

each child they serve. Supporting at-risk youth in our community is such critical work. As someone who faced many challenges growing up, I know my life is on a much different path because of the adults and teachers in Jefferson County who cared about me and invested in me as a teen.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's 7th Congressional District, it is my honor to thank Royal Family Kids Arvada for all they do to support at-risk youth in Jefferson County.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE
OF ARMY SPECIALIST DAVID A.
WILKEY, JR.

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 4, 2026

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Army Specialist David Anthony Wilkey, Jr., a native of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our Nation during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Specialist Wilkey was born in Norway, Michigan, and grew up nearby in Wilson. As a teenager, he moved to Elkhart, Indiana. After graduating from Jintown High School in 2003, David worked alongside his father at Plastic Components Inc. before answering the call to serve and enlisting in the United States Army. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, based at Fort Riley, Kansas, and deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On June 17, 2007, while traveling with a Humvee convoy in Baghdad, an improvised explosive device detonated near David's unit, leaving him with wounds that would claim his life the following day. On June 18, 2007, at just 22 years old, Specialist Wilkey gave his life in defense of our Nation and in service to his fellow Soldiers.

Those who knew David remember him as someone who was always willing to help others. He was the kind of person who was always ready to lend a hand, smooth out rough edges, and make a friend wherever he went. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, camping, traveling, sports, repairing things, shopping, and poetry. Most importantly, he was a devoted husband, father, son, and friend who remained deeply connected to his loved ones even while serving thousands of miles from home.

David was ultimately laid to rest in Powers, Michigan, near the Upper Peninsula community where he grew up. Though his military service took him far from home, he returned to the place that helped shape him and where his memory remains part of the community which he called home.

Mr. Speaker, may we always remember Specialist David A. Wilkey, Jr., honor his service, and never forget that the freedoms we enjoy were defended by brave Americans like him.

HONORING ST. JOHN'S UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH

HON. CLEO FIELDS

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 4, 2026

Mr. FIELDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor St. John's United Methodist Church, located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Since its founding in 1961, St. John's has been a beacon of faith and compassion for East Baton Rouge Parish and currently led by Reverend Lane Cotton Winn.

The church's impact goes far beyond its sanctuary, with its Shepherd's Market food pantry launching in 2012 and quickly becoming a lifeline for families facing hunger. Within its first two years, Shepherd's Market served 1,421 families and distributed over 430,000 pounds of food, eventually expanding to serve about 420 families each month. In addition to food distribution, St. John's provides ESL classes and assistance with Medicaid applications, empowering neighbors to overcome barriers and access vital resources.

During the devastating Baton Rouge floods of 2016, St. John's Family Life Center transformed into an emergency base for disaster-response teams including Team Rubicon, IsraAID, AmeriCorps, FEMA Corps, and Team Canada. The church played a critical role in coordinating relief efforts and offering refuge to flood victims, demonstrating its unwavering commitment to serving the community during times of crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to honor St. John's United Methodist Church for its outstanding service, leadership, and compassion. Its legacy as a resource, refuge, and place of worship continues to make a lasting difference in Baton Rouge, inspiring generations to serve others and uplift their neighbors.

RECOGNIZING THE COLORADO
PASSPORT AGENCY

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 4, 2026

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Colorado Passport Agency on its 20th anniversary.

Since opening on September 29, 2005, the Colorado Passport Agency has been assisting constituents in Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming with their urgent travel needs. The Colorado Passport Agency serves as a vital lifeline for travelers facing urgent situations. Since 2023, the Colorado Passport Agency has processed nearly 1.3 million passport applications on-site through 2025.

During the unexpected surge of passport applications in 2023, our office relied heavily on the Colorado Passport Agency, and they worked tirelessly to assist our constituents and my team. Through my office alone, the agency has assisted hundreds of constituents—helping them attend weddings abroad, reunite with loved ones, and navigate unexpected travel emergencies with confidence and peace of mind.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's 7th Congressional District, it is my honor to con-

gratulate the Colorado Passport Office on its 20th anniversary and thank them for their contribution to our community.

RECOGNIZING TEXAS-24
HOMETOWN HERO VITO DEFINO

HON. BETH VAN DUYN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 4, 2026

Ms. VAN DUYN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize our Texas-24 Hometown Hero, Bedford resident and World War II veteran, Vito Defino. Vito was drafted for World War II only one month after graduating high school. When given the choice between the Army Air Corps or Navy, he chose to fly, serving at various bases across the country as a right wing gunner on the B-29 Superfortress.

