

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING TOM SKILLING FOR A
REMARKABLE 45-YEAR CAREER

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today along with my colleague, Representative MIKE QUIGLEY, to celebrate one of Chicagoland's very own, legendary meteorologist Tom Skilling, and his 45-year career as a beloved presence on our local airwaves as he embarks on his well-deserved retirement.

As the longtime chief meteorologist for WGN-TV, Tom Skilling has been one of the most trusted figures on television screens throughout the Chicago area for decades, expertly and calmly explaining the region's often unpredictable weather situations for generations of viewers.

I am especially proud to say that Tom Skilling is an Aurora, Illinois native, and a proud graduate of West Aurora High School. After completing his studies at the University of Wisconsin, Tom worked briefly on local television stations in Madison and Milwaukee before landing at WGN-TV, where he quickly became a daily fixture in households throughout Chicago and the suburbs.

Those of us who know Tom and have worked with him over the course of his career know how passionate he is about his work and how talented he is at communicating often complex scientific data to people of all ages and backgrounds. But his greatest strength is the kindness with which he treats everyone he interacts with; he is always ready to greet a fan with a warm smile and meaningful conversation.

Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Tom Skilling and his decades of service to the Chicagoland community and offer him our most sincere best wishes on the next chapter of his life.

HONORING THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF
CARTHAGE, TEXAS

HON. NATHANIEL MORAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the 175th anniversary of Carthage, Texas.

Carthage, a vibrant and historic city nestled in the heart of East Texas, is celebrating its 175th anniversary on November 11, 2023. This remarkable milestone is a testament to the resilience, spirit, and rich heritage that has shaped the community of Carthage over the years.

Since its founding in 1848, Carthage has grown from a humble settlement to a thriving city that stands as a beacon of progress and unity. The city's commitment to fostering a

strong sense of community and preserving its unique heritage is truly commendable.

Carthage stands as a shining example of what can be achieved when a community comes together with a shared vision and a commitment to excellence. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating the 175th anniversary of Carthage's founding. Congratulations to Carthage on this momentous milestone. May the next 175 years be filled with continued growth, prosperity, and community pride. Happy anniversary, Carthage.

HONORING HAROLD L. GOMER FOR
HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize and celebrate a remarkable milestone: the 100th birthday of Harold L. Gomer, a Navy Veteran who embodies dedication, service, and love.

At the age of 7, Harold's father passed away and his mother and 5 siblings relocated to Austin, Minnesota. Harold would spend the next 86 years of his life in this new city and would grow to become an example to many.

Education played a significant role in shaping Harold's character—he graduated from Austin High School, where he participated in wrestling and Golden Glove Boxing. He excelled in his extracurriculars and eventually became a District Flyweight Champion, showcasing both his talent and tenacity.

On November 6, 1942, Harold bravely answered the call to serve his country. He left his job to join the United States Navy, where he served as Coxswain aboard the USS *Ammen* in the Pacific theater for 3 years. His unwavering dedication and service enabled him to serve on the USS *Logic* Minesweeper for an additional year before being honorably discharged.

Once returning to Austin, he resumed his employment at Hormel Meats, where he spent the following 40 years exhibiting dedication to his work and his community.

After returning home from defending our country, Mr. Gomer married his childhood sweetheart, Shirley Mae Greenlee. Their family grew with the addition of their 4 children: Patricia, Mark, Cheri, and Pamela. Over the years, the family has grown to include 9 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, and 10 great-great-grandchildren. In 2016, following the death of his wife, Harold moved to Orange County, California to live with his daughter Pam. Since relocating to Orange County, he has been enjoying retirement, occasionally going dancing and visiting Las Vegas.

Since then, he has discovered happiness in dancing and enjoying the company of his family and friends. Harold's relentless dedication to his country and community is highlighted

throughout his life, from his 2 years as commander of American Legion Post 91 and his 40 years of dedication to the Funeral Escort, to his 20 years of cooking for stag nights and his more than 30 years of bar management. These experiences show he is a leader who gives back to others.

I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing heartfelt congratulations and honoring Harold Gomer's character, service, and love for his community as we wish him a happy 100th birthday.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF
CONTRA COSTA TELEVISION

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Contra Costa Television (CCTV) as we commemorate Free Speech Week and Community Media Day.

