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THE TRUE DRIVERS OF MINNESOTA'S ECONOMY

(Mr. EMMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate three small businesses in Elk River, Minnesota, who have been recognized by the Elk River Chamber of Commerce for their outstanding track record over the past year.

I want to congratulate the First National Bank for being named Business of the Year, Serrano Brothers Catering for being recognized as the New Business of the Year, and Sportech for being honored as the Employer of the Year.

Small businesses are a huge driver of our economy in the State of Minnesota, and they are what make each city and town unique. Running a small business is no easy task, and the entrepreneurs who open these businesses take a personal risk to bring jobs, commerce, and excellent products and services to our communities.

We cannot thank them enough for their valuable contribution, which is why I am proud today to thank and congratulate First National Bank, Serrano Brothers Catering, and Sportech for everything they do for our community and for the great State of Minnesota.

CONGRATULATING BISHOP O'DOWD AND McClymonds ON FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me first say how happy I am today to acknowledge the extraordinary accomplishments of two high school football teams in my beautiful congressional district. Until now, Oakland, California, never held a State championship, but now we have two. On December 17, Bishop O'Dowd clinched the CIF State Division 5-AA Championship. They beat Valley View High School 43-24, with former Oakland Raiders running back Coach Napoleon Kaufman leading them to victory. The same day, McClymonds' Warriors claimed the CIF State 5-A Championship with a 20-17 victory, becoming the first Oakland Athletic League team to win a State championship.

McClymonds is a public historic high school in the West Oakland community of my district. Coach Michael Peters has coached McClymonds since 1992 and has shown his commitment over the years to ensuring his athletes succeed both on the field and in the classroom.

Bishop O'Dowd, a Catholic high school, has been an athletic force for years, and I am so proud of their team. They have achieved the historic accomplishment of their championship also.

These young athletes have embodied the spirit, the passion, and the sportsmanship of Oakland and the entire East Bay. Please join me in congratulating them on these championships.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

(Mr. HULTGREN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, during Human Trafficking Awareness Month, I rise in support of the 21 million men, women, and children worldwide who are victims of this insidious enterprise. Human trafficking is nothing less than modern-day slavery. It targets society's most vulnerable, stealing their souls and depriving them of any hope to escape a downward spiral of despair.

Nations must be held accountable for their efforts to eradicate human trafficking within their borders, which is why, today, I am reintroducing the Sex Trafficking Demand Reduction Act. This legislation targets the demand for commercial sex because the evidence is clear that, where markets for commercial sex exist, human trafficking proliferates as well. The bill requires governments to take the initiative to eliminate the demand for purchase of commercial sex in their efforts to combat human trafficking overall.

As a member of the Congressional Human Trafficking Caucus, I am pleased to see Congress taking a leadership role in the fight against human trafficking. We are getting closer to the day when human trafficking will no longer represent a blight on humanity and we will see victims and survivors created in God's image fully restored.

RECOGNIZING FRANK B. MESIAH OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, Martin Luther King Jr. Day is a time in our country to reflect on the progress that we have made on civil rights as well as how much further still as a nation we must go.

When contemplating the progress in western New York, Frank B. Mesiah immediately comes to mind. Mr. Mesiah has been a prominent civil rights leader in Buffalo since 1950, following his service in the United States Army. Following a 20-year stay as president of the Buffalo NAACP, he retired late last year and will continue to be a public watchdog, this time through the lens of an active citizen.

During his years of service, Mr. Mesiah has always been the first to stand up and fight on behalf of our community. He played a leading role in desegregating Buffalo public schools, integrating the Buffalo Police Department, and fighting against noninclusive neighborhoods.

Mr. Mesiah has been a key leader in promoting tolerance and equality in western New York. While his time as NAACP president has concluded, his wisdom and passion endures in our community, and his work will inspire generations to come.

STOP GTMO TRANSFERS

(Mrs. HARTZLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge this administration to stop releasing terrorists from Guantanamo, where they can be returned to the Middle East and rejoin the fight. Approximately one in three former Guantanamo Bay detainees are confirmed to have reengaged or are suspected of reengaging in terrorist activities after transfer.

The White House, despite clear understanding of congressional intent, recently gave four more individuals the opportunity to resume their fight against American ideals by releasing them to Saudi Arabia. This is irresponsible and dangerous.

Even more disturbing are the President's plans to transfer more detainees, further threatening the safety of our troops and the security of the American people. It is appalling to me that the President would consider transferring the likes of Osama bin Laden's security guards and others trained by al Qaeda.

I urge this administration, in its final 8 days, to bear in mind potential consequences of his decision and to halt any more transfers. The security of American families and military personnel are at stake.

LET'S NOT REPEAL THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

(Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned about the repeal of the Affordable Care Act and what it would mean for Americans struggling with debilitating diseases.

Prior to the ACA, the struggle of a debilitating illness like Alzheimer's or cancer could be compounded because of the financial burden from lack of affordable health care. Imagine being denied necessary health care because you or a loved one suffered from a pre-existing condition. These are the concerns that I am hearing from constituents across the Granite State.

Take Sally from West Chesterfield. Her daughter has Crohn's disease, and she is on their family plan because she is under age 26. She will always need access to health care because of her condition, and if the Affordable Care Act is repealed and not replaced, she could lose coverage because of her pre-existing condition. These concerns are all too commonplace.

