

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.

CELEBRATING THE 175TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE MARILLA
COUNTRY STORE

HON. NICHOLAS A. LANGWORTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 16, 2026

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Marilla Country Store, an institution that has truly stood the test of time.

Since opening its doors in 1851, this store has remained a constant in a world of change. Through generations, through wars, economic hardship, and even global pandemics, it has never once closed, serving as a steadfast presence in the heart of Marilla, New York and a symbol of resilience across Western New York.

But what makes this place truly special is not just its age, it's the people. For 175 years, only a handful of families have carried this store forward, preserving its character, its traditions, and its deep connection to the community. Today, that legacy continues under the leadership of Sandy Gingerich Grunzweig, whose family roots run deep in Marilla and whose commitment ensures the store remains a proud pillar of the community.

The Marilla Country Store is more than a business—it is a gathering place, a living museum, and a testament to what endures when community, family, and tradition come together.

As we celebrate 175 years, we honor not just the past, but the generations who will carry this legacy forward.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Marilla Country Store for its lasting legacy, and in celebrating the Grunzweig family as they carry this success long into the future.

RECOGNIZING PUBLIC SAFETY
TELECOMMUNICATOR WEEK AND
HONORING AMERICA'S 911 DIS-
PATCHERS

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 16, 2026

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Public Safety Telecommunicator Week and to honor the men and women who serve as 911 emergency dispatchers across our Nation.

America's 911 dispatchers are true first responders. Before a police officer arrives on scene, before an ambulance turns the corner, before a firefighter enters a burning building, there is a dispatcher on the line, gathering critical information, coordinating a response, and providing support. Without these workers, other public safety personnel would be unable to reach people in need and calls for help would go unanswered.

These dedicated professionals answer the call no matter the circumstances, through

blackouts, mass casualty events, natural disasters, and public health emergencies. They work in high-stress, fast-paced environments that demand steady composure and an unwavering commitment to the public they serve every day.

Yet for too long, 911 dispatchers have gone unrecognized for the work they perform. Despite being the critical link in our public safety infrastructure, they remain classified as administrative and clerical workers. This misclassification has fueled persistent underinvestment: insufficient pay, inadequate mental health resources, and staffing. Too many of these public servants experience burnout and emotional exhaustion from years of exposure to traumatic calls without adequate support. In some facilities, staffing shortages are so acute that dispatchers sleep at their posts rather than returning home.

At the same time, new technologies, including text-to-911, live video-to-911, and Next Generation 911 systems, are fundamentally changing the nature of this work. Congress has invested in these technologies, but those investments will fall short if we do not invest equally in those who operate them. Training, mental health resources, and fair compensation must keep pace with the demands we place on this workforce.

I am proud to stand with AFSCME and the nearly 100,000 public safety workers they represent in calling for the reclassification of 911 dispatchers as protective service workers. Reclassification is the foundation for the investment, resources, and dignity this workforce has long deserved.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring America's 911 dispatchers during Public Safety Telecommunicator Week, and to commit to ensuring these vital public servants receive the recognition, support, and respect they are owed.

RECOGNIZING THE BICENTENNIAL
OF THE TOWN OF ALABAMA

HON. CLAUDIA TENNEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 16, 2026

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the Bicentennial of the Town of Alabama, located in Genesee County, New York. In the early 19th century, settlers began to gather in the region, appreciating the abundant resources the land offered. By 1828, the previously named town of Gerrysville was officially renamed Alabama. Within the town there are four hamlets: Alabama Center, Basom, South Alabama, and Wheatville.

For 200 years, Alabama has respected and maintained its strong farming heritage. The fertile land has proven Alabama and the surrounding area as one of the foremost agricultural regions within the State. Agricultural growers and producers continue to responsibly steward the land, providing fresh products to our region and country.

As the town celebrates its 200th anniversary, I join my colleagues in wishing its resi-

dents a wonderful year of celebration and many more future milestones.

HONORING DEPUTY PATRICK
SHELL

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 16, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Deputy Patrick Shell, a devoted public servant from Vicksburg, who was recently named Deputy of the Year by the Vicksburg Homecoming Benevolent Club. This distinguished honor reflects his decades of unwavering commitment to protecting and serving his community.

A lifelong resident of Vicksburg, Deputy Shell began his career in public service in 1991 with the National Park Service, where he served with distinction as an interpreter specialist before rising through the ranks to become Chief Ranger and later District Supervisor along the Natchez Trace Parkway. His leadership and dedication left a lasting impact on both his colleagues and the countless visitors he served.

Following his retirement from the National Park Service, Deputy Shell answered the call to serve once more, joining the Warren County Sheriff's Office. Now in his eight year with the department, he continues to demonstrate exemplary service as a bailiff, while also carrying out critical responsibilities such as delivering summonses, escorting inmates, and patrolling the historic Vicksburg National Military Park, where he resides.

Throughout more than three decades in law enforcement and public safety, Deputy Shell has encountered both the profound challenges and meaningful rewards that define a life of service. He has provided comfort in moments of tragedy, including assisting a young boy in coping with the loss of his father, and has also been instrumental in life-saving efforts, such as aiding a man experiencing a heart attack—an act that contributed to the man's survival. These experiences underscore his compassion, professionalism, and steadfast dedication to others.

Deputy Patrick Shell's recognition as Deputy of the Year is a testament not only to his exceptional career, but also to the enduring values of integrity, selflessness, and dedication that he embodies. His continued service stands as an inspiration to his fellow officers and to all who are fortunate to call Vicksburg home.

Deputy Shell's commitment to service is matched by his devotion to family. He has been married to his high school sweetheart, Carolyn, since 1981, and together they have built a life grounded in faith, family, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Deputy Patrick Shell for his outstanding service and congratulating him on his well-deserved recognition.