

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE JAMES H. QUILLEN VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER FOR 120 YEARS OF PROVIDING HEALTHCARE TO OUR NATION'S VETERANS

HON. DIANA HARSHBARGER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center, known locally as the Mountain Home VA, as they celebrate 120 years of providing unparalleled healthcare and support to our Nation's brave veterans. This facility, located in the heart of Johnson City, Tennessee, opened its doors to its first veteran patient in 1903, marking the inception of over a century of dedication to those who have valiantly served our Nation.

Throughout its history, Mountain Home VA has stood as a pillar of medical excellence and constant support for veterans from all service branches. As our Nation has advanced to a new global military landscape, this facility has always offered a sanctuary, providing critical, compassionate, and comprehensive care to our Nation's heroes.

Our veterans deserve nothing but the utmost care and respect upon returning to civilian life. For 120 years, the Mountain Home VA has done just that, creating a space that not only attends to the physical well-being of our service members but also provides resources to navigate the oftentimes complex journey of post-service life.

Through generations, the dedicated staff of Mountain Home VA have exemplified an unwavering commitment to ensuring that those who have defended America's freedoms are afforded the dignity, respect, and care they have so rightfully earned. From innovative medical treatments, rehabilitative services, to mental health and wellness initiatives, Mountain Home has been at the forefront of advocating for and addressing the needs of our veterans.

As we commemorate this monumental 120-year legacy, let us pay tribute not only to the institution, but to every nurse, doctor, specialist, administrator, and support staff member who has contributed to making Mountain Home VA a beacon of hope and healing for veterans. Your dedication and service have improved the lives of our veterans and their families, and for that, we owe you a debt of gratitude.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Director Dean Borson and the entire staff of Mountain Home VA. We remain steadfast in our commitment to honor the sacrifice and service of our military men and women, who are forever remembered, valued, and supported.

RECOGNIZING THE UNITED NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, today, I recognize the important work and legacy of the United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania on its 100th anniversary. For a century, this organization has been an integral part of the region, dedicated to supporting and empowering low-income families, seniors, youth and immigrants through a wide range of community-based programs.

The United Neighborhood Centers was chartered in 1923, and since then its members have worked to provide services and create opportunities that empower individuals and build strong, interdependent communities. The organization is known for its "wraparound approach," a strategy of ensuring that their care is so thorough that every emerging need of the community is met. This is achieved through the offering of a comprehensive set of community programs, such as emergency assistance programs, work programs and more, all to guide those in need from their lowest to their highest.

The United Neighborhood Service Development Company creates properties to be used for affordable housing, as well as providing no-cost housing counseling. The organization provides free childcare services, free summer camp opportunities and manages several programs for youth and teens throughout Northeast Pennsylvania. The organization also has undertaken a revitalization project for the town of Pine Brook, dedicating itself to improving the neighborhood through many physical, social and economic projects. Additionally, it provides aid to seniors throughout the region, offering services such as in-person fitness activities as well as grab-and-go meals.

Some of the most significant contributions of the organization to the community are its community education programs. These programs, which include the Citizenship Education program, the Readiness in Skilled Employment Program and the Leaders in Training program, provide youth and adults with the skills needed to help them meet their own goals, secure their independence and transform their communities.

For 100 years, the United Neighborhood Centers has been steadfast in its support for all in the community. Its commitment to the development of Northeast Pennsylvania is an inspiration to all. I am honored to recognize this organization's many achievements and congratulate its members on this momentous milestone.

RECOGNIZING THE EXTRAORDINARY ISRAEL HOUGHTON AHEAD OF HIS LOS ANGELES "REUNION TOUR" PERFORMANCE

HON. SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary Israel Houghton, a man who has devoted his career to creating music to inspire people and transform their lives. Israel Houghton, credited as Israel & New Breed, is a faith-based singer, songwriter, producer, and worship leader. The city of Los Angeles is fortunate to welcome Israel & New Breed to perform at the Crypto.com Arena tonight alongside his fellow distinguished gospel artists Kirk Franklin, Tamela and David Mann, the Clark Sisters, and Tye Tribbett.

