

en los países emergentes. Se convirtió en un ejemplo de cómo la política y la corrupción destruyen el progreso y borran el camino hacia la prosperidad.

En el aniversario 250 de los Estados Unidos, no olvidemos aquellas partes de este país de estados, territorios y estados libre asociados que tuvieron—y perdieron—su gobierno por consentimiento de los gobernados.

No olvidemos que “nosotros, el pueblo” debemos continuar la labor hacia una unión más perfecta: una unión más perfecta de estados, territorios y estados libre asociados.

#### THANKING THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 290 FOR SPONSORING THE MOVING WALL

(Ms. FOXX of North Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and thank The American Legion Post 290 in King, North Carolina, for recently sponsoring a traveling replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Referred to as “The Moving Wall,” this replica is 246 feet in length and honors every servicemember who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in Vietnam.

In late April to early May, The Moving Wall was displayed at The American Legion Post 290 in King, and I was fortunate enough to attend the closing ceremony and offer a few remarks about its importance.

The American Legion Auxiliary sponsored the event, and doing so takes serious and dedicated planning by all who are involved.

This event came together through countless hours of preparation and diligence in monitoring the wall while it was in King.

Sheila Winfrey, the 290 unit president; Lynn Shouse, the vice president; Cherryl Penn; and Jessie Penn deserve tremendous credit for putting this entire event together.

The citizens of King and those from the area who came to view The Moving Wall indicated that they share the exact same sentiment.

We are all grateful for the dedication and efforts of these four wonderful individuals in helping put this event together, as well as grateful for those represented on the wall.

Everyone who was fortunate enough to attend, me included, would agree that they did a fantastic job all around.

It is my hope that many others across our Nation will attend such events where The Moving Wall is displayed and take the time to learn of its importance and the sacrifices made to preserve and protect the freedoms we are all blessed to have by those who have served and especially those who lost their lives in service.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF DOMINIC P. STRANGIO

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

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life of a remarkable young western New Yorker and St. Joe's student, Dominic P. Strangio of Niagara Falls, whose courageous battle with cancer came to an end on April 22, 2026, at just 16 years old.

Dominic was a beloved son to Frank and Sara, a devoted big brother to Sofia and Frankie, and a treasured grandson, cousin, teammate, classmate, and friend. Though his time on this Earth was far too short, the impact he made on those around him will endure for generations.

Dominic was a proud Marauder, attending St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute. As someone who walked those halls myself, I know firsthand the values St. Joe's seeks to instill: faith, brotherhood, compassion, and service to others.

Dominic embodied those values in every sense. The entire St. Joe's community mourns this immeasurable loss alongside the Strangio family, united in both grief and gratitude for having known such an extraordinary young man.

On the baseball field, Dominic was someone his teammates could depend on. Off the field, he loved hanging out with his cherished friends, going on fishing trips with his papa, and spending Sunday afternoons at his nonna's kitchen table. He found joy in the simple gifts of life and treasured every moment spent with his brother and sister.

It was not only how Dominic lived his life before his diagnosis that inspired so many. It was how he faced adversity. Throughout his illness, Dominic demonstrated courage and grace far beyond his years. Guided by his faith, he remained selfless, optimistic, and resilient. He never complained. He continued to think of others even as he confronted challenges that few adults could ever imagine.

Dominic's strength became a source of inspiration to his family, friends, classmates, and our entire community.

Mr. Speaker, while Dominic's years were few, his example was immense. May we all carry forward his kindness, faith, resilience, and love for his family.

To Dominic's parents, Frank and Sara; his brother, Frankie; his sister, Sofia; and all who mourn this tremendous loss, our Nation and our community mourn with you.

St. John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us. Live, Jesus, in our hearts forever.

May Dominic Strangio rest in peace.

#### CELEBRATING 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BUFFALO CRITERION

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a remarkable milestone in the history of western New York: the 100th anniversary of The Buffalo Criterion.

Founded by Frank Merriweather, Sr., and his wife, Carmelita, The Criterion is the oldest Black-owned newspaper in western New York and the oldest Black-owned business in Erie County.

