

RECOGNIZING CHANCE MULLEN

Mr. LATIMER. Mr. Speaker, permit me to extend happy birthday wishes on April 4 to Pelham Mayor Chance Mullen, who is showing talent and leadership in the public sector, as well as in the private nonprofit world.

Chance was elected as mayor of the village of Pelham in 2019 and is serving in his fourth term. He served previously as a trustee on the village board.

Chance is the chief elected official for Pelham Village, a community of 7,000 people, with all the municipal responsibilities and headaches that come with the position of mayor: the responsibilities for police, fire, sanitation, and the like.

Through all of that, Mayor Mullen has done an exemplary job, but that is not his only job. In his professional life, Chance serves as the executive director of the Housing Action Council, a regional nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income households.

Finally, Chance Mullen is an active Pelham volunteer: Cub Scouts, Little League baseball, the Picture House, Pelham Civic Association, and more.

From the floor of the House of Representatives, I wish a happy birthday to Mayor Chance Mullen and encourage him to take a break for at least one day.

RECOGNIZING ELECTION WINNERS IN NEW YORK

Mr. LATIMER. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, March 18, was a day for democracy in New York State.

Voters in many of our villages went to the polls to elect leaders to serve their home communities, running the village governments that provide basic services in their area: police, fire, sanitation, recreation, snow removal, land use authority, and the like.

In Westchester's 16th Congressional District, let me salute those who have won.

In the village of Bronxville, Helen Knapp and Vanessa O'Friel were elected as trustees to the Bronxville Village Board. William Prince was elected village justice.

In the village of Elmsford, Nelson Lopez and David Signor were elected as trustees to the Elmsford Village Board.

In the village of Scarsdale, Tim Foley, Ron Schulhof, and Scott Silberfein were elected as trustees to the Scarsdale Village Board.

These elections were held without controversy or incident. There were no claims of illegal voting or stolen elections but just simply democracy at work.

I congratulate the winners and thank all who competed in their service to the communities.

HONORING ERIC F. MELGREN

(Mr. MANN of Kansas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Judge Eric F. Melgren

of the United States District Court for the District of Kansas and to recognize his distinguished service on the Federal bench.

Today, the district of Kansas unveiled Judge Melgren's official portrait and celebrated his lasting legacy after nearly two decades of active judicial service. As of September 1, 2025, Judge Melgren has assumed senior status, which he will continue to serve with the same dedication and commitment that have defined his entire career.

Judge Melgren's story is a Kansas story. Raised on a cattle and wheat farm in southwest Kansas, he is a first-generation college graduate who went on to lead as student body president of Wichita State University and later earned his law degree from Washburn University.

From private practice in Wichita to serving as United States Attorney for the district of Kansas and, ultimately, to his appointment to the Federal bench by President George W. Bush, his career reflects a life rooted in hard work, service, and leadership.

Over 18 years on the bench, including his time as Chief Judge, Judge Melgren has upheld the rule of law with integrity and a deep respect for the Constitution. He has also given back to his community, leading organizations like United Way of the Plains and Leadership Wichita, and remaining closely connected to the people and institutions that helped to shape him.

In the Big First District and across Kansas, we value those who serve with humility, lead with principle, and stay grounded in their roots. Judge Melgren embodies those values.

I thank him for his service, congratulate him on this milestone, and wish him the very best as he continues his hard work on the bench.

HONORING MICHAEL HINTON

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a proud Kansan whose work honors the legacy of American agriculture and the generations who built it.

Michael Hinton of Hutchinson has dedicated his life to preserving the history and heritage of rural America through antique tractors, but his work goes far beyond restoring old equipment. It is about telling the story of the men and women who have worked the land, provided for their families, and helped feed the world.

Through his creation of Antique Tractors Preservation Day and the launch of talkingtractors.com, Michael has built a platform that brings agricultural history to life and connects generations through a shared appreciation for hard work, innovation, and community. His efforts have earned recognition across Kansas and the Nation.

This year, Michael was inducted into the National Agricultural Hall of Fame, joining the ranks of some of the most influential figures in our Nation's agricultural history, from George Washington to John Deere. He is now

one of only a handful of Kansans to receive this distinguished honor.

