

For more than 45 years, Connie devoted her life to nursing, including nearly two decades in geriatric care, followed by service in hospitals across the region, and ultimately with the Florida Department of Health in Clay County.

Her commitment did not stop at her profession. Connie served three consecutive terms on the Green Cove Springs City Council, including two terms as Mayor, always putting her community first. Her faith has remained a cornerstone of her life through her work with New Trinity Missionary Baptist Church and regional Baptist associations, as well as through her involvement in organizations that support children and preserve culture.

Through it all, her greatest pride is her family. Connie and her husband Bruce have shared 46 years of marriage, raised four children—Bruce, Jr., Terrence, Adrian, and Contrinia—and are now proud grandparents to nine grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, Connie Butler's life is a testament to what it means to serve. As she enters a well-earned retirement, we thank her for a lifetime of compassion, leadership, and unwavering commitment to others.

HONORING UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS MASTER SERGEANT ROBERT C. WHITE

HON. MIKE LEVIN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and pay tribute to Master Sergeant Robert C. White of the United States Marine Corps, who will retire this June after twenty years of distinguished service to our Nation. His retirement ceremony will be held on April 24, 2026, marking the close of a remarkable career that began two decades ago.

Master Sergeant White's service has taken him across both the globe and the full breadth of the Marine Corps mission. He has served with Combat Logistics Regiment 3 in Okinawa, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion at Camp Pendleton, Marine Forces Special Operations Command, and the Headquarters Marine Corps IT Center at the Pentagon. He will conclude his career with the 1st Marine Division, serving as the Division's Cyber Security Chief and Information Systems Security Manager, a role that reflects both the trust placed in him by his command and the evolving nature of modern warfare, in which our cyber defenses are as vital as any position on the battlefield.

Master Sergeant White has also represented the United States with distinction overseas, serving at our embassies in Lomé, Beijing, and Dushanbe. In these assignments, he stood at the front line of American diplomacy, safeguarding our missions and embodying the professionalism of the United States Marine Corps to all who encountered him.

His record of achievement and excellence during deployments speaks to a career defined by answering the call of duty wherever it was made. He deployed to Iraq from 2007 to 2008, to Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012, and again to Iraq with the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force from 2018 to 2019. In each of these deployments, Master Sergeant White served alongside our Nation's finest,

contributing to missions critical to American security, freedom, and to the safety of our allies.

Twenty years of service is more than a measure of time. It is a measure of sacrifice: of holidays missed, of moves made, of long separations from loved ones, and of the quiet courage required to place duty above self, year after year. Master Sergeant White's family has shared in every chapter of that service, and they too deserve our Nation's gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, as Master Sergeant Robert C. White prepares to transition to a well-deserved retirement, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking him for his service, congratulating him on his well-earned retirement, and wishing him, his wife Nicole, and their family every happiness in the next chapter of their lives.

CELEBRATING ANSHU MUKHERJEE AS OREGON'S 5TH DISTRICT'S CONGRESSIONAL APP CHALLENGE WINNER

HON. JANELLE S. BYNUM

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Ms. BYNUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and honor Anshu Mukherjee as the winner of the 2025 Congressional App Challenge in Oregon's 5th District, for the creation of Grub.io, an innovative app designed to combat food waste at large events. The colleagues in this room know exactly what I'm talking about. Platters of fresh, delicious food, thrown right into the trash, because we didn't have a plan, so we didn't have a choice. Now we have a plan. Grub.io lets event organizers and guests share and claim leftover food in real-time, cutting the waste and getting more food to more people. It's easy to use. Register an event, get a code, and post or claim surplus food. It also tracks your environmental impact so you can make every event count—literally, pounds of food saved.

Every great idea comes from something in real life. Anshu was at FIRST Robotics World Championship in Houston when he saw hundreds of teams in the competition order heaps of food with time running out on the clock. Some never got to their plates in the first place, while others only had time to eat a few bites. The result: untouched pizzas and trays went right to the trash. This wasn't the first time Anshu saw this pattern. He saw the same thing at a tailgate at the University of Oregon—Go Oregon Ducks—and realized this was a solvable problem. We don't have a lot of those, do we, colleagues? At that time, existing food-rescue apps weren't built for fast-moving, temporary events.

In Oregon, where 2 billion pounds of food are wasted annually—despite 1 in 8 residents facing food insecurity—the potential impact of reducing event waste is especially urgent. Anshu is already exploring partnerships with organizations like Urban Gleaners and Waste Not Food Tax to strengthen connections between event leftovers and local hunger-relief networks.

This year's Congressional App Challenge was the largest in the program's history, with 394 Members of Congress hosting district competitions and more than 13,800 students submitting over 4,600 original apps addressing

real-world challenges. Among these, Grub.io stood out for its social impact and scalability. Anshu plans to beta-test the app at upcoming robotics competitions hosted by Team 1425 and ultimately aims to deploy it at the Robotics World Championship—bringing it full circle. Grub.io reflects the creativity, engineering skill, and civic-minded innovation the Congressional App Challenge was designed to celebrate, and that my great state has in large supply.

I am incredibly grateful for Anshu and his work. I have a hunch this is just the start of an incredible and impactful life's purpose on this beautiful earth. I thank him for making Oregon proud.

ISRAEL AT 78

HON. JENNIFER A. KIGGANS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD remarks submitted at the request of a Virginia Beach constituent, Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman of Temple Lev Tikvah, and are a reflection of his views:

ISRAEL AT 78

The world's only Jewish state celebrates its 78th anniversary in the shadow of existential war with Iran and its proxies, fighting along its great American partner with shared values and interests. Professor David Passig's work is of particular value. He was born in Meknes, Morocco in 1957 and moved to Israel in 1968 with his parents and four siblings. Passig teaches at Israel's Bar-Ilan University in the Graduate School of Education, heading the Graduate Program in information and Communication Technologies (ICT), along with the Virtual Reality Laboratory. His doctorate in Future Studies is from the University of Minnesota. In his latest book, *The Fifth Fiasco (How to Escape the Traps of Jewish History in the Twenty-First Century)*, he suggests alternative scenarios to past periods with the goal of avoiding repetitions of fateful and costly mistakes and consequently guaranteeing a secure Jewish future in a sovereign and democratic Israeli state. Passig's underlying supposition is quite chilling, "Therefore, I want to note at the beginning that those among the readers who accept the Biblical account as a given fact, may find it difficult to understand the "exercise" of an alternative formulation contradicting the known facts. To those I want to emphasize that the entire purpose is to examine in a refreshed prose an alternative Biblical text that could have prevented the great catastrophe of the destruction of the two Temples. The occupation of providing alternative scenarios for that calamity is critical when fear for destruction returns to echo in the collective Jewish consciousness of the State of Israel in the 21st century."

The concerned readers the author refers to are Orthodox Jews and the fact that he is an Orthodox Jew affiliated with the Orthodox Jewish Bar-Ilan University, well reflects on the academic open integrity of that institution as well as Passig's. The widespread Israeli phenomenon in recent years of Israelis holding also foreign passports might support the professor's assertion of, if not concrete fear, a certain Israeli unease concerning the future; not for the state's very survival, rather I believe, a lingering disaffection with the deepening divisions and gaps in Israeli society coupled with a frustrating impasse on Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation and explosive old-new tensions

with Israeli Arabs. All that in face of a successful young start-up nation with an incredible record of progress, including the recent Abraham Accords. These contradictions highlight the complex Jewish condition with some million Israelis living abroad, mainly in North America, begging soul-searching inquiry. Israel's small size and more opportunities abroad are salient factors along with the historical Jewish wandering gene.

The author perceptively points out that the long Jewish tradition to ponder the past on a weekly basis with the discussed study of various interpretations of the Torah, maintained the bond with the people's past, but lacked the necessary alternative scenarios, and particularly arousing ones for the future's sake, and thus former mistakes were repeated with fatal consequences. Passig regards a certain sickness of self-destruction to be responsible for the misfortunes that befell the Jewish people throughout its history, though surely other weighty factors are at play such as Israel's geo-political strategic location which lures empires and superpowers as well as a nation's willingness to risk much for the sake of its ethos and ideals beyond the drive for mere survival, and even finding divine justification for its predicaments whether through punishment or reward. The Talmudic teaching (Pesachim 87b) that exile fulfills God's purpose which is beneficial for both Israel and the world at-large is a case in point. It can be argued also that in the nuclear age it is too dangerous to have all Jews concentrated in one place. The current model is of a sovereign Jewish state with a viable Diaspora, mainly American, along its historical antecedents, supports and nourishes each other for the entire Jewish people's sake and survival.

Faithful to his conclusion for the need to present a shocking future scenario serving to wake up to the possibility that Israel's future as an independent Jewish state is not guaranteed, Passig describes a wild scenario—one of the offered options by Future Studies scholars—beginning with an Israeli civil war in the 40's of the 21st century, over unbridgeable disagreements between the political left and right on basic issues such as the Law of Return, the Jewish Nation State Law, the annexation of parts of Judea and Samaria and rioting between Jews and Arabs around the Western Wall and Temple Mount. The violent escalation of internal conflicts accompanied by a costly Israeli military incursion toward Syria's Damascus, ultimately resulting at the 22nd century's end in only 20 percent fearful Jews among some 30 million mostly hostile Arabs. Once a flourishing Israeli Jewish state faces the tragic fate of its previous two Jewish Commonwealths.

While he praises the Reform rabbis for turning away from their anti-Zionist stance in 1937, he shares his disappointment with those ultra-Orthodox rabbis who remained opposed to the Jewish state with Rabbi Shach even blaming the Shoah (Holocaust) as divine punishment for accumulated Jewish sins. The traditional approach holding God in charge of human affairs, does not solve pressing dilemmas that require human responsibility which the Zionist movement's revolution exemplified. Passig is also critical of those rabbis who refused to follow protective measures during the Corona crisis in Israel and generally reject the authority of the sovereign Jewish state. He views American Jewish disunity for the failure to bomb the railroads leading to Auschwitz during World War II. The long exile promoted text replacing territory though territory was preserved in the text, while Islam favored territory first.

The author advocates for Israel's urgent need to formulate a briefly declared covenantal mission statement to unify the Jewish majority along with its minorities around a common theme, while serving to highlight its uniqueness in the community of nations. Passig is concerned that Israel is not yet fully accepted as a separate nation. Whereas the United States' motto is "Personal Freedom" and the European Union's, "Unity in Diversity," he suggests that Israel should be defined by, "The Public's Freedom" in a binding and intricate system of its individuals' interconnectedness. However, Passig may be overstating the impact of a shortly stated national goal as the most critical force behind a nation's success or collapse in history's long-run. Finding a common theme for Jews and Arabs in Israel, indeed a desired aspiration, faces enormous challenge given the complex Jewish-Arab equation.

Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman is founder of Temple Lev Tikvah in Virginia Beach. He is a member of the Holocaust's surviving remnant of European Jewry.

#### HONORING THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOUGALOO NINE

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 22, 2026*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the courage and legacy of a group of people whose actions helped move the state of Mississippi closer to justice. They are known as the Tougaloo Nine.

On March 27, 1961, nine students from Tougaloo College made a decision that many would have been too afraid to make. They walked into a whites-only Jackson Municipal Library and quietly took their seats to read. They understood the risk. In Mississippi at that time, that simple act could lead to arrest or worse. But they did it anyway, because they believed in something bigger than fear.

These students were not acting on impulse. They were disciplined, thoughtful, and committed to nonviolence. They had been guided by leaders like Medgar Evers and others who believed that real change required both courage and strategy.

When law enforcement arrived and told them to leave, they refused. They were arrested, jailed, and later convicted. Still, they did not back down. Their actions sent a message that access to knowledge, to public spaces, and to opportunity should not be determined by the color of your skin.

For too long, the story of the Tougaloo Nine has not received the recognition it deserves. But their impact is clear.

Mr. Speaker, the actions of the Tougaloo Nine helped lay the foundation for progress that would later be reflected in laws like the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I often say that progress comes because people are willing to stand up, speak out, and, in this case, sit down for what is right. The Tougaloo Nine showed us what that looks like.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the 65th anniversary of their bravery, their sacrifice, and their lasting contribution to the ongoing fight for equality and justice in this country.

#### SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2026 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

#### MEETINGS SCHEDULED

APRIL 27

3:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services  
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

To hold hearings to examine Department of Defense missile defense activities in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR-222

APRIL 28

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold closed hearings to examine the posture of United States Special Operations Command and United States Cyber Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by an open session at 11:00 a.m. in SD-G50.

SVC-217

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2027 for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

SD-138

Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2027 for the Department of Education.

SD-124

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Darrell Owens, of Pennsylvania, to be Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with the rank of Ambassador.

SD-419