

Mirziyoyev and the people of Uzbekistan on this historic anniversary, and I look forward to the next 35 years of friendship between our two nations.

HONORING FORMER MIAMI HEAT POWER FORWARD UDONIS HASLEM

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 former Miami Heat Power Forward Udonis Haslem, who now holds the history making title of all-time leading rebounder for the Miami Heat franchise, a member of the National Basketball Association.

Udonis Haslem was signed with the Miami Heat as an undrafted free agent in 2003 after playing professional basketball in France for a year. In 2006, Mr. Haslem played a pivotal role in the Miami Heat winning the NBA Championship and again in 2012.

Haslem played college basketball for the University of Florida "Gators" from 1998 to 2002. The Gators received NCAA Tournament invitations all four years he was with the team—the first time in the program's history. Haslem ranks third in school history in points scored (1,782) and tenth in rebounds (831). He was inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great" in 2012.

Haslem was born in Miami, Florida. He attended Wolfson High School in Jacksonville, Florida, then Miami Senior High School. He helped lead Miami High to state titles in 1997 and 1998.

Haslem, who is also recognized for his charity work within the community, founded The Udonis Haslem Children's Foundation in 2005, which promotes youth development and self-confidence. He is also a mentor with the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project founded by Representative WILSON of Florida, to provide mentorship and scholarships to at-risk boys.

Please join me in honoring former Miami Heat Power Forward Udonis Haslem for his commitment and dedication to his community, the Miami Heat franchise, and his fans.

HONORING SVEN "CRAIG" ANDERSON

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sven "Craig" Anderson for nearly three decades of extraordinary public service as a nonprofit leader. Craig's rich and varied career over the years is inspiring, but today, we celebrate his retirement and many positive accomplishments during his tenure at LandPaths.

Craig joined LandPaths in August 1997, a year after the organization was established. Under his energetic and enduring leadership, the organization grew from a small nonprofit into a thriving, robust, and renowned nonprofit focused on conservation, environmental edu-

cation, and community stewardship. His work has permanently transformed how Sonoma County connects with and cares for its natural resources.

Shortly after Craig started with LandPaths, the organization, in partnership with the Bay Area Ridge Trail, created a Sonoma Mountain trail segment and launched its inaugural free public outings. Over the years, he rewarded major land acquisitions, championed equitable access to nature, and mobilized thousands of volunteers through community-focused stewardship programs.

Under Craig's guidance, LandPaths preserved critical landscapes, including the Grove of the Old Trees, a stand of ancient redwoods saved from a Timber Harvest Plan, and Calvi Ranch, working closely with Indigenous partners and multi-generation ranching families to protect this historic 70-acre property. He has sparked and nurtured youth and community engagement through innovative programs such as in Our Own Backyard and Inspired Forward, bringing environmental education to Title I schools and beyond. Further, he successfully promoted inclusive, science-grounded citizenship in the outdoors, fostering deeper community bonds with the land.

Throughout his tenure, Craig's integrity, generosity, and humor have inspired colleagues and community members alike. His vision and leadership have been appreciated and recognized in the community, including in being named Bay Nature Magazine's Local Hero for Conservation in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my privilege and honor to work with Craig in a variety of roles over the course of his notable career. Please join me in expressing our profound gratitude for his remarkable contributions and in extending our warmest wishes for a richly deserved and fulfilling retirement.

HONORING WILLIAM "BILLY" NORTON

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. William "Billy" Norton, who has dedicated a lifetime of selfless service to the residents of Deltaville, Virginia, in Middlesex County, where he has served as a shining example of civic engagement and volunteer leadership. Mr. Norton has been instrumental in enhancing the safety and well-being of the community, most notably through tireless contributions to emergency response.

Mr. Norton's service includes being the longtime Fire Chief for the Lower Middlesex Fire Department and volunteering with the Lower Middlesex Volunteer Rescue Squad. Additionally, in 2000, Mr. Norton received the U.S. Coast Guard's Public Service Commendation in recognition of his bravery in aiding an emergency rescue function, enabling the safe return of a distressed vessel's crew. Mr. Norton further distinguished himself by serving as the co-chair for the rebuilding of the Ricky Taylor Memorial Swimming Pool and the Deltaville Community Association's entire campus following the devastating tornado of 2011.

