

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF MR. BENJAMIN A. HOLDEN

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 22, 2026

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart, and on behalf of a grieving community, to honor a man whose life enriched my district, my state, and indeed this entire Nation—Mr. Benjamin A. Holden—who departed this life on June 10, 2026, at the age of sixtythree. On Saturday, June 20th, his beloved family, his Columbus community, and friends from across this country gathered at the Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia, to celebrate his remarkable life and lay him to rest.

Mr. Speaker, Ben Holden believed, with his whole heart, in the power of two things—stories, and people. And across sixty-three years, he gave his life to both.

His own story began far from Georgia, in St. Louis, Missouri, where he was born on June 3, 1963, to Lorine and Percy Holden. He found his calling early. At just seventeen years old, he was already a cub reporter in the sports department of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, covering high school athletics—and his gift was so evident that it earned him a scholarship from the Pulitzer family to attend the University of Missouri. It was there, in 1983, that he became a proud member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, joining the ranks of the Divine Nine that so many of us hold dear. He went on to the University of California at Berkeley, earning both his law degree and his M.B.A., and meeting the love of his life, Melanie.

And then Ben Holden became one of the finest journalists of his generation. As a Los Angeles-based reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, he chronicled the most consequential stories of his time—the painful aftermath of the Rodney King trial, the O.J. Simpson case that gripped the entire nation, and more. His front-page *Journal* piece dissecting the staggering economics of the Simpson spectacle—which he wittily titled “O.J. G.D.P.”—earned him a national journalism award. He was a truth-teller, Mr. Speaker, and he told the truth with style.

But Ben understood that journalism is more than a profession—it is a pillar of freedom itself. A licensed attorney in both California and Georgia, he gave himself to the cause of a free press and an accountable judiciary. As director of the Donald W. Reynolds National Center for the Courts and Media, he carried the First Amendment far beyond our borders. On behalf of our own State Department and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, he traveled to Kosovo—a young nation still struggling to trust its own institutions—and there he trained its judges, its prosecutors, and its journalists in the principles of liberty, because he believed a free press and an honest court were essential to

that fragile republic’s democratic future. And right here at home, from 2004 to 2010, he led the newsroom of our own *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* through one of the most turbulent eras journalism has ever known.

He gave the next generation his wisdom, too, on the faculties of the University of Illinois and Northwestern University’s storied Medill School of Journalism, where he taught young people that the press is the only profession the Constitution itself protects by name. And he fought for his students as if they were his own children.

But Mr. Speaker, of all the chapters in Ben Holden’s remarkable story, the one he loved the most was written right here in Columbus, Georgia. Nelson Mandela taught the world that “education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”—and Ben Holden took up that weapon on behalf of children too often overlooked. In 2009, he founded a nonprofit he called Columbus Scholars. He carried a simple and stubborn conviction—that the only thing standing between a bright child who makes it and a bright child who does not is somebody willing to support them. And he did not merely say it. He spent more than forty years of his life proving it. Partnering with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Chattahoochee Valley, Columbus Scholars pairs economically disadvantaged young people with mentors and with scholarships—and in just seventeen years, it has raised more than one million dollars and lifted more than one hundred students toward a future they could not have reached on their own.

Think of that, Mr. Speaker. A man who had reported on the most powerful people in America, a man who had trained judges across an ocean, found his deepest joy in a Columbus child with ability and empty pockets—and in becoming the very support that child needed. He helped those young people write brand-new stories for their lives.

And there is one last story I must share. The celebrated poet and author Maya Angelou once wrote that “there is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.” Mr. Speaker, Benjamin Holden refused to carry his story to the grave. In his final days, he completed the draft of a novel he called *Spirit of St. Louis*—the tale of two first generation Black men coming of age in America, navigating race and class and the long odds of making it as an outsider. In so many ways, it was his own story. He did not live to see it published. But his family has vowed to finish what he began and bring his words into the world—and so this storyteller, who gave his life to telling the stories of others, will at last have his own story told.

