

continue their attempts to destroy us and what we value and love.

I wish black history month would mean to everyone what it means to me. Black history month means to me that in times of turmoil I have the strength to rise victorious. Black history month is a time where all can reflect, not on the narrative they want us to believe in, but one that is factual and full of strength, hope and promise. It's one where Mansa Musa was King of the Mali empire in 1312 and is regarded even today as the richest man in the history of the world. Black history month means to me even as an enslaved people, Harriet Tubman led about 13 missions to help many to freedom and shared she could have freed more if they only knew they were enslaved. Black history month means to me we must pass the knowledge of the achievements of our ancestors like the establishment of what was known as Black Wall Street. Black wall street was a very prosperous and self-sufficient business district in Oklahoma where black people owned barbershops and stores, schools and even a local newspaper. Black history month means to me that I can help the advancement of the world like Dr. Gladys West who is a mathematician who grew up locally in Sutherland VA and helped with the technology used to create the GPS systems everyone uses today.

Black history month means to me it is a time where all people should be able to reflect upon the history of African Americans. This is a time where our culture, contributions, music, and arts should be celebrated as a positive influence and reviewed as leaving a positive impact on the entire world. Black history month is a time where we should be able to come together as a people and uplift one another and celebrate the many achievements of our past and the hope and realization of a rich future.

HONORING DR. JEROME L. RICE

### HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Mr. ENGEL, Madam Speaker, it is my sincere honor to recognize a long-time public servant, a beloved community leader in Coop City, and one of my good friends, Dr. Jerome L. Rice, President of the NAACP Coop City branch and a member of the Riverbay Board. Dr. Rice is moving to Florida at the end of March. He and his family will surely be missed.

Dr. Rice served over 22 years in the Armed Forces retiring with the rank of E8/First Sergeant. He has also served with the New York City Department of Correction for 25 years retiring with the rank of Captain. Dr. Rice has served as NAACP Co-op President since 2012 and has served on the Riverbay Board since 2017. In February 2020, Dr. Rice received his PhD in Criminal Justice from Walden University specializing in Social & Behavioral Science. In 2017 he was invited into the Alpha Phi Sigma Nu Chapter Criminal Justice Honor Society. In 2008 he received his MBA from Monroe College majoring in Business Management. Throughout his life he has been a long and faithful servant for the Thessalonians Worship Center, where he served as chair of the trustee board and assistant director of the food pantry. Dr. Rice is also the Past No. Commander for the American Legion Post No. 1871 where he provided various services to veterans.

In addition, Dr. Rice is also a 2019 Inductee into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame; an NAACP Silver Life Member; a recipient of the NAACP Freedom Fund Award for Community Service; a recipient of the AIM High Ambassador Mentorship Award; and was the First Elected President for the Monroe College Toastmasters Club. While serving as director of Community Relations for 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, he had created various survival workshop designed to educate both communities and local elected officials. And if all of that wasn't enough, Dr. Rice was also a heroic 9/11 first-responder.

Madam Speaker, Dr. Rice always says, "Don't stand on the sidelines of Justice, get in the fight." I can't think of a more fitting motto for him and I want to thank him for all the work he's done to strengthen our community. We're going to miss Dr. Rice and his wonderful wife Eulalee deeply here in the Bronx, but we wish them well on their new journey.

225TH ANNIVERSARY OF MARINER'S TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

### HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 225th anniversary of Mariner's Temple Baptist Church located at 3 Henry Street\* 12 Oliver Street (Mariners' Temple Lane) in New York City. The Church's history is deeply rooted with the history of the Nation and this year celebrates a momentous milestone.

According to history, in 1795, Henry Rutgers, a descendent of Dutch immigrants, donated land on the corner of Oliver and Henry Streets designated for Baptist worship. Located a few blocks from the first White House occupied by George Washington and his wife on Cherry Lane, the first Church at Oliver and Henry Streets was called the Oliver Street Meeting House. The early Church began as a Mission for seamen who docked at the nearby East River and the church became famous.

Mariner's Church was established as a food and shelter mission for the seamen whose hard work helped New York City develop into a HUB of commerce and culture. The church is one of the oldest sites for Baptist worship in Manhattan offering innovative ministry in response to the great influx of immigration. Mariners' Temple gained the reputation as "The Mother of Churches," launching the First Swedish Baptist Church, the First Italian Church, the First Norwegian-Danish Baptist Church, The first Lettish (Latvian) Church, the First Russian Church and the First Chinese Church as each new arrival of immigrants moved through the Lower East Side. From the 1940s to the 1970s, Mariners' Temple continued to be a spiritual center welcoming all ethnic groups in the neighborhood and establishing supportive missions and classes for Chinese, Latinx and African Americans.