Israel has been actively pursuing a music career since 1997. His immense contributions and dedication to Israel & New Breed have not gone unnoticed, having received six prestigious Grammy Awards. He has also received several other awards and nominations, such as recognitions from the Gospel Music Association (GMA) Dove Awards and the Stellar Awards.

Israel has embraced writing songs from the heart. In his music, he discusses the value of focusing not only on ourselves but on a higher purpose, which stems from his belief in how we should worship. That perspective continues to be a motif woven through his songs and has recently been captured in his song "Blessing and Honor," featuring fellow artist Anna Sailors.

Israel remains focused on igniting the soul through song and prioritizes this grounding philosophy over superficial successes.

In addition to building his legacy through his music, Israel has also launched "Faith and Familia," a video series with his wife, Adrienne Eliza Bailon-Houghton, discussing their journey to start their family and the role of faith during challenging times.

Israel has opened up about his faith and how it helped him through difficulties in his childhood and ministry as a worship leader. As a music enthusiast grounded in my own faith. I understand the healing power of music and applaud Israel for the lives he has touched through his work.

Israel continues to be a champion in music ministry and will soon be embarking on his upcoming 2024 "Decades" tour.

I am honored to commemorate the work of Israel Houghton, a fellow Angeleno, and am excited to continue seeing the profound impact music can have on people's lives.

● 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.

RECOGNIZING THE 2023 AMERICAN
AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION
STARS OF LIFE HONOREES

HON. CLIFF BENTZ

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the members of the emergency medical services (EMS) profession who are on the frontlines of providing vital emergency 9–1–1 and interfacility ambulance services. These individuals dedicate their lives to providing often lifesaving medical care and transport services to patients as well as entire communities.

I would like to highlight a very special group of EMS professionals or “Stars of Life” who are being honored this week by the American Ambulance Association. These Stars of Life will be meeting with their members of Congress today and tomorrow and I strongly encourage my colleagues to take the time to chat with these exceptional individuals.

For the past thirty years, the American Ambulance Association has honored those paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), dispatchers and other ambulance service personnel who exemplify what is best about the EMS field. The American Ambulance Association has appropriately designated these individuals as “Stars of Life”. Past Stars of Life have included paramedics and EMTs who were part of evacuation and response efforts to natural disasters, acts of terrorism and public health emergencies.

Every year, the dispatch of an ambulance is the first response to millions of medical emergencies. Often, the survival of a patient is enhanced by the prompt medical attention provided by paramedics and emergency medical technicians prior to the arrival at an emergency department. As a result of the selfless acts of these courageous and devoted professions, the lives of thousands of Americans are saved each year. While these professionals do not expect to receive recognition for their work, they deserve our outmost gratitude.

Of equal importance, this program also pays tribute to those ambulance service personnel whose heroic acts or community service activities may not have made the news, but were just as meaningful to the people they aided. They are truly America’s health care safety net.

I am especially proud of the six Stars of Life from Oregon being recognized this year who work for five different ambulance service organizations and serve Oregonians with pride. They are Carol Boies, Sean Fuller, Victor Hoffer, Daniel Lee, Kristina Ploeger, and Don Thomas. I had the opportunity to meet with Kristina Ploeger from Baker City today and can tell you firsthand that she is an exceptional individual and a fantastic representative of the EMS profession.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2024

SPEECH OF

HON. LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 2, 2023

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Chair, today I rise in support of my amendment to H.R. 4821, Amendment No. 34.

This amendment highlights the pressing need to address the affordable drinking water crisis afflicting over a million American women, children, and families. Water is a foundational building block for healthy and thriving lives, yet far too many people struggle to afford this basic and essential need. Providing robust funding for the Environmental Programs and Management account will enable the establishment of the much-needed federal low-income water program pilot authorized in section 50108 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and bring us closer to affordable clean water for every American.