For that is who Ben Holden was. A devoted husband to Melanie, his wife of thirty-one years. A loving father to his daughter, Joy. A brother, an uncle, and the very heart of a family that gathered for reunions they lovingly called “Fling Dings.” He was a man who never missed a birthday, a wedding, or a ballgame—a faithful Atlanta Hawks seasonticket holder who lived and died by his

Missouri Tigers and his Northwestern Wildcats.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join my wife Vivian and me, along with the more than 765,000 people of Georgia’s Second Congressional District in honoring the life and legacy of Benjamin A. Holden. We give thanks for a life lived with conviction, with generosity, and with an unshakable faith in the power of stories and of people to make this world better. On behalf of Georgia’s Second Congressional District, I extend my deepest sympathy to his wife, Melanie; to his daughter, Joy; to his entire family; and to the countless students and colleagues whose lives he forever changed. Their loss is immeasurable. But the truth he defended, the students he lifted, and the love he gave will go on speaking long after his pen has been laid down.

Well done to Ben, and I wish him eternal rest. We will help tell the rest of his story.

HONORING BOB QUICK

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 22, 2026

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Bob Quick, President and CEO of Commerce Lexington. After 25 years with Commerce Lexington and more than 37 years in the chamber of commerce/economic development profession, Bob is entering retirement.

Bob is quite well respected in Lexington’s business community, the entire city of Lexington, and all across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. His diplomatic approach helps bring people together to find solutions to issues facing the business community. Under his tenure, Commerce Lexington has experienced tremendous growth and improvement, including economic development tools, public policy programming and advocacy, talent attraction, strategic partnerships, marketing, and community and minority business development. Bob’s leadership resulted in several successful initiatives, including Greater Lexington’s Washington, D.C. Fly-In, the Commerce Lexington Foundation, the nine-county Regional Competitiveness and the Access Loan Program.

Commerce Lexington was named National Chamber of the Year by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives in 2016. This tremendous accomplishment was due to the leadership skills of Bob Quick and his excellent team at Commerce Lexington. Numerous other awards over the years have also recognized the accomplishments of Commerce Lexington and its effectiveness in championing businesses. Bob leaves a tremendous legacy.

Bob Quick is not only an excellent leader; he is a well-respected man of character and humility. He inspires others every day as he leads with a servant’s heart. I wish him well in his well-deserved retirement and I am honored

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

to recognize him before the U. S. House of Representatives.

RECOGNIZING THE
UNFORGETTABLE BIG BAND

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 22, 2026

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to recognize the Unforgettable Big Band's "Freedom is Not Free" celebration of our Nation's 250th Birthday.

The Unforgettable Big Band originally formed in 2000, in the York, Pennsylvania area, for the simple joy of playing music for the local community; however, its reputation quickly grew. Within a couple of years, the Lake Meade Homeowners Association invited the Band to perform at the annual charity fundraiser dance, marking the Band's first public appearance. Their overwhelming success turned the performance into a bi-annual tradition that occurs to this day. As word about the Band continued to spread, they began performing more frequently across the York area. Proceeds from performances for local charities and churches enabled the Band to invest in a sound system and stage lighting, further elevating their shows and performances. Many of the Band's early performances focused on World War II Veterans' reunion events—an important tradition the Band upholds as long as surviving Veterans are able to attend. In 2019, the Central Pennsylvania Music Hall of Fame was formed to recognize and support bands and music in Central Pennsylvania. In January 2020, the Unforgettable Big Band won "Best Ensemble," and followed that win with a "Cover-To-Cover" award in 2021, for the song "Fighter," which was written to benefit the Four Diamonds Foundation's support of families of children with cancer at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Children's Hospital.

On July 3, the Unforgettable Big Band will host "Freedom is Not Free," a World War II-themed USO-Canteen Swing Dance at York's Valencia Ballroom, to honor our Veterans—past and present—and our community's First Responders, and the unique role that York County has played in the history of our Nation. All profits from this event will benefit charitable local causes supporting Veterans and First Responders.

Mr. Speaker, I'm honored and privileged to recognize the Unforgettable Big Band and their "Freedom is Not Free" celebration of America's 250th Birthday. From the early days of the Continental Congress, to the York Plan that helped achieve the Allied victory, to end World War II, York County has made an enormous mark on American history, and on behalf of the Citizens of the 10th Congressional District, I commend the Unforgettable Big Band for its service to our Nation and Veterans, and am proud that this memorable and historic celebration will occur in our local community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE UNITED
STATES COMMISSION ON AN
OPEN SOCIETY WITH SECURITY
ACT OF 2026

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 22, 2026

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the United States Commission on an Open Society with Security Act of 2026, which would create a commission to investigate how we can maintain our democratic traditions while actively responding to the real and substantial threats posed by foreign and domestic terrorism.