Mr. Norton has long championed the spirit of community and local pride through leader-

ship roles. He organized the first Lower Middlesex Volunteer Fire Department Firefighters' Parade to honor the essential work of local first responders and served as captain for the 2018 Urbanna Oyster Festival Parade. Mr. Norton also has a profound commitment to conservation and is an advocate for the preservation of the Chesapeake Bay. Additionally, Mr. Norton has supported the small banks across the region, serving with distinction on the Board of Directors for the Bank of Middlesex, the First Virginia Bank Director's Board, and the Bank Advisory Board for BB&T.

Mr. Norton's long-standing commitment to community has significantly improved infrastructure and safety in Middlesex County, Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 1st District of Virginia and the United States Congress, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Norton on an exceptional life of selfless sacrifice and thank him for inspiring so many to engage in civil service that betters our community for future generations.

HONORING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember the 2,976 souls we lost on September 11, 2001, and recognize the work and sacrifice of our law enforcement community in the days, months, and years that followed. As we approach the 25th Anniversary of that tragic day, let us never forget.

Thousands of innocent Americans would never come home. Families would be forever changed. And millions of Americans felt called to serve something larger than themselves. I was one of them.

I joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the world's premier law enforcement organization, driven by a desire to serve my country and keep Americans safe.

Today, we remember the lives lost at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. We honor the first responders, law enforcement officers, service members, and ordinary Americans who demonstrated extraordinary courage in our Nation's darkest hour.

But for many Americans, the consequences of September 11, 2001, did not end when the fires were extinguished or the debris was cleared. They are still living with them today.

FBI personnel who responded to the attacks and conducted the investigations and recovery efforts that followed are confronting cancers, respiratory diseases, and other serious illnesses caused by exposure to toxic substances at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, as well as during evidence-recovery operations at the Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island. Those illnesses have taken a terrible toll.

Today, 34 of the 107 names on the FBI's Wall of Honor belong to members of the FBI family who died either on September 11, 2001, or from illnesses linked to their response and recovery work.

Nearly one-third of the names on that wall trace back to September 11, 2001, and its aftermath. That number is still growing.

Congress has long recognized our obligation to care for those whose health was harmed in the line of duty. We established and strengthened the World Trade Center Health Program to provide medical monitoring and treatment for those exposed to toxic dust and debris at Ground Zero and other 9/11 sites.

That commitment reflects a core principle of our Nation: When Americans put themselves in harm's way to protect our country, we have an obligation to stand by them.

Congress did not act alone. Organizations like the FBI Agents Association have helped uphold that commitment, working tirelessly to ensure that FBI Special Agents and other personnel affected by the attacks receive both the care they deserve and the recognition their service and sacrifice have earned.

Over the past quarter-century, Congress has gradually come to understand a difficult truth: some sacrifices are visible immediately. Others reveal themselves years later. We have an obligation to honor both.

With that understanding, Congress expanded its commitment by passing the PACT Act, providing health care and benefits to veterans suffering from illnesses associated with burn pits and other toxic exposures during overseas deployments.

As someone who served in Iraq alongside our military and civilian personnel, I know these were not distant risks. They were realities of the environment in which so many Americans carried out their mission. So, our work is not finished.

Federal civilian employees, including FBI Special Agents and other public servants, deployed alongside our military during post-9/11 operations. They breathed the same toxic air and faced many of the same hazards, but they do not receive the same presumption that certain illnesses are connected to their service. They may have worn different uniforms, but they faced the same dangers.

That is why I recently joined my colleagues in introducing H.R. 8524, the bipartisan Kenya Merritt Renewing Our PACT Act. This legislation would close that gap and ensure that federal civilian employees who served alongside our Armed Forces receive the protections they deserve.

The Kenya Merritt Renewing Our PACT Act would establish a presumption that certain diseases associated with burn pits and other toxic exposures are work-related. It would apply to eligible federal employees who served in overseas contingency operations, providing a fairer and more consistent standard for workers compensation claims involving disability or death. I am especially proud that this legislation is named for FBI Special Agent Kenya Merritt.