For decades, there have been federal assistance programs to help low-income individuals afford essentials such as housing, food, and home energy bills. But no such equivalent program exists for access to water. State-level low-income water assistance has therefore become a critical lifeline for vulnerable families struggling to pay bills and maintain access to water services, yet the lack of federal support hamstringing state efforts to assist all those with limited access to clean drinking water. To address this glaring programmatic gap, IIJA authorized the creation of a rural and low-income water assistance pilot program upon completion of an accompanying needs assessment at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). To date, this needs assessment has not been completed. This needs assessment is critical to the establishment of the water assistance program because it will give the EPA and Congress the insight they need to better understand this important issue and take steps towards the creation of a nationwide, permanent low-income assistance program.

Water bills have become increasingly expensive, placing greater burdens on families that already struggle to afford their water bills. A 2019 survey found that U.S. households in the bottom fifth of the economy spent 12.4 percent of their disposable income on water and sewer services. In recent years, this statistic has increased steadily. No one should have to decide between paying their water bill or buying groceries to feed their family. Historic investments were made in IIJA and it is the duty of Congress and our federal government to ensure these dollars are reaching the people and households it was intended to help. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Administration to help our communities access critical support systems.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF
MONICA BIBBS

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the critically important and remarkable work of Monica Bibbs, who recently stepped down as Director of School Strategies & Logistics at the W.B. Patterson Elementary School, a public school in the District of Columbia.

At W.B. Patterson Elementary School, Ms. Bibbs delivered high-quality work on time, prioritized tasks and managed her time well and demonstrated excellent organizational skills.

Ms. Bibbs began her teaching career in 1987 at H.D. Woodson Senior High School as a mathematics teacher. In 2007, she went to work in central administration as a secondary school numeracy coach and mathematics content specialist.

In 2014, she went to work at W.B. Patterson Elementary School as an Assistant Principal, where she worked collaboratively to achieve team goals and contributed positively to team dynamics, fostering a positive work environment. In 2016, she began serving as Director of School Strategies & Logistics, a role she performed with dedication and a strong work ethic until her retirement this year.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Monica Bibbs and her nearly 35 years of incredible service to public schools in D.C.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF OMER
BALVA

HON. DAVID J. TRONE

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. TRONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of dual-American and Israeli citizen—Omer Balva—who made the ultimate sacrifice while defending Israel from terrorism.

Omer grew up in Rockville, Maryland, where he lived until he was 18. Every summer, he traveled to Israel to visit relatives, and quickly fell in love with the beautiful country, where his parents came from. After graduating high school from the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, he moved to Israel to join the Israeli military—ready and willing to step up and defend his new home, his family, and his friends. He finished his three-year IDF service and then enrolled in college. A few weeks ago, Omer traveled to America with his girlfriend to vacation and visit friends—including his best friend, Ethan Missner, and Ethan’s father, Jonathan Missner, whom I consider a friend.

After the heinous terrorist attacks against Israel on October 7th, Omer was recalled from his vacation in America to his unit in order to mobilize and deploy to the Lebanese border to protect against ongoing attacks. On Friday, October 20th—just three days after being deployed—he was killed in action. He was 22 years old.

Omer had big life plans. He was soon to get married, start a family, work at his father’s

business, and teach his future children to love Israel as much as he did. He had his whole life ahead of him, and today we mourn the life he lost.

His commitment to the greater good, his unwavering bravery, and his altruism were a guiding light for all who knew him. And although we can never repay Omer or his family for his courageous efforts, may his memory be a blessing.

We must honor Omer Balva for his service and strength to fight back against terrorism as we hope for peace in Israel and beyond. May his memory be a blessing.

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF COOKEVILLE

HON. JOHN W. ROSE

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate First Baptist Church of Cookeville on 150 years of spreading the gospel throughout Middle Tennessee. I was raised at First Baptist Church. I came to know my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, was baptized, and was a member for many years at First Baptist. My wife Chelsea and I were married in this church so, needless to say, I received many blessings from this congregation.

The church was organized in 1873 as the Cookeville Baptist Church of Christ. The church's first Pastor, Patrick Moore, led a congregation of 34 members. Together, they agreed to a church covenant, which reads in part, "the purpose of this body is to advance the church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort promoting prosperity and spirituality." They continue to fulfill that commitment 150 years later.