Since its inception in 1994, CCTV has sought to provide community members with critical information, helping to keep our community connected and residents abreast of local issues. CCTV provides coverage of local government meetings, public safety information, local sports, and other community events with the goal of making local journalism accessible to all. CCTV livestreams to their website and social media platforms and provides twenty-four hour broadcasting, providing Contra Costans with convenient access to breaking news, important community updates, and more. CCTV has continually shown its dedication to sharing our community's stories and connecting Contra Costa residents.

CCTV has also partnered with the County Clerk-Recorder-Elections Department and local chapters of the League of Women Voters to provide voters with up-to-date reporting on candidates and ballot measures. A well-informed public is vital to any healthy democracy and I'm proud of CCTV's contributions to provide locally-produced voter education programming.

CCTV has received many accolades for its outstanding programming. The Veterans' Voices program received the Western Alliance Video Excellence award in 2016 and 2018 and the California State Association of Counties 2015 Merit Award.

Please join me in honoring Contra Costa Television as we commemorate Free Speech Week and Community Media Day.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS ARE INDOCTRINATING YOUNG AMERICANS WITH ANTI-ISRAEL HATE IN MORAL MONSTROSITY

HON. RITCHIE TORRES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Oct. 7th is a day that will live in infamy as the most gruesome terrorist attack in the history of the Jewish State.

Thousands of Israelis were murdered, raped, tortured, and abducted as hostages. Ten percent of the members of an Israeli kibbutz, Kfar Asar, were massacred.

About 260 young Israelis partying at a music festival were gunned down. Babies were butchered, burned and beheaded.

The ONLY morally acceptable response to such incomprehensible terror is overwhelming outrage at the boundless barbarism of Hamas.

While most of the civilized world, led by President Biden, rightly recoiled in horror at Hamas and condemned its terrorism immediately and unequivocally, Israel's ideological enemies here in the US found cause for celebration at the sight of dead Jews.

Imagine, for a moment, the inconsolable grief of a Jewish mother whose baby has been butchered to death. Could you imagine anything more callous and cruel than telling that grieving mother: You had it coming. You and your people brought the terror upon yourselves.

Those were the shocking sentiments of the New York City-Democratic Socialists of America (NYC-DSA), which wasted no time in holding a hate rally romanticizing the terrorism of Hamas as "resistance."

The DSA was hardly alone in blaming the victims of terrorism rather than the terrorists themselves.

Something is rotten in the state of America. When the institutional leaders in our country cannot condemn the cold-blooded murder of Israeli children and civilians with moral clarity, one must ask: what kind of society are we becoming?

What does the silence and indifference and cowardice—from these so-called leaders—tell us about the depth of anti-Semitism in America and the reckoning required?

The time has come to confront not only the symptoms but the disease: a Democratic Socialist industrial complex that indoctrinates young Americans with an anti-Israel hatred so virulent that it renders them indifferent to the deadliest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust.

Anti-Israel extremism, which has been given a veneer of mainstream respectability in law schools and legislatures, is aided and abetted by the sheer spinelessness of so-called "leaders"—from public officials to the presidents of colleges and universities.

Days of silence were often followed by words of cowardice, if there were any words at all.

Northwestern University, for example, said it had no plans to "put out a statement officially stating a University position." Imagine that: a university that cannot be bothered to take a position on a pogrom against Jews. Have we learned nothing from the long and ugly history of Anti-Semitism?

There is nothing accidental about the disregard for Israeli life that revealed itself in the wake of Oct. 7. The dehumanization of Israeli victims follows inevitably from the hyperbolic and systematic demonization of Israel itself.

Anti-Israel hate and hysteria have been allowed to fester freely in academia, social media, the political arena, and elsewhere. It has been propagated by AstroTurf activists and academics, amplified by their enablers in elected office, and subsidized by government and civil society.

When people are made to believe the most dangerous lies about Israel—that Israel is the root of all evil on earth; that it is a "75-year occupation" that must be wiped off the map from the "river to the sea"; that Israelis are not civilians but settlers who can be fairly targeted for "resistance"; that Israelis are committing genocide and ethnic cleansing against the Palestinians and harvesting their organs and using the blood of their children; that Israel is always the aggressor and Hamas always the resister: when you tell so many lies and incite so much hate, what do you think will happen?

