

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 24, 2026*

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, due to scheduled activities and planned obligations within the district, I had to miss votes. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 223, and YEA on Roll Call No. 224.

## HONORING THE VIETNAM AND KOREAN WAR VETERANS OF ILLINOIS

**HON. MIKE QUIGLEY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 24, 2026*

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Vietnam and Korean War veterans who are traveling to Washington, D.C. on June 24, 2026, with Honor Flight Chicago, a program that provides WWII, Vietnam, and Korean War veterans the opportunity to visit their memorials on The National Mall in Washington, D.C. These memorials were built to honor their courage and service to their country.

The American Veteran is one of our greatest treasures. The Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen who travel here on June 24, 2026, answered our Nation's call to service during one of its greatest times of need. From the Pacific Asian Theatre to the Korean Theater, these brave Americans risked life and limb, gave service, and sacrificed much, all while embodying what it is to be a hero. We owe them more gratitude than can ever be expressed.

I welcome these brave veterans to Washington and to their memorials. I include in the RECORD the names of these men and women for all to see, hear, and recognize, and I call on my colleagues to rise and join me in expressing gratitude:

Jerry W. Anderson, Leon E. Ausec, Marlowe Bacon, James E. Baker, Jr., John Balkema, Arthur T. Baltazar, Lawrence K. Barber, Donald Barnacle, James Barnacle, Joseph J. Barrett, Robert T. Barrett, Anthony Barrios, Walter Beckman, Sherlen Bell, Stephen D. Bennett, Thomas Berghthold, Ronald R. Bielke, Wayne R. Biasen, Gary F. Bliss, Rockne Bork, Stephan M. Brennan, Michael R. Brittain, Roy D. Brown, Michael J. Bunton, Thomas P. Bunton, Phillip Buoscio, Gary W. Butler, James S. Butridge, Daniel Buzinski, Bruce D. Callen, Robert Capuani, Donald L. Carroll, Victor Chacon, Jr., Richard D. Clayton, John W. Cliffe, William Collins, William H. Crotty, Walter F. Cudecki, Henry L. Dean, Merle J. Denker, James J. Dennis, Jr., William T. Diaz, Michael O. Downing, Willie Ellis, Jr., George Engelthaler, John Evans, Philip M. Foss, Ernesto Garcia, Vanessa Gibbs, Robert W. Glines, Thomas C. Greenan, Richard Grenda, Dennis Habbey, Albert R. Harris, Claude C. Harris, David W. Heath, Terry D. Henderson, Robert J. Hluchy, David L. Hoffman, Herbert E. Hogberg, Jr., Richard G. Howard, Joseph E. Idaszak, Julius H. Igyarto, Jeffery A. Jordan, Dennis C. Kane, Michael R. Kearney, Donald T. Keegan, Lowell E. Killion, Francis M. Kirkpatrick, Dale L. Klinefelter, Charles H. Kock, John Kranz, Anthony W. Kubon,

Russell Leaich, Charles L. Lenzini, Richard Lisy, Kalman J. Mager, Richard Malvestuto, Charles L. Meyer, David Miller, Rex A. Miller, David E. Mills, Virgil M. Mitchell, Richard Mix, Jr., Andrew Nixon, Jr., Dennis J. Nowicki, Cesar A. Pantoja, John P. Parrish, John J. Pawelski, Lawrence A. Pebelske, Frederick T. Pennix, Jr., Edward J. Plane, Mitchell S. Pierce, Robert Pruter, John M. Puskar, Gene Sbalchiero, Joseph C. Schmidt, Vivin F. Schultz, George W. Smuckel, Robert Tamillo, John D. Totemeier, John W. Tracy, Sidney M. Victor, John C. Volkmann, Marjorie R. Walton, James T. Watts, Paul White, Warren W. Wiggemhauser, Michael C. Williams, Eugene W. Wright, John E. Yaun, John O. Young, Charles R. Zelinski, and Francis L. Zmuda.

## HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF MR. MICHAEL CORTEZ

**HON. RICHARD MCCORMICK**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 24, 2026*

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Michael "Phoenix" Cortez.

Michael's childhood during the Great Depression instilled him with humility and determination, eager to explore the world and take on life's challenges. Michael served in both the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps as a bilingual service member, then he went on to be a reservist in the U.S. Air Force. After the conclusion of Michael's active service, he demonstrated his lasting commitment to the public sector through his work as a civilian employee in the Department of Defense. Over the course of his career, Michael participated in highly classified missions and collaborated on advanced aircraft systems. He was able to travel the globe, broadening his horizons across several cultures and lifestyles and engaging in top secret defense programs. Michael's enduring dedication to his country was characterized by unwavering loyalty and selfless devotion.

