

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING JASON POTTER

HON. NICK LaLOTA

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mr. LaLOTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Jason Lynn Potter for his 25 years of outstanding Navy Active Duty and Federal service, including this past year serving as both the Principal Civilian Deputy and Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development, and Acquisition). Prior to this appointment, he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Ship Programs, where he was responsible for the executive oversight of all naval shipbuilding programs, major ship conversions, and the modernization and disposal of in-service ships.

Mr. Potter began his distinguished career with the Department of the Navy as a naval officer. His assignments included serving as Navigator aboard USS *Cape St. George* (CG 71), Communications and Repair Officer aboard USS *Rushmore* (LSD 47), naval liaison to the Joint Special Operations Task Force—Philippines, and analyst on the 2010 Navy Quadrennial Defense Review Integration Group.

Following his military service, Mr. Potter distinguished himself as a congressional professional staff member in the United States Senate for 10 years, serving on both the Appropriations and Armed Services Committees. In these roles, his responsibilities included oversight of Navy shipbuilding; Navy and Air Force procurement accounts; various research, development, test, and evaluation accounts; Defense Production Act purchases; National Defense Stockpile transactions; and defense acquisition law.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in expressing our deepest gratitude to Mr. Jason Lynn Potter for his exemplary dedication to our Nation as he retires from Federal service. Throughout his twenty-five years of public service, both in uniform and as a civilian leader, Mr. Potter has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the defense of our Nation and the safety of our service members. His profound patriotism, stellar leadership, and tireless work ethic leave an enduring legacy that has strengthened our National Defense.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN H. RUTHERFORD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I missed the following Roll Call vote. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 284.

HONORING TALMADGE WILLARD FAIR

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, from the 24th District of the great state of Florida, I rise today to recognize and honor Mr. Talmadge Willard Fair, a pioneer, visionary, and community activist who has provided distinguished and unprecedented leadership as President and CEO of the Urban League of Greater Miami for over fifty years.

Mr. Fair became the youngest Executive Director in the history of the Urban League in 1963. Under his leadership, the Urban League of Greater Miami transformed the climate of exclusion in South Florida in the 1960's and ushered in a new era of inclusion and social change.

He successfully orchestrated campaigns that led to Miami's retail, airline, banking and other industries being integrated, in addition to breaking down racial and discriminatory barriers in education, employment, and housing.

Mr. Fair has worked tirelessly to promote the interests and well-being of the African American community and is deeply committed to solving complex problems—from unemployment to illiteracy—that plague our community. He has offered solutions through expert analysis, publications in the Miami Herald, Miami Magazine, Tropic Magazine, and through interviews with 60 Minutes, the Tom Brokaw Show, and Ebony Magazine.

Mr. Fair continues to focus on education as an equalizer and driver of success. Through the Urban League's education program, he continues to work to strengthen educational opportunities for our children and instill in them the belief that education is vital to their success and the success of their communities.

Mr. Fair has served as an adjunct professor at the Atlanta University School of Social Work, Bethune-Cookman University, Florida International University, and the National Urban League's Whitney M. Young, Jr. Center for Urban Leadership. He has also been recognized by various organizations through awards, accolades, and appointments, including former Secretary of State Colin Powell's Advisory Committee on Cultural Affairs, President Obama's Commission on White House Fellowships—Miami Regional Selection Panel, the United States' Advisory Committee on Cultural Affairs, and is past chairperson of the Florida State Board of Education.

Please join me in honoring Mr. Talmadge Willard Fair for his unwavering dedication and commitment to strengthening and ensuring educational and economic opportunities for our community and to improving the overall quality of life in South Florida, across the state and around the country.

RECOGNIZING AND PAYING TRIBUTE TO MR. SAMUEL M. PLATO, A TRAILBLAZING AMERICAN ARCHITECT, BUSINESSMAN AND BUILDER

HON. KWEISI MFUME

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to an American patriot whose contributions to racial justice in construction and federal contracting have gone underrecognized for far too long. Mr. Samuel M. Plato was an African American architect, businessman, and contractor who built homes, churches, schools, factories, and government buildings across the country—more than a dozen of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places—and always insisted on a racially integrated workplace. Later this year, he will be inducted into the Alabama Men's Hall of Fame.

