

We are the party of service, of dignity, and of I hope.

I came to the House 28 years ago as a proud liberal. And that is how I am going to leave.

Mr. Speaker, it has been an honor, and my privilege.

WAR ON COAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, coal communities throughout West Virginia and Appalachia are struggling. This administration's war on coal and market forces have combined to close coal mines and send thousands of coal miners to the unemployment lines.

While we work to repeal onerous and overreaching regulations and reopen mines, we also need to diversify our economy. That means attracting new industries to our coal communities and creating new opportunities for investment.

I have introduced, today, H.R. 6403, legislation that will help us do just that. The Creating Opportunities for Rural Economies Act would allocate a portion of available new markets tax credits to be used for development in communities impacted by the downturn in coal.

Over the next 3 years, it would mean \$525 million in credits for heavily impacted communities in West Virginia and Appalachia. These tax credits can be used to help spur investment for new businesses. They can go toward developing new mixed-use facilities, food and grocery stores in underserved communities, manufacturing, healthcare services, and so much more.

I want to thank Senator SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO for her leadership in the Senate on this important issue and legislation. Our coal communities deserve our support and help as they work to diversify their economies.

MINERS' PENSIONS

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, with only weeks left in this Congress—2, to be exact—our retired coal miners and widows are wondering if we will act to protect them. At the end of the year, the healthcare benefits for many miners and their widows will dry up, and their pensions could be cut in the months and years ahead.

When they went down into the mines, they were made a promise: when you retire, you will have a good pension and healthcare benefits. Now that promise is in jeopardy. The pensions and benefits they worked their whole lives for are in jeopardy.

Mr. Speaker, time is running out to do the right thing by our miners and their families. But we have a solution: the Coal Healthcare and Pensions Protection Act, legislation I am a proud cosponsor of. It is a bipartisan bill, and a similar bill is pending in the Senate.

Congress needs to act to fulfill this promise, to keep our word to the min-

ers of West Virginia and other coal States. These miners and their families deserve no less than what they worked their entire lives to earn: the peace of mind that comes with a pension.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to keep the promise and support this important legislation. Time is running out to stand up for our miners and their families.

STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of recent efforts to strengthen the partnership between Israel and the United States by this Congress.

Our countries have a long and important friendship. That is why my and this Congress' support of H.R. 5877, the United States-Israel Advanced Research Partnership Act, and H.R. 5843, the United States-Israel Cybersecurity Cooperation Enhancement Act, two bills that advance the vital goal of bolstering the U.S.-Israeli partnership on security, are so important. These bills focus specifically on strengthening cybersecurity collaboration through grants, research, and antiterrorism programs.

Knowing of the security challenges Israel faces in its region, these measures would reinforce our commitment to our most critical ally in the Middle East at a time when the evolving threat of a cybersecurity attack has never been more serious. It is imperative we continue to work together on the security issues faced by our respective countries.

STUDENT VETERANS

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of bipartisan legislation to improve and simplify the decisionmaking process for our student veterans.

H.R. 5047, the Protecting Veterans' Educational Choice Act, would help veterans clearly understand if and how their coursework credits might transfer between schools. The legislation would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide student veterans with detailed information about education assistance benefits, including how to request free education counseling services at the VA.

For our veterans who wish to obtain or complete a degree, access to this information can not only save them countless administrative headaches, but also precious time and money. I am proud to support measures such as this bill that would streamline the transition for veterans into civilian life and provide them with the tools and resources to succeed.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

FINDING CURES

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 34, the 21st Century Cures Act, a bipartisan bill that focuses solely on solutions for patients.

All of us have been affected, whether directly or indirectly, by tragic diseases. That is why advancing and improving medical innovation and providing much-needed resources that are required for finding cures, which this bill would do, are such important goals.

The 21st Century Cures Act would target diseases that do not yet have a cure. Bringing safe, effective drugs and devices to Pennsylvanians and Americans in a more efficient manner will benefit our families and communities. This bill would also bring much-needed certainty to job creators and help keep Pennsylvania at the forefront of medical innovation.

In Congress, we have a responsibility to ensure that resources are available to help defeat these yet incurable diseases. This bill is a significant step forward toward this goal.

The 21st Century Cures Act also includes important mental health reform measures. I have focused much of my attention since coming into office on ways to make Pennsylvania communities healthier and safer, and families across my district have shared their stories about how mental health issues impact individuals, families, and communities. Much-needed reforms are included in this bill: empowering patients and caregivers, ensuring availability of treatment, encouraging students to choose careers in mental health, providing for those on the front lines, and maintaining transparency in government programs.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

HOMENET AUTOMOTIVE WINS TECH AWARD

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate HomeNet Automotive, a company in my district, on receiving the Tech360 Technology Team of the Year Award from the Chester County Economic Development Council.

I had the opportunity to visit HomeNet Automotive over the summer and enjoyed learning about their innovative company, which is bringing jobs and forward-looking technology to our community.

HomeNet Automotive makes the SnapLot Photo Capture App, which provides car dealers with the ability to update the inventory it displays on their Web sites. A tech team from the company based in East Whiteland, Chester County, updated the technology to improve its ease of use for dealers. The app is currently used by dealers nationwide as well as at Manheim Auto Auctions, with the possibility of expanding with Manheim into Europe.

I am very proud of that company in Pennsylvania's Sixth Congressional District.