My prayers are with the Cortez family as they go through this difficult time. In addition to being an incredible man, Michael was a loving husband to his wife, Sharon, and a devoted father to his five children, Michael, Michele, Sherry, Marnie, and Blayne. He is also survived by four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Service requires sacrifice, and military families pay that price in the time we spend away from our families, while defending our great Nation.

May God watch over Michael, Michele, Sherry, Marnie, and Blayne, and Sharon, who stood by Michael throughout his career.

## HONORING THE MEMORY OF MR. WILLIAM R. BERKLEY

**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 24, 2026*

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a great business and charitable leader from New England, Mr. William R. Berkley, to celebrate his life and extraordinary achievements. Tragically, Bill died suddenly from a heart attack.

His accomplishments in business are undeniable but somewhat beneath the radar as he eschewed the spotlight unless it was to further some greater purpose. His success in business allowed him to "pay it forward" in many ways, including board leadership of several educational and charitable organizations and generous giving through a family foundation, as described more fully below. He is a strong believer in the American Dream and wants to foster it for others as best he can. He recently shared his private collection of rare documents in an exhibit entitled "The Declaration of Independence: Long Trail to Liberty" at NYU's Grey Art Museum and was in the process of creating a museum in New York City to celebrate American history and opportunity.

Bill founded his company W.R. Berkley Corporation nearly 60 years ago. Since that time, the company, which is headquartered in Greenwich, Connecticut, has grown from a small investment management firm into one of the largest commercial lines property and casualty (P&C) insurers in the United States. Comprising nearly sixty specialty insurance businesses and employing over 8500 people worldwide, the company is a Fortune 500 company and a member of the S&P 500 with gross written premiums exceeding \$10 billion.

The company was largely a reflection of Bill, as he was affectionately known. The company's driving purpose is to provide customers "peace of mind" and its core tenet is striving "to do the right thing." Bill strongly believed that the integration of service, integrity and fairness in the company culture was central to building trust and loyalty among the company's customers, partners, and employees.

This strong sense of purpose, determination and drive was forged in Bill's childhood largely out of necessity in response to a tragic event. When Bill was eleven, his father was killed when the company plane he was on crashed. Determined not to burden his mother and to help out financially, Bill started selling Austin biscuits first in his apartment complex and later to the owner of the local grocery store. Impressed by the young man, the store owner soon offered Bill a job. As Bill recalled the experience, "it was there that I learned to work hard and longer than anyone else in the market. I wanted to learn all I could about the business and soon I was giving the owner advice that would improve his operations. Mentally, I pretended I owned the store, which made me take responsibility for all I did."

Bill also started a paper route and learned how to invest the proceeds from these jobs from a neighbor who was a stockbroker. Still, he did not have enough money to afford to go to the University of Pennsylvania, his first choice. Fortunately, he was offered a full scholarship to attend NYU, which he quickly accepted. Bill often referred to that as his "big break." Bill excelled there, graduating in three years with a double major in statistics and finance.

He subsequently received an MBA from Harvard Business School, which he largely paid for with the proceeds of selling a large paper route he had started while at NYU. At Harvard, Bill once again exhibited his extraordinary business acumen, starting and running a \$2 million investment fund out of an apartment with a classmate, Paul Dean. Berkley, Dean & Company quickly grew to managing \$10 million in assets.

At this point, another event helped shape Bill's world view and business ethos. While at

Harvard, he had interned and later worked full time at Fidelity Management Research Company until he completed his MBA. While he was offered a permanent position at Fidelity upon graduation, he knew he wanted to start his own business. Ned Johnson, the then chair at Fidelity, initially offered a \$25,000 investment in Bill's new company. However, Fidelity's advisors effectively nixed the new investment. This could have crushed Bill's dream of starting a new business. Fortunately, Ned Johnson decided to keep his commitment and gave Bill the money as a consulting fee. Bill later said, "This was a huge lesson for me. From then on, I've known the importance of keeping your word and honoring your commitments."

Bill spent the next 45 years building, leading, and growing W.R. Berkley into a leading provider of P&C insurance globally. Ten years ago, he relinquished the reins as CEO to his son Rob Berkley, but he remained the Executive Chairman of the company until his death and the company still bears his imprint and influence. Even after turning 80, Bill continued to go in early every morning because "I just find it exciting" and "I want to improve the company every day."

Rob says that his father was "always encouraging his colleagues to think outside of the box and not to accept the status quo."