The impetus for this bill was the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. Its importance grew after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. The tragic attacks endured by our Nation have led to a series of sweeping security measures that are deemed both necessary and temporary in the moment but create lasting security infrastructure that is difficult to dismantle and infringes on our open, democratic society.

We must acknowledge and accept that we have entered an era of constant internal and external threats, requiring ever-higher levels of security for our people and public spaces. What we thought would be a temporary infringement on our open society has turned into a permanent restriction on how our citizens interact with each other and our democratic institutions. Because emergencies typically dictate security decisions, essential discussions on the proper balance between security, individual rights and the freedoms enjoyed in an open society have been repeatedly deferred.

This bill would ensure that these long overdue discussions take place in a public forum with experts from across the spectrum. To date, security planning has been delegated almost exclusively to security, intelligence and military experts. Although their input is indispensable, they cannot be expected to consider matters outside of their expertise. To strike a better balance with our democratic traditions, we need to invite experts from diverse fields to the same table to work together. Therefore, the commission would be composed not only of security, intelligence and military experts, but also experts from such fields as business, architecture, technology, law, city planning, art, engineering, philosophy, history, sociology and psychology.

We have used commissions before to deeply investigate and address unprecedented challenges, such as the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (also known as the 9/11 Commission), the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (also known as the Silberman-Robb Commission) and the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (also known as the Kerner Commission).

The commission created by this bill would seek to avert a crisis in basic freedoms before their infringement becomes entrenched. We cannot allow security protocols to proliferate without informed civilian oversight and a thorough analysis of alternatives that might better safeguard freedom and commerce.

Furthermore, we have had decades to develop security strategies and technologies that

do not deprive our citizens of access to institutions and personal liberty. Thus far, we have either relied on imprecise, medieval approaches like crude barriers or on intrusive new technologies that treat privacy like a privilege instead of a right. We can, and must, do better.

As the home of the Federal government, the District of Columbia and its residents have suffered disproportionate infringement on public spaces, personal rights and freedoms in the name of security. Public spaces that serve as the heart of our local communities have become restricted zones characterized by a heavy security presence, with individuals liable to be reprimanded for walking on the wrong side of the street or marveling too long at the architecture. Barriers such as walls and fences are touted as essential security features while our citizens are left peering at their democracy from a distance.

Security is not only about reducing lives lost and costs. It is also about safeguarding the institutions, freedoms and values that anchor our country, not only for ourselves but for future generations. The social compact between government and the people should not be the result of a series of hostage negotiations. We must resume reasoned and deliberative decision-making, beginning with a high-level commission composed of experts from diverse disciplines charged with developing a new course that will protect both our people and our precious democratic institutions and traditions.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

RECOGNIZING CASA FOUNDER AND
CEO MARCIA "MARTY" SINK

HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 22, 2026

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Marcia "Marty" Sink, who has spent the last 38 years as a dedicated child advocate, during which time she has left a profound and lasting impact on children in the foster and court systems in New Hampshire.

Marty began her journey in child advocacy in her thirties when she and her husband, Russ, became foster parents. After witnessing the realities of the court system for minors in foster care and similar situations, Marty reached out to CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates for children. She learned there was no chapter of the program in New Hampshire and took on the challenge of founding the New Hampshire chapter of CASA in 1988. For 38 years, she has remained a dedicated advocate of children suffering from abuse and neglect across the state of New Hampshire.

CASA in New Hampshire started with just ten volunteers but has since grown into an organization of over 3,000 individuals. These advocates have supported over 13,000 children since the founding of the NH chapter. In addition to serving as the President of CASA, Marty has sat on numerous committees, including the New Hampshire Citizens' Commission on State Courts, the New Hampshire Commission on Adoption, and the New Hampshire Attorney General's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect. Throughout her nearly 40 years of service, she has received awards, including the National CASA Association Kappa