In the Big First District of Kansas, agriculture is not just our way of life. It is our legacy. Leaders like Michael Hinton remind us that preserving that legacy matters while we continue to build its future.

I am grateful for his work, proud to call him a fellow Kansan, and congratulate him on his well-deserved recognition.

RECOGNIZING ELIZABETH RAMIREZ

(Mrs. RAMIREZ of Illinois was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor a fierce advocate for justice and a tireless champion for gun violence prevention, Elizabeth Ramirez.

On a tragic night almost 15 years ago, Elizabeth's son, Harry Rodriguez, was fatally shot, giving his life to protect his family members when a masked assailant opened fire during his 23rd birthday celebration.

From the depths of unimaginable grief, Elizabeth transformed her pain into purpose. She cofounded Parents for Peace and Justice in Belmont Cragin, in Illinois-03, to not only advocate for stronger gun violence prevention measures but to provide essential support to families who have been impacted by gun violence.

Elizabeth provides courtroom support for families. She organizes peace walks and hosts vigils throughout communities to ensure that no family member has to navigate the profound pain of losing a loved one to violence alone.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I am proud to commend Elizabeth Ramirez for her relentless hope and for her essential work to help our communities recover from violence and loss.

I thank Elizabeth, and may her son rest in peace and power.

RECOGNIZING JESSICA ESQUIVEL

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my constituent, Dr. Jessica Esquivel.

Jessica is a queer, Afro-Latine, particle physicist, disruptor, author, and visionary who has made it her personal mission to ensure the success of underrepresented communities in the sciences.

As one of the few Afro-Latine, queer women in the world of STEAM, Jessica embraces all facets of her identity, unapologetically existing in spaces that have historically excluded people who look like her or identify as she does.

Through her work as an associate scientist at Fermilab, her leadership as cofounder of Oyanova Enterprises, and her creation of Twitter movement #blackinphysics, she has fostered opportunities for Black and Brown leaders to thrive through culturally relevant STEAM programming, mental

health advocacy, and countless other initiatives.

Jessica's work reveals the critical intersection of science, identity, and culture, demonstrating how diverse perspectives are essential to solving the challenges of our time.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, it is my honor to commend Dr. Jessica Esquivel for blazing trails and reminding us that all is possible when we lift others as we climb.

I congratulate Dr. Esquivel on her success.

RECOGNIZING MARY SANTANA

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mary Santana, a visionary whose leadership has built transformative, creative spaces that uplift our young people in Illinois-03 and beyond.

Mary is the founder and executive director at the Miracle Center, an organization that reflects her belief that community, creativity, and care have the power to change lives. The Miracle Center is a beacon for diverse youth and families, offering mentoring, coaching, training, and academic support, all grounded in the arts.

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What started as a small day camp run out of her basement apartment has, over the last 30 years, grown to impact over 20,000 young people across Chicago. Mary has ensured that The Miracle Center nurtures diverse local artists, showcases BIPOC artistry, and uplifts unique perspectives. Under her leadership, The Miracle Center has grown, acquiring a dedicated building near my district office offering Latino artists a platform for performance.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I am proud to commend Mary Santana for bringing the power of art to our communities and establishing The Miracle Center in Illinois Three as a space where young people can explore their creative dreams and know that nothing is impossible when you dream and you have community.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mary and congratulate and commend her on this House floor.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SERGEANT BENJAMIN N. PENNINGTON

(Mr. CRANK of Colorado was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the nation in mourning the loss of Sergeant Benjamin N. Pennington, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 1st Space Brigade in my district at Fort Carson in Colorado Springs.

A Kentucky native, Benjamin had the drive to serve instilled in him from a young age. Even as a kid, he knew he wanted to be an American soldier. Here beside me is one of his drawings he made in kindergarten where he wrote: "I love America because I want to fight for my country," at 5 years old. He

would even spend all day outside playing Army man with his friends and with his neighbors, dreaming of the day he would be able to wear a uniform. He enjoyed watching the Military Channel and reading books about the military. Even his childhood bedroom was decorated with Army prints and military planes hanging from the ceiling.

