

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE OF MINNESOTA STATE REPRESENTATIVE KAREN CLARK

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 2026

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of an extraordinary public servant, pioneering legislator, and tireless champion for equality, former Minnesota State Representative Karen Clark. Karen passed away on June 30, 2026, at the age of 80, following a brief illness. She is survived by her wife, Jacquelyn Zita, and by countless friends, former colleagues, and Minnesotans whose lives were changed by her decades of service and advocacy.

First elected to the Minnesota Legislature in 1980, Representative Clark went on to represent south Minneapolis for 19 terms. At the time of her election, she became the first openly lesbian state legislator in the United States, helping to pave the way for generations of LGBTQ+ leaders to follow. Even before entering public office, Karen had dedicated her life to serving others as a public health nurse and OB/GYN nurse practitioner with the Hennepin County Health Department. She earned her nursing degree from the College of St. Teresa in Winona and later earned a Master of Public Administration from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Throughout her career, Karen believed that public service was about expanding opportunity, protecting dignity, and ensuring that every Minnesotan had the chance to thrive. Karen worked tirelessly to strengthen protections and opportunities for LGBTQ+ Minnesotans, but her sense of justice was expansive. She championed environmental justice, affordable housing, economic opportunity, public health, and strived to lift marginalized voices from all walks of life. Her trailblazing leadership earned national recognition in 2013, when President Barack Obama honored her as a Harvey Milk Champion of Change in recognition of her decades of advocacy and public service.

It was an honor to call Karen Clark a friend, a colleague, and a mentor. When I was first elected to the Minnesota House, our offices were next door to each other, and we shared a fantastic Legislative Assistant. Together, we worked to pass landmark amendments adding sexual orientation protections to Minnesota's Human Rights Act, and in 2013 she authored the legislation that made Minnesota the 12th state to legalize marriage equality.

Karen was a constant, vocal champion for social justice, economic opportunity, environmental sustainability, and human rights—and she carried that fight with openness, kindness, and courage for nearly four decades in office, always working hardest for the people who needed it most.

Karen has been an inspiration to me, and her legacy lives on in every Minnesotan whose life she made freer and safer.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating the remarkable life, dedicated service, and enduring legacy of former Minnesota legislator Karen Clark.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF MAJOR BRAD "SLATE" HOVEY

HON. ZACHARY NUNN

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 2026

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Major Brad "Slate" Hovey of Adel, Iowa, who was killed on June 15, 2026, when his B-52 crashed on takeoff during a test flight at Edwards Air Force Base in California. Seven fellow airmen were lost with him. Brad was 35 years old. His family says his life was woven with threads of bravery, integrity, and service—inspiring all who knew and loved him.

Brad was born on March 5, 1991, in Algona, Iowa, and came to Adel in 2001. At Adel Desoto Minburn High School, he did it all—football, track, choir, band, mock trial, drama—and with Adel Troop 152, he earned Scouting's highest rank of Eagle, fixing with him a love of the outdoors he never lost. Adel is also where Brad met his wife, Megan, in the ninth-grade band. They married in 2012.

Brad's love of airplanes led him to Iowa State University, where he studied aerospace engineering and served in the Air Force ROTC with Detachment 250. After graduating in 2014, he was commissioned by his own father-in-law—a fitting start for a man who never drew a line between family and service.

He earned his wings in 2015. Through 12 years of service, Brad served as a B-52 and B-1 bomber pilot, completing three combat deployments and flying over 200 combat hours across 20 combat sorties.

In 2022, Brad and Megan moved their family to Edwards, where he was selected for the United States Air Force Test Pilot School with Class 23A—one of the most demanding schools in American aviation. With the 419th Flight Test Squadron, Brad flew B-52 and B-1 test missions to ensure the next crew in the cockpit had safe, lethal and combat-ready equipment ready to fly in defense of our Nation. Over the course of his career, Brad logged more than 1,890 total flight hours and over 350 sorties across 29 distinct airframes.

Mr. Speaker, as a 20-year Air Force Veteran, I know I speak for my fellow airmen when I say that the flight test is some of the hardest and least recognized work we do. On the morning of June 15, 2026, Brad took a sixty-year-old bomber into the sky with a new radar on it so the crews who fly it next would know it worked. He did that without fanfare and with mission first.

