

His dedication is worthy of recognition and appreciation from both the House of Representatives and the state he has faithfully served for 50 years.

HONORING MISS PRESLEY BENNETT MISS ARKANSAS' TEEN 2026

HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Miss Presley Bennett of White Hall, Arkansas, on being crowned Miss Arkansas' Teen 2026. At just 17 years old, Presley has distinguished herself through her talent, leadership, service, and commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of others.

Competing as Miss Saline County's Teen, Presley impressed judges with a dynamic Michael Jackson-inspired tap dance performance and demonstrated exceptional poise and character throughout the competition. Equally noteworthy is her dedication to youth mental health advocacy through her community service initiative, Peaceful Places. Through this important effort, Presley works to promote mental health awareness and well-being in schools, encouraging students to prioritize emotional wellness and foster supportive environments for their peers.

I recently had the pleasure of meeting Presley during her visit to Washington, D.C., when she stopped by my office. It was a privilege to learn more about her accomplishments, aspirations, and dedication to serving others. Presley exemplifies the talent, character, and leadership that have earned her this distinguished title. Her accomplishments during the Miss Arkansas' Teen competition were extraordinary. She earned a total of \$13,750 in scholarships and awards, including recognition for Overall On-Stage Conversation, Preliminary Health and Fitness, the Sharon Evans Bale We Are More Award, and Overall Arrival. Her title as Miss Arkansas' Teen also includes a \$10,000 scholarship sponsored by Pafford EMS, further supporting her educational aspirations and future success.

As Miss Arkansas' Teen, Presley will spend the coming year serving as a statewide ambassador for the Miss Arkansas Scholarship Program, making appearances across Arkansas while promoting her platform and inspiring young people throughout our state. Her example of service, confidence, and leadership reflects the very best of Arkansas's next generation.

In September 2026, Presley will proudly represent the Natural State at Miss America's Teen 2027, to be held at the Palm Beach County Convention Center in West Palm Beach, Florida. There she will compete alongside delegates from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands for the national title.

The Miss Arkansas Scholarship Program, an official state preliminary to Miss America, has long been dedicated to empowering young women through scholarship, service, leadership, and personal achievement. Presley Bennett embodies each of these values and serves as an outstanding representative of this mission.

On behalf of the people of Arkansas, I congratulate Presley Bennett on this remarkable achievement and commend her for her dedication to service, academic excellence, and advocacy. I join her family, friends, and community in wishing her continued success as she represents Arkansas on the national stage and inspires others through her leadership and example.

RECOGNIZING ANGEL REINS

HON. TOM EMMER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a special occasion and the impactful work being done in Minnesota's 6th Congressional District.

Minnesota's 6th District is home to many great organizations. One such organization is Angel Reins, which not only provides a loving home for rescue horses, but provides veterans, survivors of human trafficking, and others suffering from PTSD, depression, anxiety, and grief with a peaceful place to relax and heal. The horse-human connection that Angel Reins fosters helps survivors heal and experience meaningful change.

In commemoration of Flag Day, it was an honor to recognize Angel Reins at the dedication of their new facility, the Rescue Ridge, commonly known as "The Ridge." On Flag Day, June 14, 2026, The Ridge was officially dedicated with a Flag Raising Ceremony. This new cabin will serve as a gathering place for all those served by Angel Reins. I am thrilled that both the American flag and the old Minnesota flag were proudly flown. They will continue to fly proudly day after day.

To the Combat Veterans who raised the flag they so bravely fought for and defended, I thank them. Their service and sacrifice do not go unnoticed.

The partnership between Angel Reins, the St. Cloud VFW, the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, and others is truly making a difference in the lives of Minnesota's veterans.

It was great to see so many people come together in our district to support this noble cause. The community engagement on this was truly inspiring to see. From local business leaders and project sponsors to community partners and our veterans, the hope and healing that Angel Reins brings is something only patriotic Minnesotans could come together to accomplish.

In the 250th year of our great Nation, it is an honor to recognize Angel Reins and its partners' dedication to our veterans and others in need.

INTRODUCTION THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS JUDICIAL VACANCY REDUCTION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Courts Judicial Vacancy Reduction Act, which would expedite

the appointment of local D.C. judges. Senator CHRIS VAN HOLLEN is introducing the companion bill.