As a teenager, Benjamin enjoyed playing sports, but he dedicated most of his time to Boy Scouts, later proving his dedication to serving by achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

In growing up, many of his teachers recognized all the qualities of an American hero. With his determination, his compassion, and his natural charismatic demeanor, no act of service was ever too small.

In 2017, at age 18, just one month after graduating high school and his Eagle Scout ceremony, Benjamin enlisted in the United States Army as a supply unit specialist, where he quickly earned the trust of his colleagues and senior officials.

He spent much of his career stationed at Fort Polk in Louisiana, and he served a tour in Korea before ultimately being stationed at Fort Carson. While there, Benjamin fell in love with the beauty of the nature and the mountains of Colorado Springs. It was there that he also found the comfort of home in church, giving his life to Christ through baptism in January of this year.

While talking to Benjamin's father, Tim, a great man, he told me that Benjamin enjoyed going to Major League Baseball games and had the goal to see a game at every MLB stadium.

Benjamin was deployed in support of Operation Epic Fury, answering the call to defend our freedoms from those who sought to harm our country. Tragically, on March 8, Benjamin was only 26 years young when he gave the ultimate sacrifice, succumbing to his injuries during an enemy attack at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia. His sacrifice is a grave and sobering reminder of the dangers our men and women in uniform face in the Middle East and across the globe to defend our Nation and our freedoms.

During Benjamin's time in service, he earned many honors, including the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Army Commendation Medal. In recognition of his true bravery and his true sacrifice, the United States Army has announced that he will be posthumously promoted to the rank of staff sergeant, an enduring testament to the courage and sacrifice to our Nation that will not be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Sergeant Pennington's noble sacrifice.

THE WAR IN IRAN

(Mr. DOGGETT of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, before departing the Capitol last week, I stood at this very spot with Democratic and Republican colleagues, three separate times, to honor, with moments of silence, American servicemembers who have fallen in Trump's reckless war in Iran. If congressional Republicans continue to remain silent, the only result will be more of those ceremonies and more deaths of innocents like the 168 children and teachers who were killed by a U.S. bomb.

An arrogant Hegseth dismisses all of this with a shrug as "bad things happen." To Trump, he sees it as a fundraising opportunity as he solicits money using the pictures of these fallen heroes.

But for the families who lost a father, a son, or a daughter, a spouse, it means an empty seat at Thanksgiving. It means a bride walking unaccompanied down the aisle. It means an untouched pillow on the bed. It means years of grief without the good advice, the laughter, the hope, and the bear hug that will never come.

While Iran certainly has a tyrannical regime that has murdered thousands of its own citizens and in prior years was responsible for the deaths of some Americans, Iran posed no imminent or immediate threat at the time President Trump chose to suddenly abandon negotiations and launch an assault. Republicans are rubber-stamping a war that lacks any plan or any set goal. More than 200 American servicemembers have already been wounded, and Trump is certainly not dispatching more ground troops to the area for the sunshine.

We are now in week 4 of what he told us was a 4- to 5-week war. All we have to show for it is death and destruction, a depleted weapons supply, soaring gas prices, and an Iranian regime that is intact and more hardline than ever.

Israeli officials have advised that any Iranian protestors will be "slaughtered" by a brutal regime that is "not cracking." What is much worse about this is that Trump knew. He was told by close advisers that this would be the outcome before this war began. As one said: "It wasn't just predictable, it was predicted."

Instead of acknowledging this complete failure, Trump continues to endanger all of us. Now, he is submitting to this Congress a bill for American taxpayers of \$200 billion. Let's face it, Iran has grabbed Trump by the Hormuz, with no path out of a quagmire that could be like Iraq where we lost 4,400 servicemembers and wasted over \$2 trillion.

With Trump's \$200 billion bill, about 22 million Americans could have affordable access to healthcare, not just this year, but with restored tax credits for the next 7 years. Our veterans, 9 million veterans could get their VA healthcare paid for for the next 2 years. With \$200 billion, we could double the National Institutes of Health budget to explore research for Alzheimer's and