

access to homeownership. People simply cannot compete with these for-profit corporations, and every family deserves a place to call home.

Just last week, President Trump acknowledged the same problem and called on Congress to address it. On this issue, it seems we may finally all be reading from the same page.

I encourage my colleagues to support the HOMES Act and see its swift passage, but we also need to build homes, too. Supply simply has not met the demand. That is why I secured Federal funding for the East Akron Neighborhood Development Corporation to help expand affordable housing, revitalize neighborhoods, and create jobs. Increasing supply is essential if we want housing prices to come down.

As chair of the New Democrat Coalition's Affordable Housing Task Force, I helped develop a housing action plan with more than 20 recommendations to increase housing supply, reform zoning and permitting, strengthen Federal incentives, grow the construction workforce, and improve transparency.

Mr. Speaker, housing is the foundation of opportunity. Homeownership is the primary way in which families build wealth. When housing is affordable and stable, families can plan, save, and build a future. When it is not, life becomes harder. Rents are too high. Mortgages are still out of reach for far too many families. Property taxes and repairs are stretching household budgets. Homelessness programs that protect our most vulnerable neighbors must be preserved.

Mr. Speaker, we have to get serious about housing and focus our attention on lowering the cost of housing and keeping housing accessible to everyone. The American Dream depends on it.

Every family deserves a safe and affordable place to call home, and this House has a responsibility to help make that possible. Until housing costs come down, Congress has a lot more work to do. I look forward to working with this body on behalf of my constituents and across the country to work to reduce housing costs so everyone can live their American Dream wherever they choose to call home.

RECOGNIZING AND THANKING NATE SOULE

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

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank someone whose impact on my office and on me personally cannot be overstated, my chief of staff, Nate Soule, as he concludes his service to New York's 17th Congressional District.

When I first ran for the New York State Assembly in 2020, before there was a congressional office or a seat in this Chamber, Nate took a leap of faith and helped build a campaign from the ground up. Together, we delivered a

victory many said was impossible, defeating an incumbent in a district with a 2-1 Democratic enrollment advantage. That race was the foundation for everything that has followed.

In Albany, Nate served as my chief of staff and helped lead one of the most active offices in the State assembly. Our team delivered real results for the Hudson Valley and built a reputation for being accessible, responsive, and relentless when it came to constituent services.

When I was elected to Congress, Nate once again stepped up, first as deputy chief of staff and communications director and now as my chief of staff. Through every transition, he has brought discipline, sound judgment, and an unwavering commitment to the people we serve.

Nate understands that public service is not about titles or headlines. It is about doing the work, telling the truth, and delivering for the people who sent us here. His counsel is steady and measured, his loyalty unwavering, and, above all, his friendship cherished.

Through Nate's vision, his hard work, and his invaluable leadership, our office has not only been more effective but has set a standard for what public service can and should be. I have no doubt that he will bring the same integrity and dedication as he embarks on a new chapter. Doina and I wish Nate and his wife, Lauren, the very best.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ANTHONY "TONY" DEFECIANI

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Anthony "Tony" DeFeciani, who passed away peacefully on December 23, 2025.

Born and raised in Haverstraw, Tony was a proud New Yorker, attending Haverstraw High School and participating in the marching band, where he was voted the most musical in his senior year.

Following graduation, Tony enlisted in the United States Navy and proudly served during the Korean war. He was awarded the Bronze Star after more than 30 years of service. Returning home, Tony worked at Bear Mountain, Lederle Laboratories, and New York Telephone/Verizon, retiring after 30 years of professional service.

Tony also gave back to his community as a volunteer firefighter with the Haverstraw Fire Department Relief Hose Company No. 3 for 60 years, serving as fire chief.

Tony was an avid gardener and fisherman, built his own boat, and ran Rainbow Gardens, known locally for its tomatoes.

A devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Tony shared 66 years of wonderful marriage with his beloved wife, Joan. Together, they raised six children. He cherished every moment with his family and community and will be deeply missed.

HONORING LIFE OF THEODORE SCHULTZ

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Theodore

"Ted the Great" Schultz, who passed away peacefully on January 10, surrounded by his family.

Born in Nyack, Ted was raised on his grandfather's farm in Pomona and attended Spring Valley High School, where he earned the rank of Eagle Scout. A talented athlete, he wrestled and played football, earning the nickname "Tank," and went on to attend Illinois Wesleyan University, where he played football for 4 years and later earned his MBA from Washington University.

It was at Illinois Wesleyan that Ted met his wife, Carol. They settled in Pearl River, New York, where they raised their children, Traci and Craig, before later moving to Stony Point.

Ted built a remarkable career at Ted Schultz Auto Sales, relocating the dealership to Nanuet and growing it into a nationally ranked Ford dealership while earning numerous President's Awards.

Beyond work, Ted enjoyed time with friends, boating on the Hudson River, and spending time with his grandchildren. His legacy lives on through the lessons he passed on to his family, his friends, and the many lives he touched. May he rest in peace.

RECOGNIZING S.W. JOHNSON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the S.W. Johnson Fire Department in Rockland County on an incredible milestone of 150 years of dedicated service to our community.

Since its formation in 1876, S.W. Johnson has been 100 percent volunteer, embodying selflessness, courage, and a commitment to protecting our neighbors.

One of the department's most treasured pieces of history is its steamer, a Button manufactured in 1896 by the company that would become American LaFrance. This remarkable piece of equipment reflects the rich legacy and enduring dedication of S.W. Johnson and the fire service today.

