

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF STEVE SHEETZ

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, with a heavy heart, I rise to honor the life and career of Steve Sheetz, an entrepreneur, a businessman, a philanthropist, and a personal long-time friend, who passed away this past Sunday in his hometown of Altoona.

The Sheetz name is familiar to many as one of the largest family-owned and operated convenience store chains in the United States, with more than 800 stores across seven states.

As the company's President and CEO and Chairman of the Board, Steve provided an inspired leadership that was essential for expansion and sustained success.

For all of his achievements, Steve was truly a man without pretenses. A lifelong resident of Altoona, he never lost sight of where he was from and where he was going.

Throughout the years, numerous Blair County charities and non-profit organizations benefited from the philanthropy of Steve and his loving wife, Nancy.

In particular, the couple took great pride in their gift to Penn State Altoona that created an incredible entrepreneurial center and endowed The Sheetz Fellows program.

Steve crafted a distinguished legacy as a business leader, as a community volunteer, and as a philanthropist that will forever serve as a source of inspiration and blueprint for all who share his values and ideals.

As we pause to remember Steve, we also keep his wife Nancy and all of his family in our prayers.

Steve was truly a selfless man, and his legacy will continue to live on throughout Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, the seven states where Sheetz stores serve, and all of America. The legacy of Steve Sheetz will always live on.

RECOGNIZING THE SUPPORTERS OF THE 2025 CONGRESSIONAL APP CHALLENGE IN PUERTO RICO

HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend the dedicated judges and STEM leaders who supported the 2025 Congressional App Challenge in Puerto Rico, a national coding and computer science competition designed to inspire middle school and high school students to explore technology, innovation, and problem-solving.

The Congressional App Challenge provides students in grades 6 through 12 with a unique

opportunity to develop original applications that address real-world challenges through coding, creativity, and critical thinking. This year's competition in Puerto Rico reached a historic milestone, with a record total of 20 applications submitted and more than 30 students participating from 16 municipalities across the island, reflecting the growing interest in STEM education in Puerto Rico.

Behind the success of this program stands an exceptional group of judges, professionals, and leaders in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, who generously volunteered their time and expertise. They carefully reviewed student submissions, evaluating technical execution and creativity, and offered thoughtful feedback grounded in industry knowledge and academic rigor—ensuring a fair, thorough, and meaningful evaluation for every participant. Beyond judging, these STEM leaders demonstrated a deep commitment to mentorship and youth development. By exposing students to professional pathways in technology and innovation, they reinforced the message that Puerto Rico's young people can compete, create, and excel at the highest levels—helping to cultivate the next generation of engineers, innovators, and problem-solvers who will shape Puerto Rico's future and contribute to our technological advancement. On behalf of the people of Puerto Rico, I extend my sincere gratitude to the judges and STEM leaders who offered their perspectives and expertise in the industry in our 2025 Congressional App Challenge: aerospace engineer and CDS Manager at Pratt & Whitney Puerto Rico Inc., Ms. Shirley Skerrett Ramírez; Executive Director of Grupo Guayacán, Ms. Laura Cantero, Founder of Terminal34 and 2019 CAC winner of Puerto Rico, Mr. Bryan García; Former Executive Director of the office of Puerto Rico Innovation and Technology Services (PRITS), Mr. Antonio Ramos Guardiola; and former Chief Information Officer and Advisor to the Governor, Mr. Giancarlo González Ascar.

Their service reflects the very standards we hold our student innovators to: analytical rigor, ethical judgment, creativity, collaboration, and a commitment to applying technology to solve real-world challenges.

RECOGNIZING THE SAVANNAH CHRISTMAS MARKET

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate a great seasonal tradition in our home state of Georgia: the Savannah Christmas Market at Plant Riverside District.

This year, it was ranked as one of the top holiday markets in the entire country by USA Today, drawing visitors from all over and spotlighting the rich culture and community spirit of Savannah.