Mr. Plato was born on January 10, 1882, in a one-room log cabin outside of Waugh, Alabama. He was the sixth of eleven children, the son of parents who had been born into slavery. His father, James, Sr., was a carpenter who taught his son Samuel the trade, skills he later used to finance his law studies. But his life changed course when he enrolled in a mail-order correspondence course in architecture and building construction. His career was set.

In 1904, Mr. Plato relocated to Marion, Indiana, with just \$2.40 in his pocket, where he soon secured his first major contract: a new structure for the Black-owned Second Baptist Church. Over the next decade, he became a prominent figure in the community, founding and leading the local chapter of the National Negro Business League.

In Indiana, Mr. Plato came face-to-face with racial discrimination firsthand. The only Black man on a crew of 26, he was fired after just one hour because his white coworkers refused to work alongside him. From that point on, he resolved to integrate every workplace that he was part of.

He soon had an opportunity to put his principles into practice. Awarded a plum contract to design and build a mansion in Marion in 1912, he presented white workers with an ultimatum: to join the project, they would have to allow Black workmen into the local mechanics' union. Over the protests of its president, the union was integrated.

Soon after, he returned to the South. In 1918, Mr. Plato became the first Black man to receive a federal contract to build a post office, constructing the U.S. Post Office in Decatur, Alabama—the first of more than 45 post offices he would build throughout his career.

In 1941, as America prepared for war, he began working as a Federal Defense Housing contractor, building 88 units for defense workers and their families near Louisville, Kentucky. Later that year, Mr. Plato received a

• 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.

contract that is near and dear to my heart: leading an integrated crew of more than 1,000 skilled and semi-skilled workers, he oversaw the construction of the Sparrows Point Defense Housing Project, later renamed the Ernest Lyon Homes. Built for Black steelworkers excluded from white-only federal housing, these homes became a cornerstone of Turner Station, Maryland, my birthplace.

In 1942 and 1943, he built two major housing facilities in Washington, D.C., that housed over 1,000 Black women working in the defense industry. In the postwar years, he built 88 homes in the Chickasaw neighborhood of Louisville and helped Black families acquire them. To this day, the community has a street named in his honor, Plato Terrace.

Mr. Plato died on May 13, 1957, at his home in Louisville. Though he married twice, Mr. Plato never had children and thus lacked heirs to steward his legacy. I am grateful for the research and advocacy of Mallorie K.M. Berger, M.S., whose diligent work to promote Mr. Plato's memory empowered me to pen these words to commemorate a remarkable life lived in pursuit of racial justice in housing, construction, and contracting.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleague to join me in honoring the venerable memory and legacy of Mr. Samuel M. Plato.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL HOTEL EMPLOYEE DAY

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the countless hardworking hotel employees across Michigan's 1st Congressional District and throughout our Nation on National Hotel Employee Day. These dedicated individuals are the backbone of the hotel industry, providing the exceptional service, professionalism, and care that make travelers feel welcome.

Hotel employees do far more than greeting guests at check-in. From room attendants and front desk staff to engineers, chefs, sales managers, and countless other professionals, hotel staff ensure safe, comfortable, and memorable experiences for millions of travelers each year. Their dedication strengthens our communities, supports our economy, and reflects the very best of American hospitality.

The hotel industry plays a vital role in our Nation's economy, supporting one in every twenty-five American jobs and contributing approximately \$900 billion annually to our Nation's Gross Domestic Product. In Michigan's 1st Congressional District, travel and tourism are central to our local economy, with destinations like Mackinac Island welcoming more than 1 million visitors each year. The 552 hotels and more than 10,000 hotel employees across my district provide the warm and welcoming service that keeps visitors returning to experience all that Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula have to offer.

On National Hotel Employee Day, we recognize the men and women whose contributions often happen behind the scenes, but whose impact is felt everyday by travelers, families, and communities across the Nation. Their hard work and dedication embody the values

of service and excellence that make our country stronger.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing hotel employees across Michigan's 1st Congressional District and throughout the United States on National Hotel Employee Day. We thank them for their continued dedication, professionalism, and commitment to providing exceptional service to all who travel.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JUDGE CALVIN REID MAPP, SR.