For over a century, four generations of the Merriweather family have carried forward a simple but powerful mission: to tell the stories that too often go untold and to ensure that Buffalo's Black community has a voice that is heard loud and clear.

Frank Merriweather, Sr., a graduate of the Tuskegee Institute, who studied under Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver, understood that journalism would be a force for justice, opportunity, and change. That vision has endured for 100 years and counting.

From the extraordinary leadership of Frank Merriweather, Jr., to Evelyn Patterson Merriweather, Frank Merriweather III, Dr. Eva Doyle, and countless dedicated journalists, photographers, and community leaders, The Criterion has chronicled the triumphs, struggles, and aspirations of generations of western New Yorkers.

When our community faced tragedy following the racist terrorist attack at Tops on Jefferson on May 14, 2022, The Buffalo Criterion helped to tell Buffalo's story to the Nation and the global community.

In a moment of profound grief, it became a source of truth, moral clarity, strength, and healing. That is what The Criterion does. It leads.

For 100 years, The Criterion has spoken truth to power, preserved history, amplified local voices, and strengthened our community.

Today, we honor its extraordinary legacy and congratulate everyone who has played a role and helped to make The Buffalo Criterion an enduring institution in Buffalo and throughout western New York.

I congratulate them on a century of work, and here is to many, many more years to come.

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#### RECOGNIZING 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALLEN, TEXAS

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

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the city of Allen's 150 years of history and community spirit and encourage all residents to join in honoring this sesquicentennial milestone.

Founded in 1876, Allen has become one of north Texas' most vibrant communities and has built a proud legacy of civic leadership, opportunity, and service.

Allen's story is one of vision, resilience, and progress. What began as a small railroad settlement in rural Collin County has become a dynamic city known for its flourishing neighborhoods, strong local economy, high-ranking schools, and exceptional quality of life. Its continued success reflects the dedication of generations of

residents, educators, business leaders, first responders, public servants, city leadership, and staff who have helped shape Allen into the excellent example it is today.

As Allen has expanded in size and prominence, it has remained grounded in the values that have long defined its character: Texas toughness, hard work, civic pride, and a deep sense of unity. The city's sesquicentennial anniversary is not only an opportunity to honor its rich history, but to celebrate the bright future that lies ahead.

Allen's legacy continues to reflect the strength, promise, and spirit of north Texas. On behalf of Texas' Third Congressional District, I am honored to recognize the city of Allen on the occasion of its 150th anniversary and to extend best wishes as we celebrate this historic milestone.

RECOGNIZING 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTH TEXAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the North Texas Municipal Water District as it celebrates its 75th anniversary of service to the people of north Texas.

Founded in 1951 by civic leaders from 10 original member cities who understood that water would be the key to our region's future, the District has spent the last 75 years turning that vision into reality. What began as a partnership among a handful of communities has grown into a regional utility of 13 member cities and 34 customers serving more than 70 communities and over 2.4 million Texans across Collin County and beyond.

In Texas' Third Congressional District, I have witnessed firsthand the extraordinary growth of north Texas. Communities such as McKinney, Plano, Frisco, Allen, Wylie, Farmersville, and many others have become one of the fastest growing areas in America. Families and businesses continue to choose our region because of its opportunity, innovation, and quality of life.

However, growth does not happen on its own. It requires planning and the willingness to build for tomorrow. Every home, school, hospital, and business depends on reliable water infrastructure. Today, the North Texas Municipal Water District provides not only drinking water but also wastewater treatment and solid waste services that support communities across our vast region.

For 75 years, the District has demonstrated a commitment to the region through responsible stewardship, long-range planning, and investment in the infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of future generations. Its leadership has helped ensure that one of America's fastest growing regions has the resources to continue thriving.

On behalf of the people of Texas' Third Congressional District, I congratulate the North Texas Municipal Water District on this milestone anniversary and thank the men and women of the District past and present for 75 years of dedicated service.

HONORING LIFE AND LEGACY OF SPENCER LEAK, JR.