The market transforms historic River Street into a festive destination filled with local vendors, holiday entertainment, seasonal food and drink, and family-friendly activities. It brings together residents and visitors alike and highlights the unique charm that makes Savannah such a special place. This recognition not only celebrates the creativity of our local artisans and businesses but also brings positive economic impact to the region during the holiday season.

I encourage everyone to experience this celebrated market while it is open, and I thank all who worked to make it one of the best in the Nation.

HONORING JESSIE FRANK

HON. CHUCK EDWARDS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the exceptional service of Jessie Frank, whose six years of dedicated public service to the State of North Carolina and to the United States Congress reflect the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and commitment to the public good.

Jessie Frank began her career in public service in the North Carolina Senate, where she served for three years as an intern and later as a legislative assistant. From the outset, Jessie distinguished herself through a strong work ethic, a keen understanding of policy and procedure, and a genuine respect for the legislative process. She approached every task—whether large or small—with diligence and care, earning the confidence of legislators, staff, and constituents alike. These early years in the state legislature laid a strong foundation for a career defined by competence, discretion, and thoughtful engagement in public affairs.

Following her service in the North Carolina Senate and her graduation from the University of North Carolina Asheville, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a major in Political Science, Jessie continued her commitment to the people of our state by joining my congressional office full-time. Over the next three years, she served with distinction as Scheduler and later as Deputy Chief of Staff. In these roles, Jessie became a central pillar of our office's daily operations. She managed extraordinarily complex schedules, balanced competing priorities, and ensured that our work advanced efficiently and responsibly on behalf of North Carolina's 11th Congressional District.

Beyond her administrative excellence, Jessie proved herself to be politically savvy, strategically minded, and deeply perceptive about the dynamics of both Congress and our district. She possessed a rare ability to understand not only the mechanics of policy and politics, but also the human and political implications behind every decision. Over time, I

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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.

came to rely heavily on her judgment and counsel. On many occasions, Jessie offered advice that challenged my initial instincts, and in those moments, her insight, clarity, and confidence led me to trust her perspective. Time and again, that trust was well placed. Her guidance was thoughtful, grounded, and motivated solely by what was best for the office, the district, and the people we serve.

Jessie's leadership was especially evident in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, which struck North Carolina's 11th District on September 27, 2024. In the face of widespread devastation and urgent need, she played a critical role in our response and recovery efforts. Jessie worked tirelessly to coordinate with local officials, emergency responders, and community leaders throughout Western North Carolina, while maintaining close communication with our Washington, D.C., team and relevant federal agencies.

Her ability to operate seamlessly across levels of government ensured that resources and assistance were directed where they were most urgently needed. During an extraordinarily challenging time, her calm demeanor, organizational skill, and unwavering dedication helped our office serve constituents with compassion and effectiveness.

Throughout her service, Jessie Frank consistently demonstrated the qualities that define exceptional public servants: intelligence, discretion, political awareness, and a deep sense of responsibility to those she served. Her contributions strengthened our legislative work, enhanced constituent services, and improved our office's overall effectiveness. She earned the respect of colleagues on both sides of the aisle and the trust of community leaders across our district.

On a personal note, Jessie has been a public servant every Member hopes to have by their side—steadfast, selfless, and wholly committed to serving others.

In moments of pressure and calm, she brought clarity, kindness, and an unwavering sense of responsibility. Her service was not simply professional; it was deeply human. I am grateful beyond words for her loyalty, her friendship, and the heart she poured into this office. Her imprint on our work and on the people we serve will endure long after her time here.

Jessie Frank will always be part of the story of this office, as well as my political career. I am profoundly thankful for the years we had the privilege to serve together.

TRIBUTE TO WOODROW “WOODY” HARPOLE

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend Woodrow “Woody” Harpole, who celebrated his 80th birthday on December 21, 2025. Woody has been a respected business leader, community volunteer, and trusted friend to my hometown of Corona, California, for nearly five decades.