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, from the 24th District of the great state of Florida, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of the late Judge Calvin Reid Mapp, Sr., the first black County Court Judge in Miami-Dade County. Judge Mapp was appointed in 1973 by Governor Reuben Askew to fill a vacancy created by the Florida Legislature's reorganization of the state's judicial system. Judge Mapp presided over criminal, traffic, and juvenile cases from 1973 to 1994 when he retired.

Judge Mapp's interest in community service started long before he was appointed to the bench. In the 1950's, he served as a patrolman and traffic instructor with the City of Miami's visibly segregated police department, where black officers operated out of a black precinct in the publicized Central Negro District.

Judge Mapp received his law degree in 1963 from Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C. After receiving his L.L.B. Degree, he returned to Miami and worked for several years as an Assistant State Attorney for State Attorney Richard Gerstein. In 1968, he resigned his position to join the law firm of James, Matthews, and Harold Braynon to form the new firm of Matthews, Braynon, and Mapp, P.A.

His early education was completed at Dunbar Elementary, and he later attended and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School, in Miami, Florida.

Please join me in honoring the late Judge Calvin Reid Mapp, Sr., for his commitment and dedication to his community and the citizens of Miami-Dade County.

CELEBRATING THE 95TH BIRTH- DAY OF SOPHIE SHIRLEY SHEFTS

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Sophie Shirley Shefts on the wonderful occasion of her 95th birthday.

Shirley was born September 10, 1931, to Greek and Turkish immigrant parents. A daughter of the depression, she was delivered on the kitchen table of a fourth-floor walkup on Orchard Street in New York City and spent her first year cradled in a dresser drawer.

Raised in the South Bronx as the second of four daughters, Shirley was an honor student

and given the opportunity to attend college. But when her father became disabled, she instead went to work at Emerson Radio to help support her family.

The love of her life, Sam, was the boy next door. They met as kids and were married for nearly 73 years, until Sam's passing in 2024. Together they raised three daughters—Janet, Mindy, and Nancy—with Shirley holding the family together at home while Sam worked to provide for them. Later, she worked in an art gallery with one of her best friends, Aphro, who turns 100 this year.

Shirley was active in the United Order of True Sisters, a historic women's philanthropic organization that has raised millions of dollars since 1947 for cancer research, patient care, and specialized children's cancer camps.

Today, Shirley is the matriarch of a family spanning four generations. Her granddaughter Sofi—whom she nicknamed "Sweetakins"—is the apple of her eye.

In retirement, Shirley and Sam moved to Florida, where she still lives in Boynton Beach. She remains a devoted lifelong Yankees fan who loves watching games on TV, especially Aaron Judge and Jazz Chisholm, Jr.

And at 95, Shirley is still sharp as a tack. She watches Jeopardy! and Wheel of Fortune religiously—and could probably win. She loves Law & Order and the evening news with David Muir.

Shirley is a wife, mother, nana, aunt—great and great-great—sister, mother-in-law, friend, survivor, comedian, and sweetheart. She bounces back after every medical hurdle and loss, keeps people laughing, and is loved by all who meet her.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I'd like to extend a warm congratulations to Sophie Shirley Shefts on her 95th birthday, and wish her many more happy years.

I wish Shirley a happy birthday.

RECOGNIZING THE 35TH ANNIVER- SARY OF UZBEKISTAN'S INDE- PENDENCE

HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Republic of Uzbekistan as it marks the 35th anniversary of its independence. On August 31, 1991, Uzbekistan declared its independence from the Soviet Union. Each year on September 1, the Uzbek people celebrate that moment with pride. This year's milestone is a testament to how far the country has come in a single generation.

Just last week, I had the honor of leading a congressional delegation to Tashkent as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. We met with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Chairwoman of the Senate Tanzila Narbayeva, and other senior officials. During our meetings with senior officials and business leaders, we saw a nation that has chosen reform, opened its economy to the world, and welcomed American partnership. The hospitality of the Uzbek people left a lasting impression on every member of our delegation.

Thirty-five years ago, the people of Uzbekistan chose freedom. I congratulate President