Today, the church enjoys a membership of more than 1,300 members and an average attendance of more than 450. But their story isn't one of instant success. It's one of persistence and faith.

There were long periods of time when the church stopped meeting for worship. In fact, with 20 members at the time, the church underwent a reorganization in 1892. And it wasn't until 21 years after the church's founding that the congregation was able to secure their own House of Worship.

Like so many churches, First Baptist Church of Cookeville was impacted by the Great Depression in the 1930s, which led to the church opting to discontinue their pastor's salary through the end of the year. But that decade was about more than loss for the church. It was also in the 1930s that the Women's Missionary Union was formed, along with the Young Women's Auxiliary and Girl's Auxiliary for the women and girls of the church. The church also formed groups for the boys and men of the church, including the Royal Ambassadors and Baptist Brotherhood.

This is a common theme of this church's story. Through difficult times, they stood firm in their faith and found ways to continue being a blessing to others. First Baptist Church of Cookeville started several missions over the years, missions that later became standalone congregations.

The church began reaching out to students at the nearby Tennessee Polytechnic Institute,

now known as Tennessee Tech University, as early as 1926. They even built a Baptist Student Center, which continues to be a resource for young people to this day.

First Baptist Church of Cookeville was also a pioneer in broadcasting sermons on tv, which they began doing in 1973. The church continues to broadcast their services today, bringing the Word of God to homes throughout the Upper Cumberland.

Whether it be serving their local community through missions like Operation Christmas Child or the Family Life Center, or a mission overseas, the folks making up the church embody what it means to have a servant's heart.

Again, I want to congratulate First Baptist Church of Cookeville on continuing to fulfill that covenant written all those years ago. I wish Pastor Scott McKinney the best of luck as he continues to guide the church in the years ahead. I pray they will continue to be a blessing to their community, and to the region, for another 150 years.

RECOGNIZING THE HEROIC SERVICE OF KADRI CAKRANI DURING THE HOLOCAUST

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to recognize the humanitarian efforts of Albanian Commandant General Kadri Cakrani.

On Saturday, November 11, 2023, the Albanian and Southeastern European Studies Program at DePaul University will host an event entitled, The Cakrani Family of Albania: Repairing the Fabric of History, that will honor the work of General Cakrani in protecting Jews during the Holocaust and advancing Democracy in Albania. Illinois is the home of many relatives of General Cakrani, including my constituents Elizabeth Cakrani Vrato, Evan Metaj, and Abigail Vrato—his granddaughter, great-great grandson, and great-great granddaughter, respectively.

During the German occupation of Albania, Commandant-General Cakrani led the protection of over 600 Jewish refugees and residents in the Berat region from Nazi capture during the Holocaust. At risk of death, General Cakrani lied to Nazi officials about the whereabouts of Jews hiding in Albania and guided efforts to shelter Jews in safe hiding locations, including his own home. His courage and leadership contributed to Albania being the only European country that ended World War II with more Jewish residents than at the start of the war. Further, General Cakrani sheltered three American Army nurses and secretly returned them to Allies after their plane crashed in Albania.

In 1951, General Cakrani moved to the United States after President Harry Truman granted him political asylum. He worked with the U.S. Intelligence to try to bring Democracy to Albania for the remainder of his life. The lives and safety of families and individuals depended on General Cakrani's silence about his efforts during his lifetime. The DePaul event is a step to recognize his humanitarian work during and after the war.

The Auschwitz Memorial Museum, the United States Holocaust Museum, the Illinois

Holocaust Museum, the Jerusalem Post, and the Israel Hayom have all recognized General Cakrani's service and bravery. Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker recently issued an executive proclamation recognizing November 11, 2023, as Kadri Cakrani Day in Illinois.

I wish to add my voice to those recognizing the service and bravery of Commandant-General Kadri Cakrani in the protection of Jews during the Holocaust and his work to promote Democracy in Albania. I wish his family well as they honor his work this week at the DePaul event on Kadri Cakrani Day in Illinois.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call No. 570 and No. 571, I inadvertently voted Aye. I oppose the Perry Amendments, and both votes should be recorded as Nay.

