

of his life. Bob still describes their chance encounter in a rainstorm great detail. Amid heavy rain, Susan stood illuminated by single a beam of sunlight. For 3 years, the couple communicated through letters, finding peace in each other's presence amid the chaos of war. Immediately after the war, Bob called Susan and proposed marriage. They were married in a Nissen hut outside the ruins of a bombed English church in 1946. They spent 72 wonderful years together and had three children. They now have 4 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

Bob selflessly put his life on the line to defend America's freedom during one of its most challenging periods. President Roosevelt famously referred to the Merchant Mariners' mission during World War II as "the most difficult and dangerous transportation job ever undertaken."

It is my humble privilege to present Bob with the highest honor bestowed by Congress, the Congressional Gold Medal. This award is 1 of numerous honors that Bob has received for his service, including the Atlantic War Zone Medal, the Merchant Marine Combat Bar with Silver Star device, and the World War II Victory Medal.

I congratulate Lieutenant Commander Bessell, on this well-deserved recognition. A grateful Nation thanks him for his service.

#### HONORING THE ODDO BROTHERS

##### HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 14, 2023*

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and honor the lives of the Oddo brothers, 6 men who courageously served their country as naval seamen following the outbreak of WWII.

Their father, Charles Oddo, was a Sicilian immigrant who settled in Bellevue, Ohio with his wife Mary. They raised their sons to acknowledge the prestige and privilege of being American citizens. Richard, William, Charles, Samuel, Carl, and James Oddo all faithfully served their nation, and are believed to be the largest set of siblings to serve in the U.S. Navy.

Thankfully, all 6 brothers returned home safely to start their lives in their hometown after their honorable service, where the Oddo family still gathers today. Saturday, they will be honored with a plaque at the Dr. Jackson Commemorative Plaque Wall within the Navy memorial. More than 2 dozen family and friends will be in attendance to pay tribute to their heroism.

Ohio salutes these exceptional men, who continued to serve their families, neighbors, and communities throughout their lives.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 14, 2023*

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 291, and YEA on Roll Call No. 290.

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF NORMA VALLES

##### HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 14, 2023*

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate and honor the life of Ms. Norma Valles, a vocalist, businesswoman, advocate, and loving wife and mother from North Texas.

Norma Valles was born in 1969 in Dallas, Texas, and graduated from Grand Prairie High School in 1987, to then go on to pursue career and family. She married her husband Alfonso in 1989 and had 3 amazing children. Her family was the center of her life—she was an amazing mother that did whatever she could to be there for her children and husband at every moment of their lives.

Aside from being an amazing mother and wife, Valles was also an accomplished vocalist. Known as the "The Queen of Mariachi Music," she captured the attention of countless North Texas Fans, from singing National Anthem at a Mavericks or Texas Rangers game to singing at local weddings. Her amazing voice led her to showcase her skills in various productions. She was cast in leading roles in "The King and I," as well as in independent productions like "Fiestas de Mi Tierra" and Spanish movies such as "Yo Soy El Hijo del Michoacano." Her vocal skills also landed her numerous opportunities to record voice-overs and jingles for TV and Radio. She additionally hosted Channel 44's "Happy Sunday's Variety Show" and "Salud Para Usted y Su Familia."

Valles gave back to the community in numerous other ways. Norma's vocals left such a deep impact that David Albert wanted to become her mentor. From that day on, they were a team that just kept on giving. David brought her into the studio, and they went on to record nine albums plus Si Se Puede CDS to help the Spanish community to learn English. He asked her to manage Casita Tex-Mex Bar & Grill, which she later became the owner of and is still standing today. Casita Tex-Mex Bar & Grill had a love for veterans—from welcoming the troops at DFW to now honoring veterans every First Tuesday of the month at Casita Tex-Mex. Valles also had worked at the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce and spent her life involved in various organizations, ranging from the Irving Hispanic Chamber, H100, North Dallas of Commerce, HWNT, Dallas St. Patrick's Day parade, Dia De Los Muertos and so many more. She also remodeled and fixed up homes across North Texas, later starting her own business and becoming General Contractor for her business NV Contractors.

Valles will be forever missed by loved ones. She blessed the lives of many and will continue to bless us with her music and businesses.

#### HONORING THE REVEREND DR. GREGORY A. SUTTON

##### HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 14, 2023*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding mentor,

dedicated servant leader, faithful servant of God and dear friend of longstanding, the Reverend Dr. Gregory A. Sutton. Dr. Sutton will be honored for his 53 years of faithful service at Jackson Memorial Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, on Sunday, July 16, 2023, at 10:30 am.

Dr. Sutton was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He was raised among great educators, philosophers, and theologians. Dr. Sutton was always concerned about the welfare of others and used his voice to speak out on pressing issues of the day. He began to preach the Gospel at the young age of 16. This would lay the blueprint for his ministry and his destiny—the boy, the preacher, the man, and the visionary.

Dr. Sutton began preaching the Gospel while he was still in high school and accepted the calling to preach a growing church called Jackson Memorial at the age of 18, where he has pastored for 53 years. Through his leadership, the church has continued to expand its membership and physical footprint. Dr. Sutton has seen the expansion of the church's membership to over 6,000 members and he has overseen the construction of 2 new edifices for the church. Dr. Sutton's ministry is indeed a global ministry and reaches people where they are across the world.