The longstanding judicial vacancy crisis in the local D.C. courts has existed regardless of which party controls the presidency and the Senate because the president and the Senate are, understandably, more focused on nominees to the federal courts and the executive branch than to the local D.C. courts. The sole purpose of this bill is to protect public safety and promote justice by ending the judicial vacancy crisis in the local D.C. courts, which delays the resolution of criminal and civil cases. This bill has nothing to do with D.C. statehood or home rule. Although D.C. will control the local D.C. courts when it becomes a state and Congress can—and should—give D.C. control over the local D.C. courts now, this bill would not give D.C. any new authority over the local D.C. courts.

Under the D.C. Home Rule Act, D.C. has no control over the organization or jurisdiction of the local D.C. courts, including the nomination and appointment of judges. A seven-member commission, which is comprised of federal, D.C. and private-sector appointees, submits to the president a list of three persons for each vacancy on the local D.C. courts. The president must nominate, and, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint one person from the list. If the president fails to nominate one of the persons from the list within 60 days, the commission must nominate, and, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint one of the persons from the list.

This bill would not change the role of the president or the commission in the appointment of local D.C. judges. Instead, it would apply the current congressional review process for bills enacted by D.C. to the appointment of local D.C. judges. Upon nomination, local D.C. judges would be appointed after the expiration of a 30-day congressional review period, unless a resolution disapproving of the appointment was enacted into law during the period.

Local D.C. judges are non-Article III judges. The Constitution only requires Senate approval of Article III judges—that is, judges on the federal district courts, the federal appeals courts and the U.S. Supreme Court. Congress has the discretion to decide how non-Article III judges will be appointed, and it has chosen to subject some non-Article III judges to Senate approval, but not others. For example, Congress has not given itself any role in the appointment of bankruptcy or administrative law judges. This bill would strike a middle ground. Congress would retain authority to block the appointment of local D.C. judges, but it would only have a limited period to do so.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING RAIZ FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

HON. VERONICA ESCOBAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Raiz Federal Credit Union as it celebrates its 90th anniversary of service to the people of El Paso.

Founded in 1936 by seven visionary educators as the El Paso Teachers Federal Credit

Union, Raiz was built on a belief that when communities invest in one another, families thrive. Through generations of change and challenge, Raiz has remained a trusted partner for teachers, workers, and families across our region. Since 2019, more than 53,000 individuals have participated in Raiz's financial education programs, helping families build stronger financial futures. Raiz has also awarded more than 160 scholarships, grants, and community awards, while employees have contributed more than 4,100 hours in support of local organizations and initiatives.

Featured on the award-winning TV show Opportunity Knocks, Raiz was highlighted for their excellence as a financial leader, helping El Pasoans purchase homes, build credit, overcome financial challenges, and build brighter futures. I congratulate Raiz Federal Credit Union on this remarkable milestone and wish them continued success in the years ahead.

HONORING CHAMBERS COUNTY
JUDGE FRANK JAMES "JIMMY"
SYLVIA, JR.

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a good friend and respected leader of Chambers County, Texas—County Judge Frank James "Jimmy" Sylvia, Jr. For three decades, Judge Sylvia has guided Chambers County through a remarkable period of growth and transformation. On December 31, 2026, Judge Sylvia will retire from public office as the longest-serving county judge in Texas, concluding a distinguished career.

Judge Sylvia was born on October 5, 1955, in Seattle, Washington, but moved to Texas as soon as he could. The Sylvia family has been a pillar of the Old River community in Chambers County for decades. Jimmy was a standout athlete on the 1971 Barbers Hill High School football team, which won the Class 1 A co-state championship. He graduated from Barbers Hill in 1974 and was named a Distinguished Alumnus in 2010. Judge Sylvia continued his football and academic pursuits at Sam Houston State University, where he graduated in 1979. Jimmy has often attributed the values he learned playing team sports to his success in serving the public. Anyone who has worked with him knows that to be true. Judge Sylvia's service to Chambers County began in 1993, when he was elected Commissioner for Precinct 3. Following the timely passing of County Judge Oscar Nelson, he was appointed to serve as County Judge, assuming the responsibilities as the chief administrator and budget officer of Chambers County. He was later elected to the position in 1998 and concludes his seventh consecutive four-year term at the end of this year.

Over the last decade, Chambers County has been one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation and has become one of the most desirable places to live in the Greater Houston area. During his tenure in office, the county population has more than doubled, as has the number of county employees. Additionally, the county budget expanded from \$8.5 million in 1993 to \$75.7 million today. Judge Sylvia has

balanced the needs of rural rice-farming communities, one of the largest and most critical petrochemical complexes in the world, and the development of once-rural communities as the Houston region migrates further east.

