

HONORING ROCKWALL AND BRIN
CHURCH OF CHRIST'S 130TH AN-
NIVERSARY

HON. LANCE GOODEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 20, 2026

Mr. GOODEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 130th anniversary of Rockwall and Brin Church of Christ in my hometown of Terrell, Texas—a congregation that has been a meaningful part of my life since childhood. With humble beginnings in a town of cotton farmers, this congregation has been a faithful fixture in Terrell since 1896, when a small group of Christians gathered in homes and the Odd Fellows Hall on Nash Street to worship.

In 1900, Peter Breeden donated land and built a small structure on College Street to serve the growing congregation. Over the years, the church has remained on that property, expanding and rebuilding after a fire in the spring of 1994. On February 12, 1995, construction began on the building that still stands today at Rockwall and Brin. For more than a century, this congregation has faithfully served both near and far—through local outreach, mission work abroad, and partnerships with the Terrell Share Center and Boles Home for Children.

I congratulate the elders—Wynne Breeden, Ty Burnes, and Steve Rogers—on this milestone. This congregation will continue to be a source of faith, service, and strength for generations to come.

RECOGNIZING THE NEHEMIAH AL-
LIANCE NATIONAL 52-DAY RE-
BUILD INITIATIVE

HON. MARLIN A. STUTZMAN

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 20, 2026

Mr. STUTZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend the Nehemiah Alliance for launching the National 52-Day Rebuild Initiative, calling the people of the United States to an extended time of unified prayer, fasting, and repentance for the purpose of rebuilding the spiritual walls of blessing and protection around our fifty states and our Nation.

From its founding, the United States of America has been shaped by enduring Judeo-Christian principles of faith, liberty, and justice, and has long understood itself to be One Nation under God. Throughout history, Americans have turned to these principles in moments of challenge to seek renewal, unity, and moral clarity.

From the earliest days of the Republic, our leaders have issued calls to prayer and humility, reflecting a longstanding historical precedent of seeking divine guidance during significant moments in the life of our Nation. The founding ideals of the United States affirm principles of faith, liberty, justice, accountability, and the dignity of the human person, values that continue to inspire citizens across generations.

This initiative emphasizes personal responsibility, civic virtue, reconciliation, and service, encouraging individuals to strengthen their homes, neighbors, and communities through

prayerful engagement. The Nehemiah Alliance draws inspiration from the biblical account of Nehemiah, who rebuilt the broken walls of Jerusalem in fifty-two days, and in that same spirit, during America's two hundred fiftieth Anniversary, this Initiative calls Americans to recognize that the moral, cultural, and spiritual foundations of our society require our attention and action.

Indiana, known as The Crossroads of America, has long stood at the intersection of commerce, community, and faith, and throughout its history Hoosiers have valued prayer, personal responsibility, and service to neighbors as essential foundations for a flourishing society. Citizens of Indiana have historically participated in national seasons of prayer and reflection, recognizing that the strength of a Nation is rooted not only in its institutions but also in the character, humility, and faith of its people.

Beginning at sundown on September 10, 2026, and concluding at sundown on All Saints' Sunday, November 1, 2026, this Initiative invites people across our Nation to humble themselves before Almighty God through prayer, repentance, and periods of fasting as each person is individually led.

The purpose is to rebuild our walls, restore our homes, revive our hearts, and renew liberty and justice for all, reunifying us as One Nation under God. The mission of the Nehemiah Alliance is grounded in the call of Scripture, including the promise recorded in 2 Chronicles 7:14 that as His people pray and repent, He will hear from Heaven and heal our land.

Participants are encouraged to serve as modern-day gatekeepers, interceding for their families, neighbors, schools, churches, businesses, and leaders in authority. During the fifty-two days, focused prayers will be made for spheres of culture, the fifty states and territories, the Nation's Capital, Congress, the Supreme Court, the President, and the consequential midterm elections.

On October 31, 2026, and All Saints' Sunday, November 1, 2026, people of faith will gather online and in person, including in Washington, D.C. on the National Mall, in sacred assembly to pray and stand.

I commend the Nehemiah Alliance for its leadership in advancing the National 52-Day Rebuild Initiative and I encourage the citizens of the State of Indiana to participate in this national call to prayer, fasting, repentance, and spiritual renewal.

RECOGNIZING SARAH AGUILAR AS
CALIFORNIA'S 24TH CONGRES-
SIONAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. SALUD O. CARBAJAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 20, 2026

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Speaker, each year, I have the honor of recognizing women on the Central Coast whose leadership, service, and dedication have made a lasting impact on our community through the Women of the Year Award. This year, it is my pleasure to recognize Sarah Aguilar of Oak View, for her outstanding contributions to animal welfare, public service, and community engagement.