Today, the church continues to be a beacon of hope for parishioners from all backgrounds. It takes the call to community engagement seriously. Mariner's Temple community is incredibly active, participating in a variety of ministries and programs. Under the leadership of

Rev. Dr. Henrietta Carter, Mariners' Temple remains committed to its missions and outreach initiatives. There is a ministry for everyone as Mariners' focuses on the ministries of Prayer, Church School/Christian Education, Evangelism, New Discipleship, Community Outreach, Communications, Sacred Arts Drama & Dance, Health, Wellness and Soul Care. Mariners' Temple is a multicultural Church utilizing small-group-driven ministry to build and strengthen the community.

Madam Speaker, as Mariner's Temple celebrates this historic milestone, its congregation can take pride in an inspiring 225 years of fellowship, worship, and service. I would like to congratulate Rev. Dr. Henrietta Carter and past and current members of the church's congregation on this joyous occasion. Mariner Temple Baptist Church embodies the values of charity, inclusion, and integrity embraced by all New Yorkers. I wish them many more years full of growth and prosperity.

RECOGNIZING THOMAS EDISON MIDDLE SCHOOL OF MERIDEN, CONNECTICUT FOR BEING NAMED A NATIONAL MAGNET SCHOOL OF DISTINCTION BY MAGNET SCHOOLS OF AMERICA

### HON. JAHANA HAYES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Mrs. HAYES. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Thomas Edison Middle School of Meriden, Connecticut for being named a National Magnet School of Distinction by Magnet Schools of America.

Thomas Edison is one of 12 schools in Connecticut and one of 142 in the country to be given this prestigious distinction. Its challenging curriculum, full engineering program, innovative technical supports, and strong family and community partnerships have resulted in high student achievement at the school.

Thomas Edison started an initiative that has provided every student with a laptop to help with their studies. That kind of investment in students and commitment to reducing disparity pays dividends—in student success.

Even with plentiful resources, success takes staff buy-in, strong leadership and tireless work. I commend the staff at Thomas Edison for their commitment to their craft and dedication to students.

But it also takes a community—parents devoted to their children's learning, and students empowered and motivated to go the extra mile. Thomas Edison has implemented a Families as Partners program to foster mutual respect and effective collaboration between families and school staff. It has also partnered with Community Health Center Inc. to provide behavioral health services and dental services at school.

This comprehensive approach to supporting students with wraparound services makes a difference. Students learn best when their physical, mental and emotional needs are met.

This week also happens to be National Public Schools week—a week when we celebrate the significant contributions and accomplishments of students, parents, educators and education advocates in our public schools.

The achievements of Thomas Edison underscore the importance of supporting robust federal investment in public education, including

the Magnet Schools Assistance Program. I am committed to continuing to fight for strong supports and funding for public schools and programs with a track record of success, so that every school in my district and around the country has resources needed to mirror the accomplishments achieved at Thomas Edison Middle School.

Every school in America has the potential to be a school of distinction—we just need to prioritize education.

Again, I congratulate the Thomas Edison Middle School community for this award and honor.

#### BAKU POGROMS

### HON. ANDY LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise, as the representative of a large and vibrant community of Armenian-Americans in southeast Michigan, in remembrance of the Baku pogroms.

During these tragic events 30 years ago, Armenians faced unthinkable horrors. Press reports describe Armenians tossed out of their homes, their possessions thrown into bonfires. Others were killed by mobs.

As we condemn this violence and remember those who were lost, we must also look forward and reaffirm our commitment to the Armenian people.

Last year, I was proud to be an original cosponsor of and to cast my vote for the resolution that finally recognized the Armenian Genocide. Our vote affirms that there is no question about what happened to the Armenian people, and that we will never forget it.

I was also proud to support funding for aid to Artsakh, including support for critical demining projects. I am committed to continuing that support and working to secure the safety and wellbeing of the Armenian people.

I stand with the Armenian-American community of Michigan's 9th District and across the nation, as they honor those lost during the Baku pogroms. Armenian-Americans have champions and friends in the U.S. House of Representatives.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I was unable to be on the House floor on February 26, 2020, because my flight from Oregon was canceled. If I had been present, I would have voted in favor of H.R. 35, the Emmett Till Antilynching Act.