COMMEMORATING THE 2023 RANGERS WORLD SERIES

HON. COLIN Z. ALLRED

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. ALLRED. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to commemorate a historic achievement by the Texas Rangers.

The Texas Rangers won the World Series for the first time in franchise history despite many setbacks and injuries along the way.

On Friday, November 3, 2023, Arlington, TX hosted a well-deserved Championship Parade.

As a Congressman for North Texas and a lifelong Rangers fan, I am excited to celebrate this hard-fought victory with the Rangers and my fellow fans.

Achievements such as this don't happen overnight, and they take the support of families, friends, coaches, fans, staff and crew. It really does take a community. And the Metroplex should be proud.

As a former professional athlete myself, I know the hard work it takes, day in and day out, to practice and work to win as a team. All while forging ahead in the face of adversity.

They have shown that North Texans are champions, and we couldn't be prouder of what they all have accomplished together.

Go Rangers.

GRAND OPENING OF EMERGENCE HEALTH NETWORK VETERANS ONE STOP CENTER IN EAST EL PASO

HON. VERONICA ESCOBAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the Emergence Health Network Veterans One Stop Center for their continuous innovation to expand mental and behavioral health services to El Paso veterans and active-duty military and their families.

Emergence Health Network (EHN), the local mental health authority in El Paso, has a dedicated facility focusing on behavioral needs and services. The Veterans One Stop Center (VOSC) in Northeast El Paso provides behavioral health services and additional support to veterans, active-duty military, and their families. Recovery-oriented care is offered to meet the needs of veterans, thus promoting hope and encouragement.

EHN's partnership with Fort Bliss has proved to be a tremendous benefit as an additional resource and support system for these individuals to solve the wait and intervention times for care. EHN's Veteran's One Stop Center has the capability and resources to expedite these services to a much-needed population and can provide care to service members anywhere from two to five days of initial contact.

Today, it is my privilege to honor Emergence Health Network's Veterans One Stop Center for the grand opening of their new facility in East El Paso and thank them for their ongoing efforts to help our veterans, active-duty military, and their families.

RECOGNIZING FRANK ROMANO

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an individual whose unwavering dedication to providing exceptional care to the most vulnerable in our society, Frank Romano.

For over four decades, Frank Romano has been creating and nurturing several successful enterprises that provide essential services to elderly and disabled individuals. His notable portfolio includes skilled nursing, assisted living residencies, adult day health programs, as well as home care services and senior transportation.

A graduate of Merrimack College and the Harvard Business School Program in Entrepreneurship, Frank embarked on his entrepreneurial journey at IBM in Boston where he worked for six years, interspersed with a two-year leave of absence to honorably serve our nation in the Vietnam War. Upon his return, he channeled his passion and expertise into establishing his first healthcare facility in 1972, laying the foundation for what has been a long career synonymous with dignity, care, and deep-rooted respect for the care of our elders.

Frank has served on the Board of Governor's for the American Health Care Association, the largest association in the United States representing long term and post-acute care providers. His contributions have not gone unnoticed, as he was honored with the Joe Warner Patient Advocacy Award, acknowledging his unparalleled commitment to senior care.

On Thursday, November 16th the Massachusetts Senior Care Foundation will honor Frank at its annual breakfast. Today, Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the many years of service Frank has dedicated to his profession, which will undoubtedly continue to inspire and uplift our community for generations to come.

RECOGNIZING WWII U.S. ARMY
VETERAN SERGEANT JOSEPH
DRAKE

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the bravery and valor of U.S. Army Veteran Sergeant Joseph Drake, recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal and one of only 12 remaining WWII Army Rangers. Born on October 24, 1924, Sgt. Drake recently celebrated his 99th birthday with family and friends at his home in Hawley, PA, where he currently resides.

As the member of the U.S. House representing Hawley, in Wayne County, I am grateful to have this opportunity to recognize the courage, dedication and selfless service that Sgt. Drake offered in support of our Nation during WWII in April of 1943 at just 19 years old.