I say thank you on behalf of New York's 17th Congressional District to the many firefighters who have given their time and bravery to this firehouse over the years. Congratulations to S.W. Johnson on 150 years of dedicated service. Their commitment, bravery, and volunteer spirit are an inspiration to us all.

HONORING OFFICER WILLIAM EPPERSON

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

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the courage and selfless service of Officer William Epperson of the Oyster Creek Police Department.

Mr. Speaker, on the night of November 17, 2025, Officer Epperson responded to a house fire with two residents trapped inside. Heavy smoke was pouring from the home, and the living area was only accessible by an exterior stairwell.

When the front door was locked and conditions were too dangerous to enter, Officer Epperson did not give up. Hearing calls for help, he broke a smoke-filled window and pulled a woman to safety. He then returned to assist her husband, who had limited mobility, helping him also escape the burning home.

Officer Epperson then ensured no one else was inside and went door to door, warning the nearby neighbors, all while suffering smoke inhalation himself.

Mr. Speaker, without Officer Epperson's bravery, lives would have been lost that night. His actions reflect the very best of law enforcement and the very best of Texas. God bless Officer Epperson.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL IAN O'SULLIVAN

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, we honor a leader whose service has left a lasting mark on the Texas coast and on the safety of millions of Texans. I am speaking about Lieutenant Colonel Ian O'Sullivan, who has been instrumental in advancing the Coastal Texas Project, what folks back home called the Ike Dike. Under his leadership at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Galveston District, this project moved from concept toward construction.

Just recently, the House included \$5 million to advance pre-construction engineering and design for the Ike Dike. That funding moves the project forward, Mr. Speaker, as it heads to the Senate, and it supports a comprehensive coastal resiliency strategy that protects lives, restores ecosystems, and strengthens our economy.

Those numbers only happen, Mr. Speaker, because of leaders like Mr. O'Sullivan, leaders who understand the mission, discipline, and follow through on what they promised.

From combat deployments overseas to mega projects right here at home, he has served with honor and excellence.

On behalf of the people of southeast Texas, I thank Lieutenant Colonel O'Sullivan for his leadership, his service, and his commitment to protecting our coast.

May God bless Lieutenant Colonel O'Sullivan, and may his next chapter be as impactful as the one he leaves behind.

□ 1045

CATALINA FOOTHILLS HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' SWIM TEAM WINS D2 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

(Mr. CISCOMANI of Arizona was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Catalina Foothills High School boys' swim team for winning the D2 State championship.

The Falcons finished with a total score of 386, with senior Connor Daggett winning gold.

The team finished first in three races: the 200-meter medley, with Nicholas Dinsmore, Mathew Murray, Ariston Elsesser, and Connor Daggett finishing with a time of 1:39.891; the 50-meter freestyle with Connor Daggett finishing with a time of 21:42; and the 200-meter freestyle relay, with Nicholas Dinsmore, Aidan Kastner, Ariston Elsesser, and Connor Daggett finishing with a time of 1:30.831.

In addition to finishing first in multiple races, the Falcons also placed in the top five for several others.

To Coach Ed Walter, the whole team, and everyone who made this win possible: Congratulations. Their hard work has made their school and our community extremely proud.

Falcons, enjoy your victory. You earned it. Congratulations again.

TANQUE VERDE BOYS' SWIM TEAM WINS D3 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Tanque Verde High School boys' swim team for winning the D3 State championship.

The Hawks finished with a total score of 257, placing first in the 200-meter freestyle relay and in the top five for multiple other events, including the 200-meter medley relay and 400 freestyle relay.

The team's time of 1:31.81 on the 200-meter freestyle won them first place, with a team made up of Jackson Eftekhari, Grayson The, Wade Olsson, and Zachary Duerkop.

To Coach Porter Olstad, the whole team, and everyone who made this win possible: Congratulations. Their hard work has made their school and our community extremely proud.

Hawks, enjoy your victory. You have earned it. Here is to another successful season and many, many more.

CIENEGA HIGH SCHOOL'S MARCHING BAND WINS CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Cienega High School's marching band on winning the Arizona Marching Band Southern Regional Championship.

The Bobcats broke the program's record for the highest score in a regular season show. They also brought home the highest score in music performance, visual performance, general effect, and percussion performance.

I also congratulate them on coming in as State silver medalists at the Arizona Marching Band Association's State championship. Through the long hours of hard work and dedication, the Bobcats achieved this outstanding accomplishment.

To Director Reed Bailey, each member of the band, and all parents and staff who made this win possible: Congratulations. They have made their school and our community very proud.

Bobcats, enjoy this victory. You earned it. Congratulations on yet another successful season.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 47 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOST) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Holy God, let all who are faithful offer their prayers to You. Trusting in Your care, teach us the way we should go, that we may yield ourselves to Your instruction and have confidence that Your righteousness is our strength.

When we are overwhelmed or in distress, even the inundation of mighty waters will not overtake us. For You are our shelter, a hiding place where we are protected from discouragement. Your voice delivers us from despair.

Your eye is upon us. You watch over our comings and goings. You attend to our motivations and discipline our inclinations. Your counsel is omniscient and perceptive, plumbing the depths of our innermost souls.

Your steadfast love surrounds us. There is nowhere we can be, no turn or move we can make that we are not hemmed in by Your compassionate care and guided by Your generous grace.

Sovereign God, may Your immeasurable and abiding presence be our guardian, guide, and refuge through this day and always.

In Your infinite mercy, we offer our prayers, and in Your matchless name, we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LUTTRELL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LUTTRELL led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests