

HONORING RANDY BLACK

HON. JEFF HURD

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Mr. HURD of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Randy Black of Durango, Colorado, for his outstanding commitment and contributions to the people of Durango.

Chief Randy Black has devoted more than three decades to the safety and well-being of the Durango community. Beginning as a volunteer firefighter, he rose through the ranks to lead the department as Fire Chief of the Durango Fire Protection District.

Under Chief Black's guidance, the department has prioritized community engagement, ensuring that fire and emergency services remain visible, responsive, and closely connected to the people of Durango. In recognition of his continued commitment to community well-being and addiction prevention, Chief Black was recently honored with the Mothers for Awareness and Prevention of Drug Abuse Leadership Award.

On behalf of the Durango community, we extend our deepest thanks to Chief Randy Black for his compassionate work addressing addiction and overdose and for his commitment to protecting public health. His leadership has strengthened the safety and resilience of the community he so faithfully serves.

HONORING THE CAREER OF BRET JACOBSON

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Bret Jacobson, who selflessly served our country and retires today from his position as Director of the Manufacturing Apprenticeship Center at CT State Community College Three Rivers. The Manufacturing Apprenticeship Center has innovated various streamlined paths for individuals to pursue a career in advanced manufacturing and possesses a key role in workforce development in Eastern Connecticut.

Mr. Jacobson has been a steadfast champion of the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI), a nationally recognized manufacturing-focused workforce training program managed by the Manufacturing Apprenticeship Center. Mr. Jacobson utilized a \$6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor awarded to Three Rivers in 2016 to create and develop MPI. Now, a decade later, MPI comprises 150 instructors who have taught over 250 classes and prepared more than 2,500 students. Thanks to Mr. Jacobson's leadership and dedication to the program, MPI stands as a national model for workforce development programs.

Before joining CT State, Mr. Jacobson led a 30-year career serving in the Coast Guard as a mechanic-by-trade at duty stations in Hawaii, Michigan, and Key West. His final five years of service were spent at the Coast Guard Academy, serving as a Lead Laboratory Technician where he supported Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture stu-

dents in operating equipment needed for their capstone projects.

Mr. Jacobson is a resident of Waterford, Connecticut, and a native of northern Minnesota.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member serving the 2nd District of Connecticut, I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Jacobson to build the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative in Eastern Connecticut. The program's award-winning success has been recognized both locally and nationally at a time when the demand for skilled metal trades workers is at an historic high level. On behalf of the U.S. House of Representatives and the American people, I express deep gratitude for Mr. Jacobson's contributions during his service with Three Rivers. I join Mr. Jacobson's family, friends, and colleagues in wishing him all the best in retirement.

BILL (H.R. 7567) TO PROVIDE FOR THE REFORM AND CONTINUATION OF AGRICULTURAL AND OTHER PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2031, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

SPEECH OF

HON. DEREK SCHMIDT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

Mr. SCHMIDT. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment, No. 43, which would direct the secretaries of agriculture and health and human services to enter into a memorandum of understanding to conduct collaborative research related to increasing the domestic production of crops that can be used to produce natural food colors. With growing interest among consumers in foods containing no synthetic food dyes, the demand for natural alternatives is increasing. Currently, the United States lacks domestic production of natural food dyes, requiring these dyes to be sourced from overseas.

This increased demand for natural food colors presents an opportunity for American agriculture to step into the gap and grow the crops necessary to produce the brightly colored foods that so many of us enjoy. Working together, under the direction of my amendment, USDA and HHS will work to identify the barriers that exist to producing these crops domestically and processing them into the natural dyes that can be used by American food companies.

I am grateful to Chairman THOMPSON and the Agriculture Committee staff for working with me on this amendment and for including it in the en bloc amendment. I am also grateful to the industry groups who worked with us on this issue. I include in the RECORD a letter of support for my amendment signed by seven industry groups.

Mr. Chair, thank you for your consideration. I urge the adoption of my amendment as part of the en bloc package, and passage of the long-overdue Farm Bill.

APRIL 28, 2026.

Hon. DEREK SCHMIDT,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE SCHMIDT: As representatives of food and ingredient manufac-

turers and suppliers, we write to share our support for your Amendment #204 to H.R. 7567, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026, which would direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to coordinate activities to enhance the capacity of domestic producers to increase production of crops used in naturally derived food and beverage colorants.

The U.S. food industry is currently managing a complex, system-wide shift in how color ingredients are sourced, produced, and incorporated into finished products. This transition is being driven by evolving regulatory frameworks and supply chain realities that will require alignment across agricultural production, ingredient processing, manufacturing systems, and distribution and retail channels. Coordinated federal engagement between USDA and HHS is essential to ensure that these interconnected elements develop in a practical, efficient, and economically viable manner.