Sgt. Drake honorably served with Company A of the U.S. Army Ranger Battalion and after training in Mississippi, Louisiana and England he fought in five battles in the European Theater, including the Battle of the Bulge and Central Europe. His outfit spearheaded the invasion of Europe by climbing the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc on D-Day on June 6, 1944.

Sgt. Drake proudly recalls Company A moving to relieve a Battalion from the PA National Guard's 28th Infantry Division in Ardennes, France, during the initial German attack that led to the Battle of the Bulge. Sgt. Drake and his Company fought through Luxemburg, Belgium, Germany and Czechoslovakia until the end of WWII in 1945.

Sgt. Drake's distinguished service has earned him many medals, including this institution's highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions—the Congressional Gold Medal.

Upon returning to the United States in October of 1945, Sgt. Drake was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army in December and started a family with his late wife, the former Lydora LaTourmous, in Hawley. They were married on September 23, 1950, and raised two daughters and one son. Life gifted them with many grand and great-grandchildren.

Shortly after arriving back home, Sgt. Drake joined the U.S. Postal Service and worked there for 34 years, 15 of which he was the Hawley postmaster. He's proud to be the first person from Hawley, and without a political appointment, to have served in this position.

Sgt. Drake was active in his community, serving as Quartermaster and Treasurer with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 5823 in Hawley, founded by his late brother Robert J. Drake. He worked with the Mayor of Hawley and others to plan parades and carnivals. After the post disbanded in 2008, he made arrangements to have the post headquarters on Park Place turned over to the County of Wayne, for the Hawley Senior Center.

Sgt. Drake's devotion to our Nation is evident in his exemplary military career, and I thank him for his service while wearing, and after hanging up his uniform. He truly embodies what it means to be one of the few remaining members of the "Greatest Generation."

Sgt. Drake is a true American hero whose commitment to duty and service distinguishes him as an individual whose character represents the very best of Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District, and I am proud to be his Representative in Washington.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Mr. Speaker, due to unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to participate in voting on H.R. 1607 and H.R. 359. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 599, and YEA on Roll Call No. 600.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF KELLIE RUETSCH

HON. MIKE CAREY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Kellie Ruetsch, a constituent from Plain City, Ohio.

Kellie is a regional operations manager for Superior Air-Ground Ambulance Service of Ohio Inc. She was recently recognized as one of Superior Ambulance's "Stars of Life." Every year, Superior Ambulance recognizes a handful of its EMTs for their exceptional leadership skills. An EMT since 1997, Kellie has devoted her life to helping others.

Apart from being an EMT, Kellie is also a paramedic and a firefighter. Despite volunteering countless hours to her community and raising two children, Kellie has also found time to advance her skills and professional growth.

In 2016, Kellie was offered a leadership position in which she immediately excelled. In 2017, Kellie obtained her EMS instructor license and completed Ambulance Service Manager training in 2022. Kellie's colleagues and superiors say, that she's someone who leads by example, never seeing a task as below her station.

Plain City and central Ohio are better places to live because of people like Kellie Ruetsch. I salute her service to our community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT GARCIA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I was unfortunately unable to be present at votes on November 6 due to travel reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 599, and YEA on Roll Call No. 600.

RECOGNIZING THE PLEASANT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE AHSAA CLASS 2A STATE TITLE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Pleasant Valley High School volleyball team for being undefeated and winning the AHSAA Class 2A state title.

On November 1, 2023, Pleasant Valley High School defeated Sand Rock for the 2A state championship in straight sets at Bill Harris Arena in Birmingham.