How do you think the believers internalizing these lies will respond to the savage slaughter of Israelis? This is a moral monstrosity made in America, and one that America must unmake.

The anti-Israel hate increasingly possessing the American mind is a demon that must be exorcised from our body politic. For America cannot long remain a decent society if the next generation of Americans are made to be indifferent to the barbaric butchering of Israeli civilians and children.

I, for one, stand with Israel as it seeks to defend itself. Despite the profound pain of the present, Israel will emerge from it all better and stronger than ever before.

It will outlive the pernicious lies and the dangerous demagogues who tell them. It will outlive the extremism of the DSA and BDS. It will outlive the terrorism of Iran and its proxies, Hamas and Hezbollah.

Israel will live on—for the next 75 years and beyond. Resilience is the DNA and destiny of the Jewish people and the Jewish State. It always has been and always will be. I am as certain of that as I am of anything. The Jewish Nation lives on (Am Yisrael Chai).

HONORING THE VIETNAM AND KOREAN WAR VETERANS OF ILLINOIS

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise to honor the Vietnam and Korean War veterans who traveled to Washington, D.C. on October 18, 2023, with Honor Flight Chicago, a program that provides WWII, Vietnam, and Korean War veterans the opportunity to visit their memorials on The National Mall in Washington, D.C. These memorials were built to honor their courage and service to their country.

The American Veteran is one of our greatest treasures. The Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen who traveled here on October 18th answered our nation's call to service during one of its greatest times

of need. From the Pacific Asian Theatre to the Korean Theater, these brave Americans risked life and limb, gave service, and sacrificed much, all while embodying what it is to be a hero. We owe them more gratitude than can ever be expressed.

I welcome these brave veterans to Washington and to their memorials. I am proud to include in the RECORD the names of these men and women for all to see, hear, and recognize, and I call on my colleagues to rise and join me in expressing gratitude.

Mario R. Aliano, Sr., Peter Ralph Amodei, Ronald Angone, James Larry Arnold, Dennis J. Asch, Leonard Austin, Joseph T. Bienias, Ronald M. Bienias, Robert Bom, Thomas Brackenbury, Scott Lee Brighton, Terrence V. Burns, Donald T. Catchpole, John K. Clauson, David M. Clemen, Maurice J. Costello, William T. Coughlin, William A. Cox, Ronald L. Cummins, Dan A. Dahlquist, John Diehl, James Doffin, Charles A. Doiron, Jr., James M. Donahue, Mitchell G. Doud, James Drnek, George Joseph Durfor, Steven M. Dyer, Walter L. Favorite, Melvin L. Fonville, Rodney Foster, Ronald E. Foster, Carol J. Fowler, Gilbert F. Garcia, Raymond Gervais, Richard W. Giemzik, George N. Gray, Robert Grenlie, Louis Gugliuzza, Alvaro Guillen Jr., Dale Hamblin, Bruce Hansen, Henry Harris, Jackie Haviland, George Elmer Hessenthaler, Maurice Holman, George Hosso, John W. Huff, Tom Jackson, Martin D. Jayne, James Jensen, William Johnson, J. Malia Jones, David Kapella, Robert F. Kelly, Edward Allen Kimmey, Louis M. King, Arthur Landorf, Thomas W. Leitner, Thomas H. Lichtenfeld, Ronald William Line, Jerome Lorenz, Felipe Marrero, Michael Martino, Abraham Matook, Edward Maynard, Jr., Russel E. McClintock, William J. Mesheimer, Robert E. Miller, David E. Miller, Francis L. Minnito, Thomas J. Moran, Peggy Morris, David Myers, Joseph Offenbecher, Edward Lee Oller, Bruce E. Parry, James Patnode, Adis Patrick, Joseph P. Phelan, Terry L. Pierson, William A. Polensky, James E. Popjoy, James Purcell, Raymond Ritcheson, Jr., Robert Ross, David A. Sandeno, Thomas L. Schambach, James Scherbarth, Michael Scherer, Charles Scholtens, James L. Schulte, Kenneth Schussler, Andrew Sherlag, Michael A. Snyder, Donald B. Snyder, Ronald J. Soltis, Craig Summers, David Harry Swanson, Ronald Joseph Szikora, Donald D. Talbot, Anthony Turacek, Charles J. Vladika, William A. Ward, Arthur A. Warner, Thomas Wasmund, Robert A. Welko, John A. Wentz, Sr., James Wiginton, Johnnie Lewis Williams, Leon Withers.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF KENNETH A. MILLS

HON. ANDY KIM

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Mr. KIM of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to honor the life and selfless service of Kenneth A. Mills, a U.S. Army veteran who bravely served during the Korean War and passed earlier in October.