Sarah Aguilar became Director of Santa Barbara County Animal Services in September

2022 and has since transformed the agency through innovative leadership, transparency, and collaboration. With a background in business and prior leadership roles in animal welfare organizations across the country, she brought a collaborative approach to an agency that had long faced significant challenges. Under her stewardship, the care of more than 6,000 animals at county's three shelters annually has been reimaged through programs that prioritize humane outcomes, community partnership, and transparency, helping change the atmosphere for volunteers and staff in a positive way.

Among her most notable achievements is the creation of the "Dog Day Fostering" program, an initiative that has enabled more than 2,000 community members to provide shelter dogs with enrichment, socialization, and exposure to potential adopters. This has reduced stress on animals, increased adoption rates, and strengthened community investment in the wellbeing of shelter pets.

Ms. Aguilar has also demonstrated leadership through securing a \$200,000 grant from the UC Davis Koretz School of Shelter Medicine to establish a "Pawsitive Care Coordinator." This bridges the gap between human social services and animal care, ensuring that individuals facing hardships are not forced to surrender beloved pets due to lack of resources.

Her dedication extends beyond policy and program development to direct, hands-on action. In one instance, Ms. Aguilar personally intervened to rehabilitate and transport a high-risk shelter dog to a safe, permanent home hours away. An act of courage and compassion that not only saved that animal's life but inspired ongoing rescue efforts for others in need.

In a field often challenged by limited resources and complex public demands, Ms. Aguilar has remained steadfast, advocating for sustainable funding, developing fundraising strategies, and maintaining a solutions-oriented approach in the face of fiscal uncertainty.

I am proud to recognize Sarah Aguilar as a Woman of the Year for her inspiring leadership, her deep commitment to both people and animals, and the lasting difference she continues to make in the Santa Barbara County community.

HONORING THE CAREER OF LOIS
BRUINOOGUE

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 20, 2026

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary constituent and pay special tribute to Lois Bruinoogue, who retires from The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) this month after 20 years of dedicated service to the organization. TLGV is a non-profit organization connecting residents to the Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, a landscape of farmland and forest spanning 35 towns across Eastern Connecticut and South-central Massachusetts. As TLGV transitions to new leadership under Ms. Francesca Kefalas, I would like to recognize Ms. Lois Bruinoogue for her dedication to protecting the Last Green Valley.

Ms. Bruinooge began her career serving as an environmental lawyer protecting waters and woods with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. She later joined TLGV as a deputy director in 2006 and was promoted to executive director in 2014. Her command of environmental law and leadership drove her to success in spearheading efforts to care for the last stretch of dark night sky between Boston and Washington, D.C.

Ms. Bruinooge has led impressive initiatives to educate people about the environment. In 2009, she led the effort to paddle the entire Thames as a part of the TLGV *Source to Sea* Program. She also expanded TLGV's water quality monitoring, created a trail assessment program, and bald eagle monitoring. Moreover, she encouraged resident and youth participation in TLGV's programming. One of her most impressive accomplishments was organizing the annual Walktober event, attracting up to 120,000 visitors to participate in over 250 hikes, bikes, and paddles each year.

Ms. Bruinooge's time at TLGV was one of transformational, positive change for the organization. She forged ties between TLGV and agricultural, land trust, historical, and cultural organizations to build stronger conservation and sustainability efforts. In 2016, TLGV received over \$6 million from USDA and millions more from regional programs to preserve their forests. In turn, TLGV has provided over \$4 million in grants to local partners. Her collaboration with financial partners has increased revenue, created endowment funds, and heightened investments into environmental conservation. Her passion for outreach, financial expertise, and creativity have set TLGV on a path of undeniable success.

Ms. Bruinooge is a graduate of Boston College Law School and a resident of Waterford, Connecticut.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member serving the 2nd District of Connecticut, I have had the pleasure of seeing the impact of TLGV on the environment of Eastern Connecticut. On behalf of the U.S. House of Representatives and the American people, I express deep gratitude for Ms. Bruinooge's contributions during her two decades of service with The Last Green Valley. I join Ms. Bruinooge's family, friends, and colleagues in wishing her all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

HONORING AND REMEMBERING
MRS. CAROL KITMAN FOR HER
HUGE IMPACT

HON. EUGENE SIMON VINDMAN
OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 20, 2026

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Carol Kitman, a stalwart supporter, a trusted friend, and a maternal figure whose presence has been a constant in my childhood, my life, and my family.