The scripture tells us in Proverbs, "that the people perish where there is no vision." Dr. Sutton is indeed a visionary and has used his ministry to reach people beyond the church walls. He has dedicated himself to the awareness, protection, and spiritual development of youth. Dr. Sutton was the originator of the phrase, "Stop the Violence, Save the Youth." Cementing his commitment to young people and their spiritual futures, Pastor Sutton was the first pastor in the Atlanta area to open his church for prayer for students before school. He also reaches out and incorporates the needs of his elderly parishioners in his ministry. Dr. Sutton has a complete ministry that attempts to reach many different groups for Christ to include those that are in prison, the homebound, the homeless, the low income and the disenfranchised. He uses his Weekly Television Broadcast, "Now is the Time," to reach those who would not otherwise be reachable.

Dr. George Washington Carver once said that "How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young; compassionate with the aged; sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and the strong, because someday in your life you will have been all of these." Dr. Sutton is acutely aware that for the Kingdom of God to be manifested in this world, it is imperative that people from all walks of life be brought into the fold and be made to feel that they matter and that Jesus Loves them. Dr. Sutton's ministry is truly a Matthew 25 type of ministry.

Even amid his various ministerial duties, Dr. Sutton finds time to serve his community at large. It has been said that "Service is the rent that we pay for the space that we occupy here on this earth." Dr. Sutton has paid his rent and he has paid it well. He serves on the board of directors of many social and civic organizations to include the Board of Ministers of Morehouse College.

Reverend Dr. Gregory Sutton has achieved much in life, but none of it would have been possible without the grace of God and the love and support of this wife, First Lady Gail Sutton; his children, Theresa, Tony, Keisha, and

LaQuay; his 3 grandchildren and other family members.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join my wife, Vivian, and I; along with the more than 765,000 people of Georgia's Second Congressional District in honoring and commending the Reverend Dr. Gregory A. Sutton for 53 years of dedicated service to his God, Jackson Memorial Baptist Church and humankind. Moreover, we pray God's continued blessings upon him, his ministry, and his family in the weeks, months, and years ahead.

HONORING THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 14, 2023*

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice (NABCJ) on their 50th Anniversary.

The mission of the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice is to act upon the needs, concerns, and contributions of African Americans and other people of color as they relate to the administration of equal justice. This milestone of NABCJ advancing justice for 50 years signifies decades of positive change and a commitment to criminal justice as a fundamental aspect of our democracy.

At the heart of NABCJ is its dedicated members, who consist of criminal justice professionals including those in law enforcement, corrections, courts, social services, academia as well as religious and community leaders. They work diligently to research relevant legislation and focus attention on improving law enforcement and our criminal justice system through evidence-based policies. Their strong commitment to respect the dignity of all humans contributes to the NABCJ's rich history of excellence and integrity.

The 400 Years African American History Commission, created by Congress in 2017, has been heavily engaged with NABCJ through 11 student chapters of the organization at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Additionally, the National Alliance of Faith and Justice, first formed as a committee of the NABCJ, was founded and has successfully grown over the last 20 years. The establishment of these relationships have helped pave the way for African Americans and other people of color to receive equal justice under the law.

The National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice has a long history of promoting evidence-based strategies that more effectively address crime and keeping America's communities safe. I was grateful for NABCJ's support of my Youth Prison Reduction through Mentoring, Intervention, Support and Education (Youth PROMISE) Act, which I first introduced in 2007 to help communities develop and implement evidence-based strategies to reduce youth violence and delinquency. Provisions of the Youth PROMISE Act were ultimately enacted in the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018, and it would not have been possible without the work and support of organizations like NABCJ.

Mr. Speaker, NABCJ embodies what it means to fight for "liberty and justice for all." It is my pleasure to congratulate the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice on the many hard-fought battles won since its inception 50 years ago and wish the organization many more years of success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. RUBEN GALLEGO**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 14, 2023*

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, today I missed a vote on final passage of H.R. 2670—National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2024 because of the birth of my child. Had I been present on the House Floor,

I would have voted NO. As a combat veteran and a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, helping to develop the NDAA is one of the most important parts of my job. This year, however, I would not have been able to vote for this bill in good faith.

While I voted in favor of reporting H.R. 2670 out of the House Armed Services Committee, Speaker MCCARTHY allowed the most radical members of his party to hijack what was a bipartisan effort to protect our Nation and support our troops. Instead, House Republicans passed amendments that do the opposite, including provisions that restrict access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, discriminate against the LGBTQ+ community, and eliminate efforts to ensure that Americans from all communities that want to serve know they will be supported and succeed.

Although there were dozens of amendments that I would have opposed, I want to highlight 5 in particular where I would have cast the following individual votes:

No on Jackson Amendment No. 377, which seeks to reverse the Defense Department's policy that safeguards access to abortion and other reproductive health care.

No on Rosendale Amendment No. 194, which seeks to prohibit coverage of gender-affirming care through TRICARE.

No on Norman Amendment No. 30, which seeks to prohibit gender-affirming care for dependents through the Exceptional Family Member Program.

No on Norman Amendment No. 1464, which seeks to ban the pride flag from Defense Department facilities.

No on Boebert Amendment No. 1386, which seeks to prohibit Defense Department schools from having books that espouse "radical gender ideology."

Instead of passing the bipartisan annual defense bill that I supported in Committee, Speaker MCCARTHY chose partisan politics over national security. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House and Senate to address these harmful provisions through the Conference process.