RECOGNIZING RYAN VARGO

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring attention to the leadership of Ryan Vargo, a senior up at Pottsgrove School District, and his role in helping expand recreational opportunity at the Upper Pottsgrove Township Park. He spearheaded a project to install donated playground equipment at Hollenbach Park off North Hanover Street, adding recreational opportunity for children in the Pottsgrove community.

It is a testament to how our country and its future is great when we look at student leaders and what they are doing in their teenage years to help improve communities across this Commonwealth and across this country.

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MINNESOTA'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate five outstanding students in my district who have earned a Fulbright scholarship this year.

Austin Barkley of Sartell, Paul Creager of Stillwater, Amy Grant of Big Lake, Natalie Hoidal of Forest Lake, and Jenna Maus of Kimball will each have the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lecture, study, teach English, or do research in foreign countries that range from Mexico to Malaysia. Each of these Fulbright scholars will not only have the ability to promote healthy relations and diplomacy with foreign nations, but they will also bring home the knowledge and leadership experience they will gain while abroad.

Many past participants of this program have gone on to achieve success in a variety of fields, with some even serving here in Congress. I have no doubt we will see great things from each of these exceptional individuals, and I congratulate and wish them luck on their exciting adventure.

MINNESOTA'S TOP FARM FAMILY

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Bruce and Sharon Johnson of East Bethel and the Minnesota Fresh Farm for being named the Anoka County Farm Family of the Year by the University of Minnesota. For the past 2 decades, the University of Minnesota has chosen top farming families for their work promoting our State's great agricultural industry.

The Minnesota Fresh Farm has been passed down from one generation of the Johnson family to the next and is currently being farmed by Bruce and Sharon Johnson, along with their son, Luke, and his wife, Liz.

This year, the Johnson family was chosen for the efforts they have made to educate Minnesota's youth about farming. This includes working with

the Opportunity Services in Anoka, an organization that helps individuals with special needs so they can enjoy farming and the great outdoors. The Johnson family were also chosen because of their focus on sustainable production methods and growing food without using pesticides.

I want to congratulate the Johnson family and thank them for their efforts to promote the farming life and Minnesota's agricultural industry.

INVESTING IN MINNESOTA'S FUTURE

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a great Minnesota company that is actively helping our Nation's students develop skills that will help them shine in their future success. I am proud that Minnesota's own Best Buy Foundation is giving grants to form programs that will give students the chance to master important technology skills, like coding and graphic design.

The world that we are living in is rapidly transforming and technology is quickly becoming more than just a luxury—it is becoming a way of life and a key ingredient to our Nation's future success.

What is perhaps most commendable about Best Buy's grant program is that it targets teens who live in underserved communities. If we as a Nation hope to remain not only relevant, but competitive, then everybody must have the chance to strive. I would like to thank the Best Buy Foundation for recognizing the importance of serving the underserved.

STEARNS COUNTY HEROES

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor 12 Stearns County dispatchers who received medals of merit for their work during the horrific attack at the Crossroads Center Mall.

What seemed like a normal night at a mall in central Minnesota quickly turned into a nightmare when a man began to attack shoppers with a knife. As the attacks unfolded, chaos ensued.

What kept this dangerous situation from getting even worse was the dedicated work of these 12 professionals. In 2 hours, they took 250 calls and they made numerous calls to emergency responders to keep them abreast on the most current details of the attack. As a result of their work, there was no loss of life and all shoppers and first responders were able to return home safely to their loved ones that night.

While words can never express the full extent of our gratitude, I am proud to stand here today to thank these men and women for their heroic efforts.

RECOGNIZING REPRESENTATIVE RON STEPHENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my lifelong friend, Representative Ron Stephens

from Savannah, Georgia, for being awarded the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Armstrong State University.

Chairman Stephens represents the 164th District in the Georgia General Assembly. During his time in the legislature, he has done a remarkable job representing his constituents.

Currently, he is the chairman of the House Economic Development and Tourism Committee and a member of the Appropriations, Rules, and Ways and Means Committees, allowing him to advocate important issues for his constituency. In addition, Governor Nathan Deal appointed Mr. Stephens to the Georgia Tourism Foundation.

Before his time in the Georgia General Assembly, Chairman Stephens was already working for the betterment of his community. He began his career in pharmacy and served the medical needs of others for 37 years. Thereafter, he served as a councilman in Garden City, Georgia.

I am proud of my lifelong friend for his work, and I am overjoyed that he is receiving the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Armstrong State University.

RECOGNIZING COACH DOYLE KELLEY

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Doyle Kelley from Savannah, Georgia, who passed away on September 30.

Mr. Kelley, known throughout the Savannah community as Coach Kelley, dedicated his life to teaching and mentoring students.

After graduating from Armstrong State University in 1969, Coach Kelley started coaching Jenkins High School's basketball team, sparking his commitment to students. Coach Kelley's passion shows not only in his incredible success on the court, but also the notorious testimonials from students about how he changed their lives for the better.

After he moved to coach basketball at Savannah Christian Preparatory School, he had 427 victories in basketball, along with 18 State championships in three sports, but the number of students he positively impacted is far greater.

After his successful years in the sport, Coach Kelley served as the high school principal for 14 years at Savannah Christian until his retirement.

His caring and compassionate nature was seen by everyone in the community, from friends, colleagues, students, and certainly family members. Coach Kelley's presence in the community will be deeply missed and felt by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

HONORING WINSTON HENCELY

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask for your thoughts and prayers for Mr. Winston Hencely.

Mr. Hencely was injured in the suicide attack on Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan on November 12. Four brave Americans were killed in the attack