A beloved member of our Evesham community, many knew Ken as a person that was deeply committed to family, his community,

and our country. After graduating high school, Ken enlisted in the U.S. Army, where he was later stationed in Korea and served there for 3 years. After his honorable discharge in 1955, Ken's service was highly honored, as he earned two Bronze Stars, the Korean War Service Medal, and the United Nations Service Medal.

Beyond his service to our country, Ken went above and beyond in his personal and professional life to care for those around him. While starting a family of his own in Rockwood, Michigan, with his wife, Betty, Ken also started his career as a union representative, before eventually transitioning into a long, accomplished tenure in Human Resources. Eventually stepping up as the Director of Human Resources for Allied Signal, Ken became a strong leader of their department, working on behalf of the people, and traveling across the country before eventually settling in Marlton, New Jersey.

It was in Marlton that Ken became a dedicated member of the St. Joan of Arc parish, our local government, and the town watch. Through his involvement across multiple organizations, he took every opportunity to facilitate projects to make our community a better, safer place. Most recently, he focused his vision on the Evesham Township Veterans Wall of Honor in the Evesham Township Municipal Building. Ken played a vital role in the 'Coffee with a Vet' program as well as the local Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter.

No matter the task—big or small—Ken proved every day that he was a deep believer that it was always possible for each person to create positive change in their community. Even beyond Evesham's borders, he dedicated his time as the President of the Boys & Girls Club of Philadelphia, uplifting kids and young adults across the area. I know Ken will have the lasting memory of being a friendly face around town, often riding his lawn mower through the neighborhood with a warm smile and helping hand for whomever may need one.

We were lucky to have Ken as a member of our community. He was a beloved husband, father, and neighbor. My heart goes out to his entire family, his friends, and for anyone who knew him and grieving his loss. Though he will be deeply missed, I am sure his legacy will live on for years to come through his positive impacts on all our lives.

RECOGNIZING KATHLEEN O'BRIEN
HAM, 20 YEARS WITH T-MOBILE
USA

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise to recognize Kathleen O'Brien Ham for her forty years of work in wireless telecommunications advocacy, and to congratulate her on her retirement as T-Mobile's Senior Vice President for Government Affairs.

Throughout her nearly 20 years with T-Mobile, Kathleen has been instrumental in leading the company's public policy practice. She was responsible for engaging federal and state governments and agencies to advance a wide range of priorities for T-Mobile, including radio spectrum and consumer safety matters.

Kathleen's fourteen years of prior experience at the Federal Communications Commission equipped her well for the landmark achievements she accomplished during her tenure at T-Mobile. Thanks to her unmatched focus on industry competition and doing more for consumers, T-Mobile became the first telecommunications provider to offer 5G network coverage in all 50 states, expanding wireless access for millions of Americans across the country.

From testifying before Congress to spearheading T-Mobile's efforts to secure additional spectrum, Kathleen laid the groundwork for the company's growth and innovation in recent years. Under her oversight, T-Mobile closed its merger with Sprint after a successful two-year policy and regulatory campaign, positioning T-Mobile as the country's leading 5G wireless provider and strengthening the company's competitiveness for years to come.

Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I thank Kathleen O'Brien Ham for her career helping T-Mobile thrive and subsequently doing more for American consumers, and I wish her a happy retirement.

HONORING THE LANSING BOARD
OF WATER AND LIGHT

HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today I pay tribute to the hardworking men and women of the Lansing Board of Water and Light, a municipally-owned public utility in Michigan's 7th Congressional District for their efforts to restore service following storms that moved through Michigan on Thursday, August 24 and Friday, August 25, 2023. In a matter of hours, six tornadoes swept across the state, leaving a trail of devastation from west to east. Five people died, dozens of homes and businesses were destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of Michiganders were left in the dark due to power outages.

