Marcus Collins, Raquel Collins, and Joseph Wells; and great-grandchildren Ava Collins and Amaya Collins.

Steven will be remembered for his unwavering commitment to leadership, service, and his family. Please join me in honoring Steven A. Roberti for his invaluable contributions to our region.

HONORING THE LIFE OF TRISHA GARLOCK

**HON. JARED HUFFMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 16, 2026*

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Trisha Garlock, who passed away on January 15, 2026. Trisha was a visionary leader and tireless champion for equitable access to high-quality public education.

Born in Bakersfield, California, Trisha’s parents instilled in her a deep respect for education and public service. She earned a Bachelor of Arts from Stanford University and a master’s degree from the University of Michigan, where she met her husband, Jim.

In 1982, Trisha and her neighbor Penny Weiss founded the Mill Valley Schools Community Foundation, later renamed “Kiddo!,” to preserve arts and music in the school district. What began as an urgent stopgap to backfill state cuts to public education became a community institution focused on supplemental funding for Mill Valley public schools. She served as the foundation’s executive director for 32 years, helping it evolve from a grassroots effort into a nationally recognized model that raised millions annually to support enrichment for our schools.

In response to disparities in school funding in Marin County, Trisha then helped co-found and lead SchoolsRule, a countywide collaboration of public-school foundations focused on equitable funding for every student. Under her leadership, SchoolsRule brought together community partners and donors to invest in arts, literacy, technology, and student wellness, distributing support so that each student in Marin could benefit.

Trisha’s leadership and legacy have been widely recognized. She was inducted into the Marin Women’s Hall of Fame in 2018 for her decades of work strengthening public education countywide.

Mr. Speaker, Trisha Garlock believed that every child deserves a full and rich education, and she spent more than four decades working toward that goal. I respectfully ask that you join me in honoring Trisha’s extraordinary life and extending our deepest condolences to her family, friends, colleagues, and the many students whose lives were enriched by her work.