

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an individual who has made a remarkable impact on higher education in this country and in my State. He has done that for more than a half a century.

William English "Brit" Kirwan retired at the end of the June as chancellor of the University System of Maryland. He served as chancellor for the past 12 years, and, during that time, he oversaw the period of growth, transformation, and achievement, which included the integration of online technology with course instruction and a 24 percent increase in enrollment.

Dr. Kirwan's lifetime of service to higher education, Mr. Speaker, began in his youth, which was spent on or around college campuses in Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky, and Durham, North Carolina.

His father, Dr. A.D. Kirwan, was an accomplished educator and college administrator as well, having written and lectured in history at the University of Kentucky and later served as dean and its president.

Brit Kirwan followed in his father's footsteps, luckily for all of us, attending the University of Kentucky, and later pursuing his master's and doctorate in mathematics from Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Dr. Kirwan came to the University of Maryland College Park in 1964, a year after I graduated. He came as an assistant professor of math. After 24 years teaching in the department, and having been elevated to the department chair, and then provost, Dr. Kirwan was selected as the president of the university in 1988.

He led the university system of Maryland's flagship campus for a decade, before leaving to become president of The Ohio State University.

I think I speak for all Marylanders when I say we were very happy when he came back to Maryland. I was a member of the Board of Regents at the time, and I remember participating in a meeting when we were searching for a new chancellor.

I asked my colleagues, "If we could get Brit to come back, what would you think?" All of them were extraordinarily enthusiastic.

So I called his house in Ohio, and his wife, Patty, answered, and I asked her if she and Brit would be interested in returning. Patty immediately replied they would both like to be closer to their grandchildren. Luckily, they were living in Maryland.

I took that as a good sign and, a short time later, Brit was back as chancellor of the university system. He managed a network that serves over 165,000 undergraduate and graduate students at 12 universities, two regional higher education centers, and one research center. It is the 12th largest university system in America. Under Dr. Kirwan's leadership, it has become a national model for excellence in higher education, research, and applied innovation.

Dr. Kirwan has been called upon by both Democratic and Republican Presidents over the years to advise on issues relating to higher education access and performance. And certainly, he has been asked by United States Senators and Members of this House for his advice and counsel as well.

He has been committed, throughout his years as an administrator, Mr. Speaker, to the principle that education ought to be accessible to all, and it ought to be seen as a tool to help people enrich their lives for learning, while advancing their careers. Among his major priorities have been making the university campuses more diverse and making attending college more affordable.

Under his leadership, the university system built partnerships with the private sector and the State and Federal Government in order to further the cause of advanced research and innovation that has practical application for economic growth and national defense.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, I was proud to be on hand to inaugurate a new test site in southern Maryland for unmanned aircraft systems, which will help in the development of new aerospace technologies and bring business development and skilled jobs to that region.

Dr. Kirwan has always understood that we need to do more to ensure that everyone who wants to pursue higher education can do so and that our colleges and universities are helping to produce skilled innovators and workers. He knew that the university system was a partner in economic growth in our State and that university and academic institutions were partners in growing the U.S. economy.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure of working closely with Dr. Kirwan for many years, and I have seen, firsthand, his passion for higher education, his respect for faculty and staff, and his love of students.

Last week, I had the opportunity to participate in a ceremony to rededicate the University of Maryland mathematics building in honor of Dr. Brit Kirwan. That building, in which he taught mathematics, is now named in his honor for him.

All of us, Mr. Speaker, have witnessed his determination to make the university system of Maryland a source of pride for our State and for our country, and he has done so.

He has been a man who is deeply devoted to his wife, Patty, a wonderful woman, and their wonderful family and their community. Patty Kirwan is, herself, an extraordinary partner in the success that she and Brit have both achieved.

Mr. Speaker, Chancellor Brit Kirwan is a man of extraordinary intellect, vision, understanding, compassion, character, and principle. He has brought all of these traits to bear in all of the important roles he performed throughout every endeavor in his life.

On behalf of all of us who live in our State but, indeed, on behalf of all the

citizens of the United States whom he has advantaged in one way or another, I thank Dr. Kirwan for his leadership on behalf of the higher education for our State and for our country.

Dr. Kirwan has stepped down as chancellor, but, Mr. Speaker, I know he will continue to lend all of his great talents to making higher education ever more effective and his country ever more successful.

Well done, Doctor.

TUBEROUS SCLEROSIS COMPLEX

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, tuberous sclerosis complex, or TSC, is a genetic disease which causes tumors to form in organs throughout the body, impacting the health and abilities of those born with it.

Nearly 50,000 Americans are affected by this condition, and many more cases remain undiagnosed because of lack of awareness or observable symptoms. For these individuals and their families, the fight against TSC is constant.

But in the face of this adversity, those with TSC show us strength and determination, not only to survive, but to thrive; individuals like Evan Moss from Virginia.

Evan was just 2 years old when he was diagnosed with TSC and, by age 4, was suffering up to 400 seizures a month because of his condition. But like so many with TSC, Evan's story is not defined by this impact. Now 11 years old, Evan is an accomplished author and a passionate advocate for those living with TSC.

As a member of the Congressional Rare Disease Caucus and honorary chair of the Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance, I am focused on shedding light on conditions like TSC and highlighting exceptional individuals like Evan.

The fight against TSC extends far beyond this Chamber, but each of us can play an important role in understanding and, ultimately, defeating tuberous sclerosis.

PASSAGE OF THE TRANSPORTATION BILL

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

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, I would like to begin by thanking Chairman SHUSTER, chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and Ranking Member DEFAZIO, for bringing forth here to floor of the House a long-term transportation bill.