Pleasant Valley's volleyball squad won its sixth state championship in program history led by head Coach Dana Bryant, who notched her 559th and final victory as a coach.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Coach Bryant, the Pleasant Valley High School volleyball team, students, faculty and all the fans. Go Raiders.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAKE AUCHINCLOSS

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Mr. Speaker, I was necessarily absent from votes on November 6, 2023. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 599, and YEA on Roll Call No. 600.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, due to events in California, I was unable to cast my vote for legislation considered on the House floor. Had I been able to be present, I would have voted as follows: YEA on Roll Call No. 599, H.R. 1607—To clarify jurisdiction with respect to certain Bureau of Reclamation pumped storage development, and for other purposes, as amended, and YEA on Roll Call No. 600, H.R. 359—Fort San Geronimo Preservation Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, due to events in my Congressional District in

Kentucky, I missed votes the evening of November 6, 2023. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 599, and YEA on Roll Call No. 600.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON ESTES

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. ESTES. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for the following Roll Call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: on Roll Call vote No. 599, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass as Amended H.R. 1607, To clarify jurisdiction with respect to certain Bureau of Reclamation pumped storage development, and for other purposes, I would have voted YEA; and on Roll Call vote No. 600, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 359, the Fort San Geronimo Preservation Act, I would have voted YEA.

HONORING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF WJHL-TV

HON. DIANA HARSHBARGER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and acknowledge a cornerstone of our community and a leading source of news and information in Northeast Tennessee and surrounding regions, WJHL-TV. This year marks the 70th anniversary of WJHL's dedication to broadcasting excellence.

On October 26, 1953, WJHL made its debut, serving as the first voice of television in Northeast Tennessee and the second station to sign on in our great state. It was the vision and determination of founders Hanes Lancaster, Jr., Hanes Lancaster, Sr., and Jay Birdwell that brought this dream to fruition. Nestled in the heart of downtown Johnson City, WJHL has since been a familiar presence, illuminating our homes with news, information, and entertainment each day.

Over the decades, WJHL has been dedicated to informing, educating, and entertaining over 300,000 households, spanning not just our Tennessee counties of Washington, Sullivan, Carter, Greene, Unicoi, Johnson, and Hawkins, but also extending its reach to into Virginia and Kentucky. The expansive reach of WJHL's signal is a testament to its leadership and trust within the region.

Under the leadership of General Manager Paula Jackson, the station has maintained its commitment to broadcasting excellence. Paula and her team of over 80 employees—writers, producers, reporters, technicians, and staff members—all play a crucial role in ensuring that our region stays connected and informed. Their commitment to integrity, fairness, and

community service is more than admirable. For seven decades, the dedicated staff of WJHL has been firm in their mission to report accurate local news that is vital to our region. Their creed is simple: news that matters to you and your family.

Throughout its history, WJHL has seen numerous milestones. For many decades, they have proudly operated as a CBS affiliate. And in February 2016, they expanded their broadcasting network, adding ABC to their second channel, further adding to the content available to their viewers. However, it wasn't just in content where WJHL sought change. In the Fall of 2019, the station embarked on a new chapter, unveiling a state-of-the-art studio, certainly fitting for a station of its legacy. As part of the Nexstar Media Group, WJHL, which encompasses News Channel 11 and ABC Tri-Cities, is poised for continued growth and success.

As they celebrate their 70th anniversary this year, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Paula and the entire WJHL team on 70 years of broadcast excellence. May they continue to shine brightly, informing and uniting our communities for many more years to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to attend this afternoon's votes as I had a longstanding, immovable commitment that necessitated I not be in Washington, D.C. today.

Had I been present for the vote to order the Previous Question, I would have voted "no" on Roll Call No. 601.

Had I been present for the vote on H. Res. 847, I would have voted "no" on Roll Call No. 602.

Had I been present for the vote on the Escobar #5 amendment, I would have voted "aye" on Roll Call No. 603.

Had I been present for the vote on the Perry #20 amendment, I would have voted "no" on Roll Call No. 604.

Had I been present for the vote on the Perry #25 amendment, I would have voted "no" on Roll Call No. 605.

Had I been present for the vote on the Grotham #29 amendment, I would have voted "no" on Roll Call No. 606.

Had I been present for the vote on the Breechen #20 amendment, I would have voted "no" on Roll Call No. 607.

Had I been present for the vote to table H. Res. 845, I would have voted "aye" on Roll Call No. 608. I will vote "no" on the resolution to censure Representative RASHIDA TLAIB when it comes before the House.