I agree the ACA is not perfect, and I am committed to working in a bipartisan way to ensure the law will work

for all Americans. But in the meantime, the ACA is helping 22 million Americans, including 1 in every 10 Granite Staters. We should build on those successes.

I urge my colleagues on the Republican side to resist the temptation to repeal the law, especially without a plan that ensures affordable coverage for all Americans.

OBAMACARE'S MARKETPLACE

(Mr. BUCSHON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, as a medical provider, I understand how critical and necessary patient choice and input is to the overall quality of our healthcare system. Put simply, patients are better off when they are equipped to make their own decisions.

Unfortunately, ObamaCare limits patient choice, as outlined in this chart. In fact, in the ObamaCare marketplace, patients in two-thirds of our country are limited to a choice of one or two insurers. Across five entire States, patients have only one option. To me, the marketplace looks more like a government-created monopoly under a system where every American is required by law to purchase the product.

To make matters worse, the onerous mandates in the law have led to restricted physician networks. So not only do patients have little choice regarding their insurers, they are also limited to what physicians they can see.

It turns out we can't keep our doctors even if we like them. That is why we are offering a Better Way plan that expands choice and empowers patients.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, to know how high the stakes are in the Republican effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act, you only have to listen to your constituents. One of the many I have heard from is Kevin Wittbrodt from Warren, Michigan, who writes: "I'm a Marine Corps veteran, and I'm covered by the VA system, but my wife isn't. She has kidney disease and I've found it hard to get coverage for her with the preexisting condition . . . but I found an affordable plan under the ACA. This allows for continued treatment and she's still with me."

ACA is not collapsing, contrary to what the Speaker is saying. The Republicans are trying to sink ACA while it is very much afloat and alive for Kevin, his wife, and millions and millions of others. Republicans have been promising a plan for 7 years and never delivered. They will not deliver now for all of America.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS LEGISLATION

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my legislation, the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act, H.R. 437. Last year in Florida alone, we witnessed terrorism, major hurricanes, and the outbreak of the Zika virus. We need to be prepared for these types of emergencies, and we need to make sure our first responders have the tools they need to keep us safe.

My bill enhances medical preparedness and promotes the stockpiling of medical countermeasures. This includes medical kits, protective gear, ventilators, and more. Importantly, the legislation uses existing grant funds to accomplish this. It does not require new or additional funding.

This Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act ensures we take these critical steps now so we are ready in case of crisis. In the wake of an emergency, our first responders bravely risk their lives on behalf of our safety. I introduced this bill to protect the public and protect our protectors.

CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

(Ms. ADAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Saint James Presbyterian Church of Greensboro, North Carolina.

As the third oldest African American church in Greensboro, Saint James is rich in history and tradition. Under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett, Saint James embraces the theme: 150 Years, Celebrating Our Walk-in Faith and Service.

It is rare but wonderful to find a group of individuals who have thoroughly enriched their community through dedicated service and good works. It has been my unique honor to represent the good people of Saint James Presbyterian both in North Carolina and in the Congress for more than 30 years. Saint James has helped make Greensboro a more just and peaceful community, and for that, I am immensely proud.

Congratulations, once again, Saint James, on your anniversary—a century plus five decades. I look forward to witnessing the many ways in which Saint James will continue to thrive during its next 150 years.

LIGHT UP STATE COLLEGE ATTEMPTS GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

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Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as the mercury dropped to record lows this week in Pennsylvania, I rise to highlight an upcoming cold-weather event in State College, Pennsylvania.

The Light Up State College will attempt to break a Guinness World Record next month by lighting more than 3,000 ice luminaries on Allen Street between College Avenue and Beaver Avenue at 6 p.m. the first Saturday in February.

Now, you may ask: What is an ice luminary? According to Guinness, ice luminaries are cup-shaped structures made purely out of ice that hold a light inside. Those interested in helping break this record can pick up a do-it-yourself ice luminary kit in downtown State College.

The current world record contains 2,561 separate lanterns and was set in 2013 by the residents of a small town in Sweden. They have been making ice luminary lanterns to coincide with a nearby winter market for the past 10 years.

Light Up State College is a partnership of three groups: Centre Foundation, Make Space, and the Knight Foundation. Organizers have asked individuals in State College to commit to making ice luminaries, as more than 2,000 are still needed to help put State College over the line and on the map in the Guinness Book of World Records. This record-breaking event will take place in State College on Saturday, February 4.

I wish them the best of luck.

FIGHTING FOR MEDICARE

(Mrs. BEATTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, what is the message?

I rise today because I am fighting for Medicare, and I oppose any attempts to balance the budget on the backs of seniors by privatizing Medicare.

For over 50 years, Medicare has guaranteed health care to all Americans 65 years or older and continues to do so for more than 50 million Americans today. Seniors, like my constituent Linda and her mother, who rely on Medicare for their healthcare needs, do not want Republicans to dismantle it.

What is the message, Mr. Speaker?

In my home State of Ohio, about 2 million seniors and disabled individuals, including 1 million women, 260,000 African Americans, are at risk of losing their Medicare benefits if Republicans privatize it.

Mr. Speaker, I am here to fight for Linda, her mother, for Janet and Mary and Robert and many other seniors who count on Medicare for their doctor's visits, their prescription assistance, and many other medical needs.

Mr. Speaker, what is the message?