It is the product of numerous hearings that have been held over the last couple of years, and those hearings were interesting in that, universally, whether we were hearing from the head of the national Chamber of Commerce, or hearing from the head of the AFL-

CIO and/or the trade unions that build our infrastructure, the message was always the same.

First of all, it was a recognition of the obvious: bridges are falling down, trains are coming off the track. It is tragic and costly in terms of dollars and loss of life.

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Secondly, it was pointed out by everybody that this failure is handicapping our economy—our ability to expand business, to create jobs, and to grow our economy.

Thirdly, everyone testified that we need a long-term surface transportation legislation so that States, communities, and our Federal transportation officials can do the kind of planning that is necessary to build the kind of transportation system that is needed for a strong economy.

Lastly, I want to point out that this legislation before us here today is the product of what has come to be known as regular order; namely, the process where important legislation for the country is brought before the appropriate committees and the committees and all the members of that committee have an opportunity to offer any ideas, any amendments that they want that they think will improve, in this case, our surface transportation system.

The fact of the matter is we have hundreds of amendments, and that committee, on which I am proud to serve, examined and considered every single one of those amendments.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to remind ourselves here that democracy is a long, arduous, and difficult process, but when you allow the members of a committee who have spent enormous amounts of time getting smart and knowledgeable about the responsibilities of that committee to come together, to offer their ideas, to have them thoroughly examined, and to have them thoroughly debated is how you find common ground. That is how you come together. That is how you build and develop respect for one another, and that is what has happened in the development of this surface transportation bill that we have before us here today.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the committee, and I congratulate the Congress for recognizing how important and how valuable regular order can be to the process of restoring people's confidence in the ability of the Congress of the United States to fix things, get things done, and end the gridlock. Thank you, my fellow colleagues.

REFORMING OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue that we don't talk about nearly enough. Our country's imperfect criminal justice system

is affecting not only the people in my district but also communities all across our Nation.

Every year the Federal Government spends more than a half trillion dollars on anti-poverty programs. The numbers show that these initiatives have not solved the problem. Today there are nearly 50 million Americans living in poverty. Over the last decade, the number of Americans living in our Nation's most impoverished communities—where at least 40 percent of the families live below the poverty line—has nearly doubled to a historic high of 14 million.

Meanwhile, the United States prison and jail population has reached an all-time high, and the number of people on probation and parole has literally doubled. This is not a coincidence, but the numbers don't even begin to tell the real story.

Solving this problem requires meaningful action and change—two things I would argue that Washington does not do so well. But rather than sitting idly by and waiting for Washington to get its act together, I have already begun taking action back home in Illinois' 10th Congressional District.

I have worked with community-level programs that have helped give people the tools that they need to be able to lift themselves out of poverty, brought in national leaders to tour our social service organizations across our district, and learned about the unique ways that these organizations are fighting poverty and working for criminal justice reform on the local level.

Recently I had the privilege to introduce Bob Woodson to a few of the inspiring local leaders who are working on these issues. The more time that I spend talking with various community leaders, the more painfully obviously the need to implement reforms to this system becomes.

One of the inspiring local groups working to fix some of the problems in our district is FIST. It stands for Former Inmates Striving Together in Waukegan. FIST works with the community to help individuals that are re-entering society get what they need to reenter the workforce. It is no secret, Mr. Speaker, that most ex-convicts, sadly, end up back in prison after serving jail time. This organization, as well as others, is trying to change that trend by sharing positive stories and offering a judgment-free zone for individuals to get back up on their feet.

Far too often, Mr. Speaker, the success stories that these organizations have do not get told, and, in fact, are kept a secret. Bob Woodson said, "People are motivated to change and improve when they are shown victories that are possible, not injuries to be avoided."

One inspiring young man we had the privilege to meet was Darrell McBride from Waukegan. He took the time to tell us about the journey that he took to get to where he is today, and that story bears repeating. Darrell spent 8

years in prison, which left him with limited resources and educational opportunities. He knew that he needed a job and direction after he was released, or the statistics would suggest that he would find himself back in prison. He turned to YouthBuild Lake County, and since graduating from the program, he has earned a construction certificate and, most importantly, has landed a job.

Mr. Speaker, it is this kind of help that we should be encouraging all to begin to promote within our communities. Thousands like Darrell would benefit greatly from criminal justice reform. While I know that this situation cannot simply be fixed in Washington, I certainly hope that we can help. One way in which I am trying to help is by cosponsoring and working for the passage of the Fair Chance Act introduced by my friend from Maryland, Representative ELIJAH CUMMINGS. This legislation would "ban the box" for Federal agencies, prohibiting them from asking prospective government employees about their criminal justice histories on job applications.

Potential employees should not use criminal history to screen out applicants before they have a chance to look at their qualifications. This policy would enable almost 20 million people to have a second chance and the opportunity to sell themselves to potential employers and make a positive contribution to our country.

Mr. Speaker, we need to deal with what leads people to end up in prison to begin with. We can do this by implementing positive strategies and innovations such as the use of body cameras for police officers to fight crime and to improve transparency and accountability.

Put simply, we need to end the era of mass incarceration, and this means reforming the mandatory minimum sentencing, among other policies.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that going forward we can work with groups to promote the success stories to help to empower individuals trying to turn their lives around and to work with local communities to reduce the rate of incarceration. Unfortunately, there is still a long way to go until this problem is solved, but I would like to thank organizations like FIST and YouthBuild for the great work that they are doing in Illinois' 10th Congressional District.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

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

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my concern over recent events taking place in my home State and around our Nation that tear at the fabric of our country's First Amendment right to freedom of religion.

Time and again we have seen instances in which an individual's right