(Ms. KELLY of Illinois was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, Representative JACKSON is going to stand with me, but this is not his 5 minutes. He is just standing with me.

I rise today to honor the life and extraordinary legacy of Spencer Leak, Jr., a devoted father, husband, son, brother, and faithful community leader whose service left a lasting mark on the Chicagoland area. Most of all, I am honored to have called him a friend and a constituent.

Spencer dedicated his life to serving the people of the Chicagoland area. He carried forward his family's proud legacy and business, Leak & Sons Funeral Home.

He pursued his education with purpose, graduating from Southern Illinois University with a degree in mortuary and funeral sciences and becoming a licensed director in 1989. However, his calling started long before that. Spencer began working at the family business at just 12 years old, answering phones and learning his trade. He rose to become vice president in 1993, carrying on a tradition of faithful, kind, and honest service to families in their most difficult moments.

As a third-generation funeral director, Spencer expanded the vision of his grandfather, Reverend Andrew Leak, so that Black people living in the Chicagoland area could lay their loved ones to rest with the dignity, respect, and care they deserved.

Mr. Speaker, Spencer's work reached far beyond his profession. He was an advocate for civil rights and justice, a trusted friend to leaders across our community, and a generous supporter of the causes that lifted up those in need. His commitment to service and to positivity never wavered. He mentored young Black men, partnered with organizations to empower residents, and stood as a true pillar to his community.

Spencer was a champion of the small, humble acts of kindness that so often go unseen. His devotion to a more just world was never in question, and through it all, he grew the Leak family legacy of making the Chicagoland community better and more loving. His love touched many. His generosity ran deep, and his service knew no bounds.

Above all, Spencer was an amazing husband, father, a kind son, a supportive brother, and a truly wonderful human being. His passing is deeply felt by his beloved wife, Dr. Donna Leak, who is in the gallery; his children, Spencer Leak III and Emma Leak; his parents, Spencer Leak, Sr., and Henrietta Leak; his siblings, Stephen and Stacy; his extended family; and the many friends and community members that mourn his loss.

On a personal level, I experienced Spencer's kindness on many levels, but most personal was when he handled my husband's funeral services almost 3 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the extraordinary legacy of Spencer Leak, Jr., and extending my deepest condolences to his family, friends, and all who were blessed to know him.

May his memory be a blessing. Rest in peace and power, my friend.

CELEBRATING 250 YEARS OF AMERICA

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

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as we honor and prepare to celebrate 250 years of American independence.

Mr. Speaker, 250 years ago, our Founders declared to the world that our rights do not come from government nor do they come from a king. They come from our creator. They declared that government exists to protect liberty, to secure the rights of people, and to preserve a nation where free men and women could build lives, raise families, worship God, and pursue opportunity. That idea changed the course of human history.

As we approach America's 250th birthday, we ought to look back with gratitude, but we should also look forward with clarity. America's success was not an accident. We were blessed by God with extraordinary resources, but it was freedom that allowed the American people to turn those blessings into the most prosperous Nation in the history of the world.

I often think about it this way: America was dealt three aces. First, we were given the largest stretch of fertile farmland in the world, which runs right through Kansas and the district that I am blessed to represent. In the Big First District, agriculture is not just an industry, it is our way of life. Our farmers, ranchers, feedlot operators, ethanol producers, researchers, truckers, and small businesses all play a role in feeding, fueling, and clothing the world.

Second, running through that great patch of farmland is the largest navigable river system on the planet, the Mississippi River system. That river system gave American producers the ability to move goods, reach markets, trade with the world, and build an economy that went well beyond the county line, a State line, or even a coastline.

Third, and most importantly, America was founded on faith, freedom, private property rights, the rule of law, and limited government. Fertile soil alone does not create prosperity. A river alone does not create opportunity. Natural resources alone do not make a nation great. Freedom does.

It was freedom that allowed families to farm the land, own the land, improve the land, pass it down to the next generation, and build communities around it. It was freedom that allowed entrepreneurs to take risks, churches to strengthen communities, families to flourish, and citizens to govern themselves.