Kenya was many things. He was a husband. A father. A son. An athlete. An exceptional Special Agent. Above all, he lived a life of service. When our Nation called, Kenya answered. He volunteered to deploy to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, serving alongside members of our Armed Forces and other public servants in a dangerous environment far from home. There, he was exposed to toxic burn pits and other hazards. Years later, he developed lung cancer linked to that exposure.

But even after learning of his diagnosis, Kenya continued to serve others. He became a determined advocate for federal employees who had served alongside our military, faced

many of the same toxic exposures, and yet lacked the protections available to those in uniform. Kenya passed away in 2024. But the cause he fought for lives on.

The legislation that bears his name would carry his work forward by protecting other federal employees who answered the same call to serve. This legislation recognizes a simple truth: Service is service. Sacrifice is sacrifice. We do not abandon those who served our country. And we do not leave behind those who stood shoulder to shoulder with our troops simply because they wore a different uniform.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of September 11, 2001, let us honor not only those we lost that day, but also those who continue to bear the physical and emotional consequences of the attacks and the conflicts that followed. Let us keep faith with all who answered our Nation's call by advancing the Kenya Merritt Renewing Our PACT Act. That is a promise worthy of the legacy of September 11, 2001.

HONORING MINISTER GARY D. JOHNSON

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 Minister Gary D. Johnson, a well-respected religious leader and dedicated community and international activist.

Minister Johnson is a member of 93rd Street Community Baptist Church in Miami and has been a lifelong champion for justice and quality of life for all people. He has served as a key liaison between Miami-Dade County's Christian community and local and statewide government officials to create public policy, programs, and coalitions that address the needs and social well-being of our community.

Minister Johnson co-founded the non-profit organization United for Family Values Foundation, and as its director has worked to establish a partnership between community organizations, law enforcement agencies, and residents. The goal being to combat and reduce violence in South Florida's urban communities, find alternatives for at-risk youth, and steer them toward getting an education or seek gainful employment.

Because of his reputation as a consensus builder and his tireless work to strengthen the leadership role of faith-based organizations, Minister Johnson was appointed Faith Outreach Director for the State of Florida for President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign.

To continue the work he began as Faith Outreach Director, Minister Johnson founded the non-profit organization Clergy for Change and continues to build upon the role of the church as a center for resources, direction, and advocacy.

Please join me in honoring Minister Gary D. Johnson for his commitment, dedication, and service to our community.

HONORING MELINA SPATHARIS FOR HER DEDICATION TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my staffer Melina Spatharis, whose last day in House Republican Conference will be this Friday. After over a year of dedicated service to the House, Melina is moving to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to continue her career in academia.

Melina was an invaluable asset to our Conference team and will be missed dearly. A dedicated staffer, she often stayed far beyond the end of the workday to ensure she fully prepared and supported my Chief of Staff as his Executive Assistant. Melina was and will continue to be deeply endeared by the entire office—she was a joy to work with, and consistently assumed a positive attitude, paired with a kind demeanor. Regardless of how difficult a day was, Melina exhibited virtue, honor, and patriotism in all things she did, said, and the way she treated others—a truly rare trait. As we bid Melina farewell, we will always be grateful and indebted to her for service to her country and the impact she had on our lives.

RECOGNIZING THE ARLINGTON COUNTY FIRST RESPONDERS AND PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL

HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, as our Nation marks the 25th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, I rise to recognize the courage, dedication, and sacrifice of firefighters, paramedics, emergency communications personnel, police officers, and public safety professionals in Arlington County, Virginia, and in communities across our Nation.

For Arlington, September 11 is not only a National Day of Remembrance. It is part of our history. On that day, when American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon, Arlington's first responders answered the call with extraordinary courage, skill, and resolve. They responded in the face of danger, uncertainty, fire, smoke, and devastation to help save lives and protect our community.

Twenty-five years later, we continue to remember the victims, the survivors, the responders, and those who have carried the physical and emotional burdens of that day ever since. We also recognize that the duty to serve did not end on September 11. Every day, firefighters and paramedics continue to respond to emergencies, enter dangerous situations, provide lifesaving care, and stand with members of the community in their most difficult moments. Such work demonstrates unparalleled bravery and discipline.

Firefighters run toward burning buildings when others are running out. Paramedics provide care in moments of fear, pain, and crisis. Emergency communications personnel answer