He is survived by his wife, Megan, and their two children; his parents, Kent and Sondra; and his brothers, Lane and Kyle, who will remember him for his love of the stars and the

sky, his devoted service to his Nation, and, most of all, the way he loved them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Major Brad "Slate" Hovey—a devoted husband, a loving father, a distinguished Airman, and a proud Iowan—and in keeping his family and the families of all eight Americans lost that day in our prayers. Iowa will remember their sacrifice.

COMMENDING AND HONORING DR. EDWARD J. BRAYNON, JR.

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 2026

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, to commend and honor Dr. Edward J. Braynon, Jr., a dedicated community-servant, civil rights activist, role model, and mentor, and I include in the RECORD the following proclamation in his honor:

Whereas, Dr. Braynon has been a loyal and faithful member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. for sixty-eight years and has served as Basileus of Sigma Alpha Chapter, Florida's State Representative, First Vice Seventh Representative (Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Mississippi), Seventh District Representative, First Vice Grand Basileus, and Grand Basileus;

Whereas, Dr. Braynon's leadership, vision and integrity have played a vital role in building, binding and strengthening Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and Sigma Alpha Chapter. He is credited with remaining steadfast to enhancing and promoting the organization's principles of Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance and Uplift;

Whereas, Dr. Braynon as Grand Basileus of Sigma Alpha Chapter played a key role in a massive "Get Out The Vote," initiative where Omega chapters around the country were actively involved and helped win Jimmy Carter the presidency with the largest black vote in history and landed Dr. Braynon an invitation along with several other Black leaders to a "White House Luncheon";

Whereas, Dr. Braynon touched and impacted the lives of countless young men as a mentor with the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project and won the admiration and respect of our community for his activism and community service;

Whereas, Dr. Braynon used his dental skills to meet the needs of our community, served as a member of the Dental Society providing leadership and guidance to new generations of dental professionals, and was a member of numerous civic and community organizations dedicated to the betterment of the quality of life for South Floridians; and

Now, therefore, be it resolved that I, Frederica S. Wilson, a member of the United States House of Representatives, representing the 24th Congressional District of Florida am proud to recognize and honor Dr. Edward J. Braynon, Jr. for his unwavering commitment to Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., community service, our youth, and his profession.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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

CONDEMNING THE VIOLENT
REPRESSION OF MUSICIANS

HON. LLOYD DOGGETT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 2026

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to condemn the violent repression of musicians. As Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Musicians' Caucus, I express my profound concern regarding reports that Iranian singer Parastoo Ahmadi has been sentenced by that nation to public flogging for appearing in a musical performance without adhering to government-imposed dress requirements. Reports indicate that her offense was not violence, incitement, but rather the act of artistic expression itself.

The Congressional Musicians' Caucus was established to recognize the vital role that music and musicians play in enriching societies, strengthening cultures, and advancing mutual understanding. While members of Congress may hold differing views on many international issues, we can stand together in support of the principle that creators should never face physical punishment, imprisonment, or violence for creating and sharing their artistic works.

History offers far too many examples of governments seeking to silence musicians, songwriters, composers, and poets whose voices resonate with the public. Authoritarian regimes have often viewed artists as threats precisely because music and creative expression have the unique power to inspire, unite, and give voice to the aspirations of ordinary people. Efforts to intimidate artists through violence are not merely attacks on individuals; they are attacks on cultural expression itself.

From the persecution of Chilean songwriter Victor Jara during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, to the denunciation and censorship of Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich under the Soviet regime, to the repeated imprisonment and violent targeting of Nigerian musician Fela Kuti for criticizing military rule, history demonstrates that the suppression of artistic voices is often an early warning sign of broader assaults on fundamental freedoms. The international community should never become indifferent to such actions.

I recognize and appreciate the efforts of organizations such as the National Music Council of the United States, the Songwriters Guild of America, the Society of Composers & Lyricists, and others that continue to draw attention to cases in which musicians and music creators face persecution because of their artistic work. Bringing these incidents into public view helps ensure that such abuses do not occur unnoticed.

I affirm my support for the freedom of artistic expression and my opposition to the use of violence, intimidation, or physical punishment against musicians, composers, songwriters, poets, and other creators. Regardless of nationality, ideology, religion, or political viewpoint, artists should be free to create and perform without fear of physical retaliation from their governments.

I stand in solidarity with artists everywhere whose non-violent, creative voices are threatened by repression and in the hope that cultural expression may continue to serve as a bridge between peoples rather than a basis for punishment.