And Bill also never lost sight from where he came and the forces and lessons that led to his success, looking to "pay it forward" often. Bill and his wife Marjorie, through their family foundation, have focused their philanthropy on three primary areas: education, health and environmental issues. For example, the family's foundation recently gave a "transformative gift" to expand the Georgetown University School of Nursing, a natural intersection of their interest in education and health, designed to help address the Nation's shortage of nurses.

Bill also gave back with his time by serving on numerous corporate boards, providing leadership, advice, and support. He served as Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Georgetown University, where he helped create the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, devoted to fostering inter-religious dialogue with a goal of improving global cultural understanding. He also was a former Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the University of Connecticut and former Chairman of Achievement First, a group of charter schools operating in the Northeast, serving over 15,000 inner-city children. And he was an Emeritus member of the Board of Directors of the National Parks Conservation Association, after serving on the Board for many years.

But most of all, Bill gave back to NYU—the school he credited with providing him the opportunity for a free education that supported his success. Most notably, he had recently retired as Chairman of the New York University Board of Trustees. He also served in several other board leadership capacities at NYU over three decades, including at the NYU Stern School of Business and the Langone Medical Center. Marjorie and him made several large gifts to the school's Leonard N. Stern School of Business. These efforts were focused on expanding access to education through scholarships, reflecting their belief in helping talented young people achieve their potential. "I see education as giving you the framework to

understand how everything works," Bill explained, "It doesn't solve your problems, but it gives you something to build on. When combined with hard work and perseverance through challenging times, success is usually the outcome."

Over the years, Bill received many awards for his business, civic and philanthropic activities, including most recently the Horatio Alger Award in 2024 "bestowed upon exceptional leaders who have triumphed over adversity to achieve greatness."

Bill exemplified how to lead a life guided by deep, constant purpose and fueled by optimism, determination, and industry. He built a company that is highly respected and an established leader in the insurance industry, as well as changed lives by providing charitable leadership and compassionate giving.

Mr. Speaker, I honor Bill's legacy and recognize his achievements as a global entrepreneur, corporate and charitable leader, and philanthropist. I am deeply saddened by his sudden passing and offer my sympathies to his wife Marjorie and his children and grandchildren.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. JOSH BRECHEEN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

Mr. BRECHEEN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained due to travel and was unable to cast my vote on Roll Call No. 224. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 224.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. GLENN THOMPSON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, due to an unforeseen absence on account of illness, I was unable to vote yesterday, June 23, 2026. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 223, and YEA on Roll Call No. 224.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, June 23, 2026, I missed votes due to a personal matter. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 223, and YEA on Roll Call No. 224.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. SALUD O. CARBAJAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Speaker, on June 23, 2026, due to unforeseen aircraft mechanical

issues that delayed my arrival to Washington, D.C., I missed the following votes. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 224, H.R. 6644, and YEA on Roll Call No. 223, S. 629.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. KWEISI MFUME

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, I missed votes due to my obligations given that it was Maryland's primary election day. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 223 and YEA on Roll Call No. 224.

Final passage of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act was originally set for the second vote series on Wednesday, June 24, the day after primary elections in Maryland, New York, and Utah. The Speaker chose to move it up to Tuesday evening's suspension calendar instead, at a time when he knew Members from three states would be home with their constituents on Election Day.

The Speaker moved this vote because his own conference was in open rebellion over the schedule he had set for Wednesday. The result was that more than 40 Members, from both parties and from all three states holding primaries, were not recorded on final passage of a housing bill the House had already approved once before by a vote of 396 to 13. The Speaker put his internal conference politics ahead of his obligation to give every Member a fair opportunity to vote, and ahead of the voters in three states who deserved their Representatives' full attention on Election Day. He owes this institution, and the people of Maryland, New York, and Utah, better than that.

I was proud to vote yes for the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act when it passed this House earlier this year. This is a good, bipartisan bill that will increase the supply of affordable housing at a moment when families in Baltimore and across Maryland's 7th District are being priced out of homeownership, and too often, out of stable housing altogether. It expands access to modern manufactured housing, lets localities use Community Development Block Grant funds to build new housing, and protects veterans receiving VA disability payments from losing housing assistance they have earned. These are the common-sense solutions this Congress should be delivering more often.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. JOHN NOBLE, JR.

### HON. CLAY HIGGINS

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise to memorialize the life of Dr. John Noble, Jr., an accomplished doctor, community leader, and friend.

Dr. Noble led a remarkable career as an orthopaedic surgeon. He earned his undergraduate degree at McNeese State University and his Medical Degree from LSU Medical