In addition to his administrative and judicial responsibilities, Judge Sylvia serves as the county's chief emergency management official. During his tenure, Jimmy has been a steady hand overseeing responses to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Humberto, Gustav, Ike, Harvey, Imelda, Laura, Beta, and Beryl, as well as the 2019 Atlas Air Crash, COVID-19, Winter Storm Uri, and many others. His expertise has been widely recognized across Texas, and he has frequently been invited to speak at training programs for county judges, offering guidance on disaster response and emergency operations. For 17 years, Judge Sylvia has hosted a Hurricane Workshop that brings together local, state, and federal organizations to prepare for hurricane season. In May of this year, he was awarded the Texas Emergency Management Leadership Award in recognition of his achievements that have demonstrated a positive and significant impact on emergency management programs or community resilience, a well-deserved honor for a public servant who leads with integrity and a servant's heart.

I have worked closely with Judge Sylvia on many projects, and the most significant was the de-obligation of \$9 million of Hurricane Ike cleanup debt that FEMA erroneously charged to Chambers County. His diligence and advocacy were instrumental in resolving that issue. Mr. Speaker, on December 31, 2026, Judge Jimmy Sylvia will conclude three decades of distinguished public service. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to my friend and offer my best wishes to his wife, Laura Lou, their children, and grandchildren as they embark on the next chapter of their lives. May God bless Chambers County, and may He continue to bless the Sylvia family.

HONORING MS. KRISTY EMBRY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Ms. Kristy Embry upon the occasion of her retirement after twenty-five years of distinguished service with Disability Determination Services.

Ms. Embry has dedicated her professional career to serving the citizens of Mississippi with excellence, integrity, and compassion. A graduate of Mississippi State University in 1998, she began her career with Disability Determination Services in 2001, embarking on a path of public service that would positively impact countless individuals and families across our state.

In 2004, Ms. Embry joined the Division of Legislative Relations, where she worked closely with Members of Congress and state legislators regarding Social Security disability cases. Through her professionalism, responsiveness, and deep knowledge of the disability determination process, she became a trusted resource for legislative offices and constituents seeking assistance.

Her dedication and leadership led to her promotion as Director of the Non-Vocational

Legislative Relations Team in 2015. In this role, she has faithfully served for more than a decade, overseeing critical operations and helping ensure that Mississippians receive the attention and support they deserve. Her commitment to public service has earned the respect and admiration of colleagues, elected officials, and citizens alike.

Ms. Embry is the daughter of William "Bill" Norton and Jonnelle "Jonnie" Norton. In 2004, she married Scott Embry, and together they raised their daughter, Caroline Embry. Beyond her professional accomplishments, she enjoys cooking, baking, and traveling, passions that reflect her warm spirit and love for family and community.

On June 30, 2026, Ms. Embry will conclude a remarkable career marked by dedication, leadership, and faithful service to the people of Mississippi. Her contributions to Disability Determination Services and to the legislative community have left a lasting legacy that will be felt for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Kristy Embry for her outstanding career and unwavering commitment to public service. We congratulate her on her well-earned retirement and extend our sincere gratitude and best wishes for happiness, good health, and success in the years ahead.

HONORING THE LIFE OF GEDONE
RAULERSON PRACHAR

HON. AARON BEAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, some people spend a lifetime building a community. Others become the heart of one. In Baker County, Florida, that person was Gedone Raulerson Prachar.

Those who knew Gedone often said she never met a stranger. Whether she was welcoming someone into her home, serving her community, or advocating for causes she believed in, she had a unique gift of bringing people together and making them feel like family.

Today, I rise to honor the life and legacy of this remarkable Floridian.

Gedone was a pioneer in local civic engagement. She established the Baker County Women's Republican Club, opening doors for women to participate in public service and enhancing grassroots leadership within the community.

She was an active member of the GFWC Woman's Club of Macclenny, where she dedicated herself to service and supporting the community. Whether through organized efforts or small acts of kindness, Gedone was always ready to help.

Above all, Gedone cherished her family. She shared 46 wonderful years of marriage with her beloved husband, Chuck, and took great pride in her family, including her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, whose lives were enriched by her love, support, and wisdom.

Mr. Speaker, as we remember Gedone, we celebrate a life well lived and a legacy that will continue to be felt throughout Northeast Florida. Her kindness, leadership, and servant's heart made her the kind of person every community hopes to have and never forgets.