RECOGNIZING PAUL LAU'S RETIREMENT FROM SMUD FOLLOWING A 44-YEAR LONG CAREER OF SERVICE

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 2026

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Paul Lau on his retirement as Chief Executive Officer and General Manager of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), capping an extraordinary 44 years of service to our region.

Paul's remarkable journey at SMUD began in 1982 as an electrical engineering student at California State University, Sacramento. After graduating in 1984, he returned as an assistant electrical engineer and steadily rose through the organization. He joined SMUD's executive leadership team in 2008, served as chief grid strategy and operations officer, and was appointed CEO and General Manager in October 2020. Paul never saw SMUD as simply a utility. He saw the way it could improve people's lives. He approached every challenge with curiosity, humility, and a profound commitment to the community.

Under Paul's leadership, SMUD became a national model for innovation, reliability, affordability, and community partnership. Its rates remain among the lowest in California, saving customers more than \$1.9 billion each year. Paul also led SMUD to become the first publicly owned utility in California to join the Western Energy Imbalance Market, an initiative saving customers more than \$350 million. Long before many utilities were seriously confronting the challenges of decarbonization, grid resilience, and electrification, Paul demonstrated how those goals could be achieved without losing sight of reliability or affordability. Through initiatives like the Neighborhood Electrification Program, he also worked to ensure that underserved communities could share fully in the benefits of our clean energy future.

Paul's service extended far beyond SMUD. He helped strengthen the Sacramento region through his work with the Greater Sacramento Economic Council, Valley Vision, and the Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce. He also shaped the national energy conversation through his service with the Smart Electric Power Alliance, the American Public Power Association, and the Large Public Power Council.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring Paul Lau for his 44 years of dedicated service to SMUD, his visionary leadership in advancing clean energy and economic opportunity across the Sacramento region, and his lifelong commitment to the 1.5 million people SMUD proudly serves.

HONORING AND PAYING TRIBUTE
TO THALES CARLTON ROBBINS

HON. MATT VAN EPPS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 2026

Mr. VAN EPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to a remarkable hero from Houston County, Tennessee, who answered the call of duty during a critical chapter

in our Nation's history. As the years pass, the profound debt we owe to our Korean War veterans only grows.

Of the 6.8 million Americans who served during the Korean War era, fewer than 300,000 remain with us today. This generation, now largely in their nineties, represents a rapidly dwindling connection to a pivotal struggle for global freedom. It is our sacred obligation to ensure their stories are told and their sacrifices are never forgotten.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the extraordinary service, sacrifice, and lifelong dedication of Thales Carlton Robbins. He represents the very best of Tennessee's Volunteer Spirit and the enduring resilience of the American servicemember.

Born and raised in Houston County, Mr. Thales Carlton Robbins, known warmly throughout his community as "Carlton," graduated from Erin High School in 1948 before answering the call to serve. He enlisted in the United States Navy on December 27, 1950, and honorably served until October 20, 1954, as a U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman (HM-8404-77).

During the Korean War, Mr. Robbins served with the 7th Marine Regiment in 1952 and the 1st Marine Division in 1953. Navy Corpsmen assigned to Marine combat units earned a legendary reputation for courage, repeatedly risking their own lives to render lifesaving medical care to wounded Marines under direct enemy fire. Mr. Robbins upheld that proud tradition through his service in some of the most demanding combat conditions of the Korean War.

For his faithful and courageous service, Mr. Robbins received the Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Service Medal with two bronze service stars, United Nations Service Medal, Korean Presidential Unit Citation, and the Fleet Marine Force Insignia. His distinguished service brought great credit upon himself, the United States Navy, and the people of Houston County. Mr. Robbins currently resides in the Clarksville-Montgomery County area.

Please join me in offering our deepest gratitude for his faithful service and proudly preserve their legacies in the United States Congress.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL
CARIBBEAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 2026

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Caribbean-Americans to South Florida and the Nation through the arts and humanities, business, science and engineering, activism, and military leadership as we celebrate the 8th anniversary of National Caribbean-American Heritage Month. I include in the RECORD the following proclamation in honor of National Caribbean Heritage Month:

Whereas, the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, has issued the annual proclamation in 2013 recognizing June as National Caribbean-American Heritage Month;

Whereas, National Caribbean-American Heritage Month recognizes the significance