

started out as a humanitarian call to action has grown into a larger mission. Communities across the country now come together to help those in need.

The bond between the American Red Cross and the United States Government is defined by more than a century of service. Since the organization's formal chartering in the early 1900s, the American Red Cross has had a hand in providing aid to our military personnel and their families.

The organization was pivotal in assisting servicemembers and families during World War I and World War II. During both wars, the American Red Cross recruited thousands of registered nurses and prepared millions of aid packages for the United States military and our Allies.

Today, the American Red Cross still provides support for military members and their families. However, their reach has also extended to serve communities that have been impacted by natural disasters. This organization assists in recovery efforts by providing emergency assistance, food, shelter, and emotional support to those in need.

Many people know the American Red Cross because of their commitment to blood donations. On average, they collect nearly 4.5 million blood donations and provide almost 40 percent of our Nation's blood.

In addition to humanitarian relief and blood donations, the American Red Cross has been training and educating people for over a century. The organization provides training in first aid, CPR, water safety, lifeguarding, and other emergency response areas.

Today, communities across the United States are safer because of the large number of people who have become certified by the American Red Cross. With training, these people can identify an emergency and step in to provide care.

Madam Speaker, I thank all the American Red Cross volunteers who work tirelessly to serve others and care for those in need.

#### RECOGNIZING JERSEY SHORE, PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania, which marks its bicentennial celebration on March 15.

Jersey Shore was founded in 1826, although the borough's rich history dates to the 1700s, when families settled in the area after the Revolutionary War. Many families chose this location because of the availability of farmland.

Before the borough's adoption of the name "Jersey Shore," the settlement was first called Waynesburg, named after Anthony Wayne, a famous Revolutionary War general who served under General George Washington. However, Jersey Shore quickly became the namesake due to the high number of settlers from New Jersey and the borough's proximity to the Susquehanna River.

Established along the banks of the Susquehanna and near numerous State

parks, Jersey Shore, also known as the Gateway to the Pine Creek Valley, offers visitors the chance to hike, bike, fish, and kayak.

Jersey Shore is a true reflection of Main Street charm and American values. It is an area many people from the Commonwealth are proud to call home. We congratulate the Jersey Shore borough on this momentous milestone.

#### RECOGNIZING AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to thank the members and staff of the House Committee on Agriculture.

Early this morning, we finished up 20 hours of markup and ultimately passed the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026. It is a strong bipartisan bill. It passed 2-1 out of committee. I appreciate all the members on the committee who contributed and helped to refine this bill.

This legislation really serves America's number one industry, agriculture, all of those farm families, ranch families, and communities of rural America. We look forward to bringing this legislation to the floor and, ultimately, to the President's desk.

□ 1030

#### RECOGNIZING GREENBURGH NATURE CENTER

(Mr. LATIMER of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LATIMER. Madam Speaker, I rise to salute the outstanding work of the Greenburgh Nature Center, its professional staff, and its volunteer leadership for providing an environmental oasis for all to enjoy in the middle of a bustling suburb.

The nature center is a 33-acre preserve just steps away from busy Central Avenue that offers hiking trails, demonstration gardens, and a live animal museum with barnyard animals and other wildlife. It provides educational programs, youth camps for kids, and an annual environmental set of events that welcomes the whole community.

The professional team is led by Executive Director Alix Dunn. She had spent decades in environmental work with nonprofits in California before returning home to Westchester.

Alix is aided by Marybeth Cagney, Chloe Digianni, Rosa Van Zandt, Elisabeth Mulder, Greg Wehgelaer, Andrew Michalski, and many others.

The board of directors provides volunteer and community-based support and direction, led by President Dolya Fleck and other leaders: Jackie Feffer, Melissa Jones, Naomi Haber, Jim Blann, and former Town Councilwoman Diana Juettner.

Madam Speaker, from the floor of the House of Representatives, we salute the team at the Greenburgh Nature Center for its constant advancement of this valued community asset.

#### RECOGNIZING SOUND SHORE ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Mr. LATIMER. Madam Speaker, the month of March, with St. Patrick's Day to be celebrated on March 17, is a time to honor those of us of Irish-American heritage.