Under these most pressing circumstances, more than 40 percent of LBWL's customers were affected by the storm, including 612 unique power outage locations, 835 downed wires, 47 broken poles, and 187 transformers knocked offline. In the challenging days that followed the storms, LBWL sent an unprecedented number of crews into the field, calling in mutual aid from across Michigan and around the country. In total, 45 tree crews, 57 line crews, and 162 spotters worked around the clock in difficult conditions, restoring power to 98 percent of customers in a matter of days.

That effort was born of experience. After a similarly devastating ice storm hit the region 10 years ago, LBWL implemented all the recommendations from an independent investigation into the storm response, spending millions on proactive tree-trimming, expanding mutual aid agreements, hardening its communication plan, and revamping the entire corporate structure. This organizational soul-searching has paid off, with vastly improved reliability and response time when it matters most.

The work of LBWL crews, and crews from across the country, was difficult and even dangerous, requiring long hours and high skill to

bring the power back for hundreds of customers. That hard work and dedication deserve recognition here.

CELEBRATING THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE AND LEGACY OF ALVIN BENN, LONGTIME MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER REPORTER

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and legacy of a talented journalist, truth seeker, and man of great integrity, former Montgomery Advertiser reporter Alvin Stanley Benn, who passed away on October 10, 2023, at the age of 83.

Alvin Benn was born on April 25, 1940, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Upon graduating from Manheim Township High School in 1958, Alvin Benn enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Throughout his six years of service, Alvin Benn traveled the world after being stationed in Cherry Point, North Carolina, and Okinawa, Japan. While stationed in Japan, he pursued his passion for journalism, working for the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service. He continued his education in the United States at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, completing military journalism school.

In 1964, Alvin Benn began what would be a lifechanging career chronicling the history of Alabama. He made his mark on journalism as a minted correspondent for the United Press International, covering the sweeping Civil Rights Movement. Interviewing the leading voices on each side, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Alabama Governor George C. Wallace, his holistic approach to reporting exposed the true story of the Civil Rights Movement, bringing the reality of the fight for rights and liberties to homes nationwide. For over two years, Alvin Benn led the United Press International's Birmingham Bureau, taking on multiple roles that supported the publication, including bureau chief, writer, editor, photographer, and producer. He contributed to newspapers across the Southeast, including the Decatur Daily in Decatur, Alabama from 1967 through 1974; the Natchez Democrat in Natchez, Mississippi; the Selma Times Journal in Selma, Alabama; and publications in Alexander City, Alabama; and Lafayette, Georgia, before settling in Selma, where he lived for over 40 years.

During his time at the Natchez Democrat, Alvin Benn and the news staff received a nomination for the prestigious Pulitzer Prize. In 1980, he joined the Montgomery Advertiser, where he would spend over 20 years. In his 50-plus-year career, Alvin Benn produced over three to four stories per day before retiring in 2003. Retirement did not curb his desire to continue writing, nor did it decrease his readership. "Al Benn's Alabama" continued to be a widely read column in the Montgomery Advertiser and served as the cherry on top of Alvin Benn's storied contributions to journalism. From interviewing United States presidents to writing a book titled "Reporter: Covering the Civil Rights . . . And Wrongs in Dixie," Alvin Benn is an Alabama gem whose

dedication to “journalistic integrity” continued to inspire us all.

Alvin Benn is the recipient of many awards and recognitions, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Alabama Press Association, the Communications Award from the Alabama Farmers Association, and the Distinguished Alabama Community Journalist award from the Auburn University Department of Journalism.

Alvin Benn was a proud member of the Mishkan Israel Congregation in our hometown of Selma, Alabama, and the Temple Beth Or in Montgomery, Alabama.

Alvin Benn is preceded in death by his wife of almost 60 years, Sharon Ann Boumel Benn. He is survived by their two children, Danielle Waters and Eric Benn; four grandchildren, Benjamin Waters, Scott Waters, Alexandria Benn, and Ilan Benn; son-in-law, Curtis Waters and daughter-in-law, Maria Benn; and a host of family and friends.

On a personal note, I grew up right down the street from the Benn family. In fact, his son, Eric, was my siblings’ best friend and my third little brother. Everywhere Andrew and Anthony went, Eric went too. They are best friends and truly brothers. The Sewells are blessed to have grown up with the Benns, and we remain good friends and family for a lifetime.