Throughout his time, Vito was promoted to Corporal and then Sergeant in only 14 months. During WWII, he met Mary, his future wife, who was working in military intelligence, and they were both honorably discharged on the same day.

Following WWII, Vito earned his degree in education, while working evenings at General Electric. Throughout his career, Vito poured into the students with various roles as a math teacher, physical education coach, and later a vice principal for 30 years.

Vito is currently 100 years old and lives in Texas with his daughter, Dee, and her family. I thank Vito Defino for his service to our Nation and for being an inspiration to those around him.

HONORING SACRED HEART OF
JESUS

HON. CLEO FIELDS

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 4, 2026

Mr. FIELDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sacred Heart of Jesus, an extraordinary church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Founded as a mission in 1924 and established as a parish in 1928, Sacred Heart of Jesus has played a pivotal role in the spiritual life of the city's Italian immigrant community, providing them with a welcoming place to worship in their native language under the guidance of its first pastor, Father Dominic Blasco, a native of Sicily.

Sacred Heart of Jesus made history in 1929 by opening Baton Rouge's first parochial school built by a church parish, laying the foundation for a legacy of Catholic education that continues to shape generations. In 1942, the parish dedicated its magnificent present church, a testament to the generosity and resilience of its parishioners during World War II. The church is renowned for its Byzantine- and Sicilian-inspired architecture, stunning murals by Benedictine monk Dom Gregory DeWit, and exquisite stained glass crafted by Emil Frei Glass Studios.

Today, under the leadership of Reverend Joshua D. Johnson, Sacred Heart of Jesus stands as a cherished Baton Rouge landmark and a symbol of unity, cultural heritage, and faith. Its enduring presence continues to inspire and uplift families throughout East Baton

Rouge Parish, preserving a rich tradition that honors both its immigrant roots and its commitment to service.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to recognize Sacred Heart of Jesus, Reverend Johnson, and the devoted congregation for their remarkable contributions to Baton Rouge. The church's legacy as a beacon of hope, education, and community will continue to make a lasting impact for generations to come.

RECOGNIZING STOUT STREET FOUNDATION

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 4, 2026

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Stout Street Foundation on their 50th anniversary.

Fifty years ago, the Stout Street Foundation opened its doors as a safe, supportive home for Coloradans battling addiction. For the past five decades, it has provided hope, stability, and a real pathway to lasting recovery. What started as a small recovery house in Denver has grown into one of Colorado's most trusted long-term residential treatment communities, offering recovery services, workforce development, counseling, and peer support to individuals working to rebuild their lives.

Today, the Foundation serves more than 400 individuals each year through its therapeutic community model, which emphasizes accountability, life skills development, and lasting personal growth. Over the last 50 years, its work has helped over 10,000 Coloradans achieve lasting sobriety, reconnect with their families, and return to their communities with renewed purpose and genuine opportunity.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's 7th Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate the Stout Street Foundation on its 50th anniversary and wish the organization continued success in its important work for many years to come.

CELEBRATING THE INCREDIBLE LIFE OF DR. LEVON ALDON LEBAN

HON. TROY A. CARTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 4, 2026

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and honor the life of a remarkable humanitarian, community servant, human rights activist, and my fellow Kappa Alpha Psi brother, someone I considered to be a dear friend, the late Dr. Levon Aldon LeBan. His commitment to social justice transformed Louisiana and had a profound impact on this entire Nation. A United States Army veteran, minister, and retired educator, he served the New Orleans Parish Schools for over 20 years, with multiple accolades—including "Teacher of the Year." He was not a man who loved power, but he deeply understood the power of LOVE, and his light impacted those both near and far.

A seventh-generation Louisianan, Dr. LeBan was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and is a

graduate of the public school system. He completed undergraduate studies at Southern University and A&M College and Southern University at New Orleans, earning a B.S. and B.A. degree, respectively. He earned a Master of Science degree from Prairie View A&M University in Texas, a Master of Social Work degree from Southern University at New Orleans, and a Master of Divinity from Bethel Bible College. He also earned a Doctor of Theology degree from the American College and Theological Seminary. He received a Doctor of Divinity and a Doctor of Ministry, honoris causa. He completed additional studies at the University of New Orleans and the University of Maryland, College Park. While at Maryland, he participated in a study with the U.S. Agency for International Development to examine socio-economic systems in Puerto Rico, USA. Twice selected as a Fulbright Scholar, Dr. LeBan studied in Zimbabwe in 1995 and the Republic of South Africa in 2000. His travels in Africa also included Swaziland, Zambia, and Mozambique.

In 1979, he was employed as a Researcher by Texas A&M University in Waller County and served for over twenty years with Orleans Parish Schools. He was elected "Teacher of the Year" at Washington High, Cohen High, and Walker Middle Schools. He also taught at San Jacinto College (Texas), the University of Maryland, and Tulane University Graduate School of Social Work. As a member of the American Association of Suicidology, Dr. LeBan supervised the crisis hotline for the Volunteer and Information Agency for several years, then founded the Crisis Institute of Mediation, Intervention & Training—a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. He has written over 80 journal articles and papers, many of which were featured in the "Africa Rising" section of a New Orleans publication, the Louisiana Weekly. Dr. LeBan also published: "Masonic Silk Stocking—History of a Louisiana Lodge," and "History of the New Orleans Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc." He served as the Historian for the Southwestern Province of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated, covering New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Dr. LeBan most recently served as the President of the Louisiana Retired Teachers Association (LRTA) for District 1 (Orleans, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard Parishes). In 2024, received the prestigious LRTA "Name of Fame" Medallion in Houma, Louisiana.

As a citizen soldier, Dr. LeBan served five years in the United States Army. In 1986, he was selected as "Soldier of the Year" for the 122nd Army Reserve Command (Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas). He served several years as an instructor with the 4152nd USAR School and was awarded the Army Commendation Medal and the Army Achievement Medal with Four Oak-leaf Clusters. He served as the first African American President of the Alliance for Good Government, Orleans Chapter.

In 1983, he was licensed and ordained as a minister of the gospel and served seven years as Senior Pastor of "Walk in the Light" Interdenominational Church and three years as Associate Pastor of "Jesus Never Fails" Ministry of New Orleans. He is the first African American to serve as the Disaster Spiritual Care Louisiana Regional Lead for the American Red Cross. Dr. LeBan also serves as a Chaplain with the Association. He is a member of

the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) Emotional and Spiritual Care Committee and the National Disaster Spiritual Care Leadership Cadre.

Though an accomplished researcher and skilled writer, he supervised a crisis hotline in our city, established intervention strategies for handling crisis situations, and led spiritual care for the American Red Cross in Louisiana—aiding victims of natural disasters. Dr. LeBan has completed numerous humanitarian deployments with the American Red Cross, assisting individuals and families impacted by disasters throughout Louisiana since 2016. Some of his humanitarian efforts around the country include Wildfires in Maui, Hawaii; Typhoon in Guam, United States of America; Atmospheric Floods in San Jose, California; Hurricane Michael in Macon, Georgia; Oil Rig Tragedy in Port Fourchon, Louisiana; Tornado in Little Rock, Arkansas; Atmospheric Floods in Vallejo, California; Hurricane Fiona in San Juan, Puerto Rico; Tornado in Mayfield, Kentucky; Flash Flooding in Central Tennessee; Floods in Eastern Kentucky, Texas; Mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas; Tornado in Southern Kentucky; Hurricane Harvey in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Houston, Texas; Floods in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Tornadoes in the Metropolitan New Orleans area. He currently serves as the first African American Louisiana Lead for Disaster Spiritual Care and Community Engagement/Partnerships with the American Red Cross.

A life member of the NAACP since 1979, he has held various offices at the local and state levels and was thrice elected the Louisiana State Conference Vice President. Dr. LeBan was currently serving as the 5th elected President of the New Orleans Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)—the oldest affiliate of SCLC in the Nation at the time of his passing. In 2019, the SCLC New Orleans Chapter was selected as the Interlebal SCLC Chapter of the Year, please see hyperlink below: <https://sclcnola.org>.

From the military to the educational system, his fraternity, philanthropy, and ministry, Levon's life was one of service to his community. I thank Dr. LeBan's family for letting him be a part of our lives. I thank Dr. LeBan for his extraordinary contributions. His legacy will live forever and continue to light our paths toward a more just society. We salute the life and legacy of this dear man of God and send our deepest condolences to his family.

HONORING ST. MARY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. CLEO FIELDS

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 4, 2026

Mr. FIELDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding church in my District, St. Mary Baptist Church, for serving as a fixture in Baton Rouge, Louisiana since its founding in 1929. From its humble beginnings in a wood-framed cottage, the church grew steadily, establishing its first sanctuary and expanding into a vibrant campus that now anchors the neighborhood.

Over the last several decades, St. Mary Baptist Church has evolved into a major institution, offering impactful ministries that meet