Woody was born in Mississippi on December 21, 1945. He served his country as a soldier in the United States Army, including a year in combat in Vietnam during the height of

the war. He later moved to California, where he established himself as a knowledgeable and dedicated professional in the commercial and industrial real estate sector. So much so, in fact, that I hired him nearly 40 years ago to work at Calvert Real Properties, the small business that I owned and operated before being elected to Congress.

Throughout his professional career, Woody has always made time for community service. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he was an active and influential member of the Corona Jaycees, a dynamic service and leadership organization that shaped many of the city's rising young professionals. Woody also became a dedicated member of the Corona Rotary Club, serving as Club President in 2006 to 2007. His leadership helped advance Rotary's mission of “Service Above Self,” and he played a vital role in supporting the club's signature events, including the well-loved Lobsterfest fundraiser, which has generated substantial support for local nonprofit organizations.

Personally, I will always value his friendship, sense of humor, loyalty, and am deeply grateful for his many contributions to our community. On this special occasion, I wish Woody a Happy Birthday and the very best in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVICE OF BETTY BUCHER

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the dedicated public service of Betty Bucher, who recently concluded a 16-year tenure as a member of Littlestown Borough Council in Adams County.

During the December meeting of the borough council, Betty was honored for the steady and reliable leadership that she provided to the community.

Serving in the role of Council Vice President, Betty was presented a proclamation that highlighted her service on the borough's union and police contract committee and a design committee that facilitated the creation of a mural for the new borough building.

Betty's servant leadership in the borough stretches from the mid-1960s, when she was instrumental in the creation and early operation of the former Littlestown Swimming Pool.

With professionalism and integrity over the last 16 years, Betty has most certainly personified the ideals of representative governance.

On behalf of constituents throughout Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank Betty for her faithful public service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, due to airline schedules, my flight was delayed.

Had I been present, I would have voted present on Roll Call No. 1.

RECOGNIZING PASCO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR RECEIVING THE AUDREY NELSON AWARD

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding work of Pasco County Community Development and to congratulate the County on receiving the prestigious Audrey Nelson Award, a national honor that recognizes exemplary achievement in serving communities and low- and moderate-income residents through the innovative use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership funds.

The Audrey Nelson Award is bestowed annually on only a limited number of projects nationwide. This year, just seven projects were selected, making Pasco County's achievement especially noteworthy. Pasco County is proud to once again be among this distinguished group, with recognition for its Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center (UCC)—the first Behavioral Health UCC in the State of Florida. This innovative project was developed to address a critical gap in access to urgent mental health and substance use services for vulnerable populations. The Behavioral Health UCC provides immediate, voluntary access to outpatient behavioral health care with extended hours, offering a vital alternative to emergency departments. It also serves as an essential access point for individuals transitioning from high-risk settings such as jails and inpatient facilities, helping ensure continuity of care at moments when intervention is most needed. The impact of this program has been extraordinary. While the UCC initially anticipated serving 450 individuals during its first year of operation—from February 5, 2025, through September 30, 2025—it ultimately provided services to 1,274 adults, exceeding expectations by 183 percent. Approximately 94 percent of those served were successfully diverted from more acute inpatient settings. Additionally, 71 percent of follow-up appointments were attended, a remarkable improvement from the 34 percent follow-up rate that existed prior to the establishment of the UCC for individuals referred from critical transition points.

This success was made possible in part through a strategic investment of \$1,469,927 in CDBG funds, which supported essential infrastructure and renovation needs at the facility. These funds not only enabled the UCC to open its doors but also helped leverage additional operational funding to sustain services in the years ahead. The Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center now stands as a model for how targeted federal resources can be used to drive innovation, improve outcomes, and strengthen communities.

I commend Pasco County Community Development and all partners involved for their leadership, vision, and commitment to serving those most in need. Their work exemplifies the purpose of community development programs and demonstrates how thoughtful investment