I am a cosponsor of H.R. 35, legislation to make lynching a federal hate crime. This bill is named in memory of Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old African American child from Chicago who was brutally tortured and murdered in 1955 by two white men during a trip to visit family in Mississippi. An all-white jury deliberated for less than an hour before finding the men not guilty of Till's murder. Emmett is one

of thousands of African American children, men, and women who have been lynched in this country in the past four centuries. Our country's historical acceptance of lynching is appalling, and by passing this bill Congress took an important step in recognizing lynching for what it is—a hate crime. For hundreds of years people have escaped convictions and justice has been denied. This legislation cannot and will not undo those unspeakable crimes, but it is an important step in reckoning with our nation's history. I am grateful for Rep. RUSH's leadership in advancing this bill, and I urge the Senate to quickly pass the bill so it can become law.

#### COMMEMORATING THE VICTIMS OF THE SUMGAI AND BAKU POGROMS

### HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of the pogrom against the Armenian residents of the town of Sumgait, Azerbaijan. On February 27, 1988, and for three days following, Azerbaijani mobs assaulted and killed Armenians. The violence left hundreds of Armenian civilians dead and injured, women and girls were raped, and some victims were burned alive. Thousands were forced to flee their homes, leaving behind their belongings.

Two years later, it is estimated that only 40,000 of the 250,000 Armenian residents of Baku remained in Azerbaijan. On January 13, 1990, organized Azerbaijani mobs turned on those remaining, many of them elderly or disabled, and killed hundreds and injured many more.

The pogroms came as a direct result of years of vicious, racist anti-Armenian propaganda by Azerbaijani authorities, dehumanizing the Armenian residents of Azerbaijan and laying the groundwork for mass violence. Azerbaijani authorities made little effort to punish those responsible, instead attempting to cover up the atrocities and denying the government role in instigating the attacks.

The pogroms accomplished their purpose in displacing the entire Armenian community from their homes in Azerbaijan, but in the decades since, Azerbaijani authorities have continued to fan the flames of ethnic hatred, using it as a tool to distract their populace from the corrupt and repressive regime in Baku. The anniversary of Sumgait is a reminder of the consequences when aggression and hatred grow unchecked.

Madam Speaker, in less than two months we will mark the 105th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, an event the Turkish government, Azerbaijan's closest ally, goes to great lengths to deny. We must not let such crimes against humanity go unrecognized, whether they occurred yesterday or 30 years ago or 100 years ago. Today, let us pause to remember the victims of the atrocities of Sumgait and Baku pogroms. It is our moral obligation to condemn crimes of hatred and to remember the victims, in hope that history will not be repeated.

#### INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO COLLECT OVERPAYMENT OF SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING ASSISTANCE

### HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Mr. CORREA. Madam Speaker, the Department of Veterans Affairs' Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) program offers grants to assist veterans with service-connected disabilities with the purchase, construction, or modification of their homes to meet their unique needs.

The SAH program provides for an increased quality of life by allowing veterans to live independently in their homes. Unfortunately, there have been cases where veterans have been unsatisfied with the quality of work provided. Currently, VA does not have the explicit authority to recover SAH funds even if it determines there has been standard work.

To address this situation, my bill authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine whether SAH overpayments have occurred as a result of a breach of contract and to recover such funds in the same manner as any other debt due to the United States. To prevent any financial burden for veterans and their families who receive an overpayment through no fault of their own, the bill requires VA to waive the overpayment.

My legislation will allow for more accountability and discourage individuals from breaching SAH contract.

#### HONORING BISHOP WILLIAM GEORGE FIELDS

### HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to honor a leader in our community whom we recently lost, Bishop William George Fields of Refugee Temple Annex in the Bronx.

Bishop Fields was a native New Yorker, born on June 16, 1932 in Harlem Hospital. He attended New York University and later received a Doctor of Divinity Degree from the Universal Bible Institute. In 1959 Bishop Fields married Mother Bertha Lee Fields, and from their union they were blessed with 3 children, Bishop William Michael, Bertram Brett, and E. Beth Chism. They also had 4 wonderful grandchildren, Michael Aaron, Shekinah, Amon and Bethany, and 2 beautiful great-grandchildren, Zion and Katie.

Bishop Fields was first ordained and appointed Pastor of Refugee Temple Annex in 1961. In 1975, he was consecrated Bishop. Bishop Fields also held several other positions in ministry, including serving as chairman and member of many convention committees, instructor at the Church of Christ Bible Institute, and treasurer of the Board of Bishops. He also served faithfully for many years on the 47th Precinct Clergy Coalition in the Bronx.

A dedicated, kind, and mild tempered leader, Bishop Fields served as pastor of Refuge