Across the Nation, much less in Westchester and in the Bronx, there will be parades and festive dinners to salute the Irish experience and accomplishments here in America.

One such event is the 14th annual Sound Shore St. Patrick's Day Parade, scheduled for Sunday, March 22, in Mamaroneck. This loops together the Irish in communities from Larchmont to Rye and Port Chester to New Rochelle.

Tonight, there is the annual Hearts & Shamrocks dinner, which was, for many, the annual scholarship fundraising effort for deserving students. At the dinner, the parade's 2025 grand marshal, Matt McCauley, will turn over his sash to the parade's 2026 grand marshal, Joe Carvin.

Joe is a resident of Port Chester and a former resident of Rye Brook. He is an accomplished business executive, and yet he finds time to work with high school students, a voluntary action. He served as village trustee of Port Chester and as Rye town supervisor.

I regret being unable to join them tonight, but we salute Matt, Joe, and parade leaders Joe Mauro and Michael Murphy as they celebrate together.

From the floor of the House of Representatives, this grandson of Enniskillen in County Fermanagh sends our very best.

#### RECOGNIZING RONALD HICKS

Mr. LATIMER. Madam Speaker, I rise to salute the newly installed archbishop for the Archdiocese of New York, His Excellency, the Most Reverend Ronald Hicks.

Archbishop Hicks has assumed the spiritual leadership of the 2.8 million-member Catholic community that includes Westchester and the Bronx, succeeding the much-loved Timothy Cardinal Dolan, who served for 16 years.

Archbishop Hicks was most recently in charge of the diocese of Joliet, Illinois, and is well known by Pope Leo, also an Illinois native, who made this key assignment.

The New York Archdiocese has 300 parishes and also runs 153 schools with an aggregate enrollment of 49,000 students. It runs a seminary, cemeteries, and links with various Catholic charitable organizations.

A native of Illinois, Archbishop Hicks was ordained to the priesthood in 1994, served in local parishes as a seminary dean, and in an important assignment in Latin America before becoming a bishop.

From the floor of the House of Representatives, we welcome Archbishop Ronald Hicks to New York, and we wish him great success in his pastoral services and in his church leadership.

RECOGNIZING MEDAL OF HONOR  
RECIPIENT MICHAEL OLLIS

(Ms. MALLIOTAKIS of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Madam Speaker, this past Monday, I joined President Trump at the White House as he posthumously awarded United States Army Staff Sergeant Michael Ollis of Staten Island, New York, the Medal of Honor, the Nation's highest military honor that can be bestowed.

Madam Speaker, I rise to share the bravery exhibited by my district's hometown hero.

On August 28, 2013, Staff Sergeant Ollis gave his life weeks before his 25th birthday. He gave his life to save an allied soldier during a Taliban raid on Forward Operating Base Ghazni in Afghanistan, after a truck carrying 3,000 pounds of explosives slammed into the base and terrorists advanced.

Without wearing any armor, Staff Sergeant Ollis fired back, then chose selflessness and placed himself between a suicide bomber and a fellow allied soldier.

He did not pause. He did not stop to calculate. He acted, knowing that the cost would be his life, but he chose to save the life of a NATO ally, Polish Second Lieutenant Karol Cierpica.

Michael's courage, selflessness, and sacrifice represent the very best of our Nation, earning him the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Silver Star, Distinguished Service Cross, as well as the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, the highest Polish decoration for a foreigner.

On Staten Island, we are so proud of Michael. We have a ferry named after him. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9587 is also named for Michael. The Michael Ollis Freedom Foundation supports veterans and students in his memory, continuing his legacy of service to others.

Yet, the Medal of Honor, a statement of national memory, tells the entire world and future generations of the courage, patriotism, sacrifice, and service exhibited by Michael Ollis. These are all values that the United States holds sacred.

His final act requires no embellishment or argument. It stands on its own, resolute and selfless, and is worthy of the highest military recognition that our country can bestow.

We are grateful to President Donald Trump for recognizing Staff Sergeant Ollis' extraordinary heroism.