Mr. Benn was an amazing journalist with a special talent for crafting his words into storytelling. He wrote the first article about my scholarship to Princeton University and subsequently, wrote about every major event in my life’s journey, from joining the rowing crew at Oxford to getting elected Alabama’s First Black Congresswoman. If anything happened in Selma or the Black Belt, Mr. Benn knew about it and reported on it. Spanning a career of decades, Mr. Benn told the history of Alabama’s Black Belt—the events, the characters, and all the happenings. What a gift his writings will leave in the annuals of Alabama’s history. His legacy will live on through the mini-stories and all the lives that he touched. Rest in peace and power.

On behalf of Alabama’s 7th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the extraordinary life and legacy of Alvin Stanley Benn for his contributions to journalism and decades of exemplary service to the State of Alabama.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROMOTING REDUCTION OF EMISSIONS THROUGH LANDSCAPING EQUIPMENT ACT

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 20, 2023

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to introduce the Promoting Reduction of Emissions through Landscaping Equipment Act. This crucial legislation provides businesses with a significant tool as they transition toward a more sustainable and consumer-friendly future.

This essential and forward-thinking piece of legislation provides a 40 percent credit on the purchase of zero-emission equipment, such as mowers, leaf blowers, hedgers, and accessories, up to \$25,000 every year and up to \$100,000 over the course of 10 consecutive years. The tax credit, which applies to any equipment purchased on or after January 1, 2023, also extends to retrofitting equipment that transforms gas-powered devices to zero-emission. These credits cover batteries, generators, retrofitting equipment, and other necessary accessories.

Currently, there are over 300 restrictions on the use of gas-powered lawn equipment across the country, as more localities recognize the need to transition to quieter, less polluting equipment. The bill will assist local businesses as they adapt to local ordinances and consumer demand for better, cleaner, and quieter equipment while reducing their costs over time through lower maintenance expenses and reduced reliance on fossil fuels. Moreover, the bill is compatible with local and state voucher and rebate programs for zero-emission equipment like the programs in my home State of California.

Current gas-powered equipment emits pollutants, including nitrogen oxides (NO_x), carbon dioxide (CO₂), reactive organic gases (ROG), and particulate matter that negatively impact the climate, air quality, ecosystems, and are potentially harmful to human health, especially for the workers who operate the equipment. These appliances generate significant noise pollution that can damage human hearing, disturb wildlife, and interfere with life and work. Replacing gas-powered equipment with zero-emission equipment would improve air quality, reduce noise pollution, and protect operators of the equipment from hearing loss and other potentially negative health effects.

I am also very proud to share that this legislation has garnered widespread support from

numerous national, state, and regional organizations, including industry, environmental, and health-focused groups. The National Association of Landscape Professionals, American Lung Association, Environmental Defense Fund, Earthjustice, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, Sierra Club, American Green Zone Alliance, California Landscape Contractors Association, California Alliance for Golf, California Golf Course Owners Association, Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California, Golf Course Superintendents Association of Southern California, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, and AmericanHort, California Landscape Contractors Association, California Alliance for Golf, California Golf Course Owners Association, Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California, Golf Course Superintendents Association of Southern California, Colorado Nursery & Greenhouse Association, Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association, Georgia Urban Ag Council, Georgia Green Industry Association, Idaho Nursery and Landscape Association, Illinois Landscape Contractors Association, Kansas Nursery and Landscape Association, Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association, Maine Landscape and Nursery Association, Maryland Nursery, Landscape, and Greenhouse Association, Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association, Inc., Michigan Green Industry Association, Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association, Montana Nursery & Landscape Association, New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association, New Jersey Nursery & Landscape Association, New York State Nursery and Landscape Association, NorCal Sports Field Management Association, Ohio Green Industry Association, Oregon Association of Nurseries, Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association, Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association, Washington Association of Landscape Professionals, Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association, West Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association, Wisconsin Landscape Contractors Association. These endorsements underscore the importance and benefit of this bill in advancing the transition to sustainable equipment.

This bill isn’t just about supporting the growth of our landscaping businesses; it exemplifies our commitment to a smooth, realistic transition towards more sustainable, consumer-friendly, and environmentally-responsible business practices. This legislation is a win for local businesses, the environment, and our health.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this crucial initiative.