Enhancing the capacity of domestic producers to increase production of colorant crops presents a meaningful opportunity for U.S. agriculture, but doing so at scale will require deliberate planning, sustained research, and targeted investment. Key considerations include agronomic suitability across regions, identification of crops most effective for reliable colorant production, crop genetics, and the need to address barriers to scale such as pest and disease pressures, harvesting technology, and other production challenges. In addition, investment in processing and extraction infrastructure—such as juicing and extraction facilities—and the development of stable, predictable markets for growers will be essential. In the absence of coordinated efforts, these factors may limit the pace, efficiency, and affordability with which domestic production capacity can be developed.

At the same time, the current supply chain for many naturally derived colorant inputs is global in nature. U.S. manufacturers rely on established international sourcing channels, which introduces exposure to trade dynamics, regional production variability, and logistical constraints. Federal coordination that considers both domestic production capacity and global sourcing dependencies can help support continuity of supply as domestic capabilities are developed over time.

From a manufacturing perspective, incorporating naturally derived colorants involves significant operational considerations. These ingredients often require different handling, processing conditions, and quality control approaches than traditional alternatives, and their successful integration may necessitate capital investments, process modifications, and updated supply chain management practices. Coordinated research, development, and demonstration of methods and technologies, along with information sharing across stakeholders, will be important to support efficient implementation while maintaining product consistency and regulatory compliance.

Your amendment appropriately recognizes that this is not a single-agency issue. By establishing a framework for interagency coordination, competitive and merit-reviewed research, and collaboration across federal agencies, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and industry partners, the amendment creates a strong foundation for advancing this work. Support for research infrastructure, workforce development, and public-private collaboration will be critical to translating research into scalable, real-world outcomes and sustaining progress over time.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and for your attention to the operational and economic considerations facing both U.S. agriculture and food manufacturers. We stand ready to serve as a resource as this effort moves forward and strongly encourage the House of Representatives to adopt your amendment.

Sincerely,

National Confectioners Association, Consumer Brands Association, International Dairy Foods Association, Independent Bakers Association, SNAC International, American Bakers Association, National Seasoning Manufacturers Association.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF
MAJOR MICHAEL HART

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Major Michael Hart as he concludes his time on Capitol Hill. During his time working in the House of Representatives, Major Hart has served as the Army Branch Chief, National Guard Bureau Legislative Liaison (NGB-LL), Legislative Assistant to the Director of the Army National Guard, Army Appropriations Liaison for the Army National Guard, and as a Defense Fellow.

Major Hart was commissioned into the Kentucky Army National Guard as a Military Intelligence Officer in 2011. He is a graduate of the Officer Candidate School in Fort McClellan, Alabama, and has served in the Army and Air National Guard for a combined 25 years. He deployed to Iraq in 2003 and 2019 in sup-

port of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Prior to his 2019 deployment, Major Hart owned Inside Out Nutrition LLC, a small fitness and nutrition business in Versailles, Kentucky. He and his wife, Jaime, constructed meal plans and hosted a variety of fitness classes to deliver personalized fitness and nutrition solutions. Before becoming an entrepreneur, Michael worked as an Army National Guard Liaison to Cadet Command at Fort Knox, Kentucky. There, Michael served as the National Guard subject matter expert to assist and advise the Command and Cadets on National Guard equities related to Officers commissioning through the ROTC program.

Additionally, he worked as a government contractor in the Information Technology industry. Major Hart worked as the lead technician for the Aviation Combined Arms Tactical Trainer (AVCATT), a flight simulator used by Army helicopter pilots. Michael's expertise kept the trainer fully functional and operational to conduct training.

In the House of Representatives, working as a National Guard Liaison, Major Hart carried out various responsibilities to assist members of Congress in developing important policies that impact his fellow national guardsmen and soldiers. As Members of Congress, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to work alongside active duty servicemembers, who provide invaluable insight in every aspect of their duties.

I applaud Major Hart for his dedicated service to our Nation in uniform and for the work he has done on behalf of the institution of the United States House of Representatives. His long career of service brings great pride to every Kentuckian, and I wish him and his family the best during his next adventure.

HONORING BOB BRAMMER

HON. JEFF HURD

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Mr. HURD of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Bob Brammer of Durango, Colorado, for his exceptional dedication and service to the Durango community. Bob Brammer served with the Durango Police Department for 21 years, including six years as Chief of Police. During his tenure, he led initiatives to strengthen the department's ability to protect public health and safety—expanding crisis de-escalation programs and improving access to emergency response kits in public buildings.

In 2024, Mr. Brammer was appointed Assistant City Manager by the Durango City Council, a testament to his leadership and enduring commitment to public service. Throughout his career, Bob Brammer has exemplified the values of integrity, compassion, and community engagement that make Durango such a special place to live. His efforts have not only improved public safety but also built lasting trust between law enforcement and the citizens they serve.

Mr. Brammer continues to serve with distinction, earning the Mothers for Awareness and Prevention of Drug Abuse Leadership Award for his tireless efforts to protect families and prevent drug abuse.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mr. Brammer for his steadfast dedication and continued leadership in the Durango community.