Today, I add this tribute to the official CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. We congratulate his family, especially his parents, Bob and Linda, who accepted the honor, and the entire Staten Island community, who worked tirelessly to ensure that the ultimate sacrifice made by our hometown hero, Michael Ollis, received the recognition that it deserves.

Staff Sergeant Ollis may no longer be with us physically, but he lives on in our hearts and in our minds. His valor

and devotion to our Nation and his fellow soldiers will never be forgotten by our proud community and by our grateful Nation.

FOOD IS NATIONAL SECURITY

(Mr. COSTA of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, before I make my comments on a very important issue facing our country, let us all pause for a moment to recognize those six Americans who have lost their lives this week and their families, realizing that they have given their all. God bless them, and our thoughts and prayers are with their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about something that touches every family, as well, and every community, and that is hunger. Food, as I always say in the House Agriculture Committee, of which I am a member, is a national security issue. Food is a national security issue. Yet, we too often fail to treat it that way.

When families cannot access healthy, affordable food, our communities are weaker, our economy is weaker, and our Nation is weaker.

If we are forced to import essential foods rather than grow them here in America, that leaves our Nation more vulnerable in an increasingly unstable world that we live in today.

In our San Joaquin Valley, which I represent, one of the most productive agricultural regions in the country, farmers rise early in the morning to put food on America's dinner table. I know. I am a third-generation farmer and proud of it.

California produces over 400 commodities, including more than 60 percent of the Nation's fruits and vegetables. Over 80 percent of the citrus in the Nation is produced in California, along with 75 percent of the world's almonds and pistachios. Think about that: 75 percent in California.

Yet, even communities that grow so much of our food, like in my district, nearly 30 percent of the households rely on food assistance. It is an interesting dichotomy. We have incredible food production that puts food on every American's dinner table every night with the help of farmworkers, yet a majority of those households, 30 percent of them in my district, require food assistance. It is sad. They depend upon food support for their food.

Nationwide, 48 million people face food insecurity in our country, including 14 million children—14 million children—in the richest Nation in the world. This is unacceptable. At the same time, we know that grocery costs are up by as much as \$400 a month for so many of our families throughout the country.

Egg prices rose 53 percent over the year from January 2024 to January 2025.

In 2025, a gallon of whole milk averaged \$4.

Ground beef prices have risen 15 percent recently and are up 63 percent since 2020.

Americans who purchase their groceries every week know that the affordability of their food continues to become more challenging and more difficult.

Last year, the United States Department of Agriculture canceled—canceled—\$1 billion in funding that schools and local food banks use to purchase food directly from local farmers. It was a great program and had a lot of merit. Why they canceled it, I do not know.

Congress also enacted cuts totaling \$186 billion in food assistance that resulted in more than 3 million people losing their food support entirely. That is disgraceful.

Soon after, the United States Department of Agriculture terminated the annual Household Food Security report, the very report that told us that nearly 48 million Americans face food insecurity. What is that about? Without reliable data, we are left without a clear picture on who is struggling the most in our communities throughout our country.

This week, the House marked up the farm bill, an important effort that we are supposed to do every 4 years. We are now into 5.5 years. We tried to strengthen the nutrition programs through amendments and legislation, but the Republicans defeated our efforts, sadly.

We must stabilize farm income, or we will allow our producers to fall behind. Whether we invest in local food systems or just let them disappear, food is a national security issue. The farm bill affects grocery prices, crop insurance, school lunches, and rural economies.

Mr. Speaker, we must pass a bipartisan farm bill this year, and I am doing everything I can by working with my colleagues across the aisle and the Senate because food is a national security issue. That is the bottom line.

In the Central Valley that I represent, the San Joaquin Valley, families are spending over \$1,000 a month on groceries. The affordability question is real.

Farmers are navigating misguided tariffs policy, volatile markets, and disease outbreaks. In the richest country in the world, we should not accept a system where the hardest-working farmers see shrinking margins while families struggle to afford their groceries.

Let's support our farmers. Let's feed our families. Let's feed our children.

HONORING ROBERT "BOB" BACKON

(Mr. BERGMAN of Michigan was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life and legacy of a truly remarkable man, my cousin, my friend, and a true pillar of his community, Robert "Bob" Backon.