

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.

HONORING GARFIELD VOLUNTEER
FIREFIGHTER EDWARD KOVACH

HON. NELLIE POU

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 20, 2026

Ms. POU. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Edward S. Kovach of Garfield, New Jersey, as he marks an extraordinary milestone: 50 years of active service as a volunteer firefighter and a lifetime of dedication to protecting others and strengthening his community.

A lifelong resident of Garfield, Ed joined Garfield Volunteer Fire Company No. 5 in 1976 at just 18 years old. From that moment on, he answered the call, time and again, whenever his neighbors needed him most. Over the decades, he has served with distinction in many leadership roles, including 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Lieutenant, and Captain, as well as Secretary, President, and Treasurer of the company, a position he continues to hold today.

Fifty years of service is a rare and remarkable achievement. Volunteer firefighters give their time, their energy, and place themselves in harm's way to keep their neighbors safe. They respond in moments of crisis and bring calm in the face of danger without asking for recognition in return. Their work requires courage, discipline, and an abiding sense of duty, all qualities Mr. Kovach has shown throughout his career.

Beyond the firehouse, Mr. Kovach has been an active and engaged member of the Garfield Fire Department's broader community, contributing to its traditions and friendship, including through years of involvement in the department's softball league and service in the Fire Department Relief Association.

Mr. Speaker, Edward Kovach's 50 years of service reflect the very best of New Jersey and of what it means to serve others. I am proud to recognize his extraordinary commitment and to thank him, along with his wife Jeanne and family, for the countless sacrifices they have made in support of his service and Garfield.

I wish Ed continued health and happiness in the years ahead.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE VIENNA COMMUNITY
CENTER

HON. JAMES R. WALKINSHAW

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 20, 2026

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th anniversary of the Vienna Community Center, a historic and enduring gathering place that has served the Town of Vienna and Northern Virginia for generations.

Since opening its doors in 1966, the Vienna Community Center has served as a shared space for residents of all ages to gather, learn, and stay active. Its creation was the result of a sustained community effort that began decades earlier, when local leaders and organizations came together to raise funds and support the vision of a shared space for the growing town.

Since its founding, the center has played a central role in the daily life of Vienna residents. As the home of the Town of Vienna Parks and Recreation Department, it has provided space for educational programs, recreational activities, and community events that bring people together and strengthen local connections.

Over the years, the Vienna Community Center has evolved to meet the needs of a growing community. Through renovations and expansions, including a major modernization project that enhanced its facilities and services, the center has remained both a historic landmark and a modern resource for residents.

Today, the Vienna Community Center continues to serve as a gathering place where neighbors connect, families participate in programs, and community traditions are built and sustained. Its enduring presence reflects the values of collaboration, civic engagement, and community pride that define the Town of Vienna.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Vienna Community Center on its 60th anniversary and in recognizing its lasting contributions to the Town of Vienna and the Northern Virginia region.

HIGHLIGHTING THE STATE OF
MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE IN
HAWAII

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 20, 2026

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the critical need to address seriously aging and increasingly failing physical infrastructure in Hawaii across all services. This can no longer be chalked up or explained away as deferred maintenance; it requires Congressional action considering the Department's negligent administration and budgeting to address clear risks to personnel safety, mission readiness, and ultimately our ability to deter and prevail in the Indo-Pacific.

Hawaii has served as a linchpin of our Nation's presence in the Indo-Pacific since 1875, when King Kalākaua granted the United States the right to enter Pearl Harbor and establish a coaling and repair station. Today, Hawaii is the Indo-Pacific home to every service—the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Space Force—along with a significant presence of our Nation's intelligence community. It is our Nation's Indo-Pacific headquarters, hosting U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pacific Air Forces, U.S. Army Pacific, Marine Corps Forces Pacific, Special Operations Command Pacific, Space Force Indo-Pacific and the National Security Agency Hawaii. It also has many key military installations including Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Schofield Barracks, Fort Shafter, the Pacific Missile Range Facility, Pōhakuloa Training Area, and various other locations. These installations support key operating forces based in Hawaii, including nuclear attack submarines, surface combatants, an Army infantry division, F–22s, MV–22s, C–17s, fuel tankers, Apaches, a Marine Corp regiment, and approximately 60,000 Department of Defense (DoD) personnel plus families.

This presence requires significant physical infrastructure investments that are sometimes difficult to maintain. Hawaii's geographic isolation makes everything from fuel to concrete significantly more expensive because they must be transported across thousands of miles of oceans. Our tropical location with buildings on or close to the ocean is also incredibly stressful on infrastructure. We face constant exposure to salt-laden air and high humidity, that can quickly cause metal to rust and lead to shorter lifespans than identical structures built on the mainland.

Despite generosity from the House Armed Services and Appropriations Committees in recent years, we must face the hard truth that the Department is not prioritizing critical repair and maintenance on its own. A 2023 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) study found that Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam alone requires almost \$5 billion to properly renovate and modernize—twice that of the next closest Navy base needing major upgrades. A 2022 CBO study found that U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii and Fort Bragg essentially tied with a \$1.5 billion deferred maintenance backlog, and a 2024 CBO report noted that Marine Corps Base Hawaii was among the “top” three Marine Corps bases with the worst backlog of deferred maintenance. Failing to perform such maintenance will accelerate the degradation of real property and increase the cost of future renovations and repairs.

The effects of avoiding infrastructure investments for years are now having real world consequences in Hawaii. For example, our aging waste water treatment systems at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and Marine Corps Base Hawaii have repeatedly spilled raw and insufficiently treated sewage into our oceans, and power outages and water main breaks have become all too real occurrences with potentially major impacts on service members' safety, especially when it affects Tripler Army Medical Center—the military's largest medical facility in the Indo-Pacific.

For far too long we have also ignored the need for major new construction. The Marine Corps' three-star command headquarters for the Indo-Pacific operates in the 1940s era 'Aiea Heights Naval Hospital that lacks sufficient classified spaces and secure connections. Special Operations Command Pacific, which serves as the functional component for all special operations missions throughout the Indo-Pacific, has personnel spread across 19 locations in O'ahu due to facility space limitations at its primary headquarters at Camp H. M. Smith. Space Forces Indo-Pacific is operating out of temporary buildings, which are little more than trailers. The 25th Infantry Division's Headquarters lacks sufficient Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility spaces and a modern headquarters facility. Failing to invest in these headquarters units now will make command and control more difficult in a time of war.

Further, the modern equipment used by our troops is in desperate need of new modern buildings to house them. The 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment does not have a magazine for the new weapons it needs, lacks sufficient climate-controlled facilities for its modern equipment, and has insufficient classified workspaces. Army helicopters operate out of World War II era hangers without modern climate control that often lead to spare parts being rusted and unusable. The Air Force's runways