I first met Mrs. Kitman in 1980, on the streets of Brighton Beach in Brooklyn, the year my family immigrated to New York from Ukraine in search of a better life. She saw my brother Alexander and me playing and asked our grandmother if she could take a photo—a small moment that marked the beginning of a lifelong connection.

In that moment, Mrs. Kitman did more than take a photograph. She took the time to speak

with us, to listen, and to understand our story. Carol was deeply touched by our Jewish family's journey to the United States and chose to remain a part of our lives.

Over the years, she became someone I looked up to, admired and deeply trusted. My brother and I went to her house for trick-or-treating, get-aways to the suburbs, and began to understand what the American dream could be for us. We forged a life-long bond with her and her husband, Mr. Marvin Kitman, an American television critic, humorist, and award-winning author.

The Kitmans were present for so many of our milestones, including our weddings, graduations, holidays, and family celebrations, always capturing those moments through Mrs. Kitman's lens. They attended my Pentagon ceremony, where I was honored with a promotion to rank of lieutenant colonel in the United States Army.

Through her kindness, dedication, and generosity of spirit, Mrs. Kitman made a lasting impact on my life. She was far more than a photographer known for documenting the lives of my brother and me. From our very first meeting, she became a vital part of my life. Throughout her 96 years, she touched many lives across New York and New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me honoring and remembering Mrs. Carol Kitman and her husband Marvin, who played such meaningful role in my life. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Kitmans' children and their entire family. I am honored to have known them.

RECOGNIZING MASTER SERGEANT
JEFFREY PAUTZ

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 20, 2026

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Master Sergeant (MSgt) Jeffrey Pautz upon the auspicious occasion of his retirement from the Pennsylvania Air National Guard (PAANG) after more than 30 years of service to our Nation.

MSgt Pautz enlisted in February 1996. After completing basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, he returned to Fort Indiantown Gap to join the 553d Air Force Band, now known as the Air National Guard Band of the Northeast, wherein he served as an Instrumentalist for a multitude of bands, including the Concert Band, Ceremonial Band, German Band, "Guardsmen" Big Band, and the "Brass in Blue" Brass Quintet, performing on trumpet and the French horn.

MSgt Pautz also served in myriad other duty positions, including: Assistant Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of Supply; Additional Duty Unit Training Manager; Unit Information Systems Security Officer; Unit Equipment Custodian; Unit Computer Equipment Custodian; Assistant Director, Commander's Support Staff; and Director—Supply.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize and commend MSgt Jeffery Pautz upon his retirement from the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and on a job extremely well done. His dedicated, tireless, and selfless service to his fellow Airmen, the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, the United States Air Force, and our

United States of America set the standard by which all should be judged.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT
ROBERT B. KIELY, JR.

HON. MATT VAN EPPS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 20, 2026

Mr. VAN EPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a truly exceptional American, Master Sergeant Robert B. Kiely, Jr., United States Army, retired, on the occasion of his induction into the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Medical Hall of Honor. This recognition is a fitting tribute to a career that reflects the very best of our Nation's military service and the enduring strength of our Special Operations Forces.

For more than 26 years, Master Sergeant Kiely devoted himself to the defense of our country and the care of those who stand on the front lines. His service culminated at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where he served as the Senior Enlisted Medical Advisor for the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), a unit renowned for its precision, courage, and unwavering commitment to mission success.

Throughout his career, Master Sergeant Kiely demonstrated extraordinary leadership and an unrelenting dedication to the health and readiness of Special Operations Forces soldiers. His work went far beyond the expectations of duty. He was instrumental in shaping not only the physical preparedness of the force, but also the culture of care, resilience, and excellence that defines these elite units.

As a pioneer in the development of the Special Operations tactical flight paramedic program, Master Sergeant Kiely helped revolutionize the way medical support is delivered in some of the most demanding and dangerous environments imaginable. His contributions have undoubtedly saved lives on the battlefield and strengthened the operational effectiveness of our forces around the globe.

Equally important was his devotion to mentoring and leading the next generation of non-commissioned officers and flight medics. He instilled in them the highest standards of professionalism, courage, and selfless service, ensuring that his legacy will endure far beyond his own years in uniform.

Master Sergeant Kiely's unwavering loyalty, steadfast devotion to duty, and lifetime of selfless service reflect great credit upon himself, the United States Army, our Special Operations community, and the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that we pause to recognize individuals like Master Sergeant Robert B. Kiely, Jr., whose quiet professionalism and extraordinary contributions often go unseen by the public, yet are indispensable to our national security.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking him for his service and recognizing his induction into the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Medical Hall of Honor.