

Cari believes that the student experience should never be boring. Each day, she works to create a space where students can truly enjoy what they are learning in her classroom. From composing a new song that helps with memorizing multiplication facts, to building igloo prototypes showing a better understanding of life in the Arctic regions, Cari goes to creative lengths to make both teaching and learning fun.

Cari is a literacy coach at Harbordale Elementary and has taught for 21 years. The success of her students serves as her inspiration, and she encourages them to make the learning process fun, not only in her class, but also in their future endeavors.

I extend my best wishes and sincere gratitude to Cari for her dedication to teaching. I look forward to hearing of her continued good work in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO KRISTA STANLEY

• Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today I honor Krista Stanley, the Okeechobee County Teacher of the year from Yearling Middle School in Okeechobee, FL.

Krista is a sixth grade teacher and has taught at Yearling Middle School for the past 4 years. She serves as the school math representative, a mentor for new teachers, and facilitates professional development focusing on standards based instruction. Krista was previously named the Project One New Teacher of the Year for Okeechobee County in 2016.

Krista believes that all students can learn if they are given the opportunity to do so in the classroom. She is appreciative of her students and cares for them, considering them to be the reason for her success as a teacher.

Throughout the school year, Krista provides her students with the tools they need to be successful and dedicates each day to helping them in any way she can. Reflecting her commitment, in 2019, 86 percent of Krista's students earned a proficient score on the Florida State Assessment.

I extend my best wishes to Krista for her tireless efforts and care she gives to her students. I look forward to hearing of her continued good work in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING SERGIO'S FAMILY RESTAURANT

• Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize a small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit at the heart of our country. It is my privilege to recognize a family-owned small business known for its community leadership and authentic Cuban cuisine. This week, it is my pleasure to honor Sergio's Family Restaurant of Miami, FL, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 1975, Blanca Cabrera opened what would become Sergio's Family Res-

taurant as a small sandwich shop off of Bird Road in Miami. Equipped with generations of family recipes, Blanca sought to honor her Cuban heritage. Her shop provided employment for several refugees, providing dignified work as they built new lives. She offered a fresh take on Cuban and American cuisine, and her sandwich shop became a local hit.

Today, Sergio's Family Restaurant has expanded to 13 locations in South Florida. Carlos Gazitua, the chief executive officer, is the third generation family member to lead Sergio's. Under his leadership, the business has expanded its community involvement and emphasized healthy living while retaining its signature flavor. Sergio's has been recognized by the Florida Department of Health as the first certified restaurant to take part in the Healthy Happens Here restaurant initiative, incorporating low-calorie versions of traditional Cuban eats on their menu.

At the local and State level and among its industry peers, Sergio's has been recognized for its outstanding cuisine. They were named Best Drive-Thru of 2015 by the Miami New Times, recognized as the 2017 Restaurant of the Year by the South Florida Tourism Professional Awards, and their traditional empanadas were featured in "Florida's Best Cheap Eats" by Travel & Leisure Magazine. Additionally, the city of Miami and Miami-Dade County mayors honored Sergio's with Croqueta Day on October 2, 2018. On this day, Sergio's served its 20 millionth croqueta—croquette.

As a community leader, Sergio's has advocated for several nonprofit organizations and local small businesses. In 2015, Sergio's donated food to a Live Like Bella Childhood Cancer Foundation event. Then-Governor RICK SCOTT recognized Sergio's service in 2017, when they collected and shipped food and supplies to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria devastated the island. When Super Bowl LIV was held in Miami in 2020, Sergio's partnered with The Women's Fund of Miami-Dade to raise funds for its mission to create awareness and preventing sex trafficking. Additionally, Carlos has advocated for small business in local and industry events, including the "Bring Small Business Back" initiative.

Like many Floridian small businesses, Sergio's Family Restaurant stepped up to help its community during the coronavirus pandemic. They participated in several social media, radio, and video initiatives encouraging support for local, family-owned small businesses. Partnering with the Miami Heat and the Miami Dade County Public School Superintendent, Sergio's Restaurant provided meals for more than 500 people in the Liberty City area. Sergio's collaborated with Meals for Heroes Miami to feed local healthcare workers and first responders, including donating approximately 1,400 meals to the Miami-Dade Fire

Rescue teams. Additionally, Carlos worked with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Florida Restaurant Lodging Association to provide more than 350,000 reusable masks for hospitality workers in South Florida.

When the U.S. Small Business Administration launched the Paycheck Protection Program, it provided a much needed lifeline to small businesses, including Sergio's Restaurant. The PPP provides forgivable loans to impacted small businesses and nonprofits who maintain their payroll during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to a PPP loan, Sergio's was able to keep their employees paid until Miami reopened. Their community leadership and advocacy was recognized by Governor Ron DeSantis who visited Sergio's in early June.

Through their service and leadership, Sergio's Family Restaurant is an outstanding example of how small businesses uplift their communities. I commend their support for local small businesses. Congratulations to Carlos and the entire team at Sergio's restaurant. I look forward to watching your continued growth and success throughout South Florida.●

VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS

• Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD some of the finalist essays written by Vermont High School students as part of the 10th annual "State of the Union" essay contest conducted by my office.

The material follows:

MADELYN TRIMPI, WOODSTOCK UNION HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR

Plastic is destroying the earth and a federal law to restrict single-use plastics must be developed. Plastic is a huge contributor to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions that are warming the atmosphere. An article called "How Plastics Contribute to Climate Change" by Brooke Bauman from Yale Climate Connections states "plastic originates as fossil fuels and emits greenhouse gasses from cradle to grave." At the beginning of its life cycle, gas and oil are fracked from the ground, then made into plastic releasing harmful pollutants like CO₂ and nitrogen oxide that get stuck in the atmosphere and warm the earth. Along with greenhouse gas emissions, plastic pollutes the ecosystems by simply entering and never leaving. In the same article by Yale, scientists state "plastics can break down into smaller pieces called microplastics through biodegradation or exposure to the sun, heat or water. These microplastics scatter to all corners of the globe and even to the depths of the oceans. Toxic chemicals can bind microplastics and create poison pills that marine animals eat." When a foreign substance enters the ecosystem, it threatens all aspects of the life cycle; including humans.

Biodiversity is the root of life on earth and when exposed to something like plastic, everything feels an effect. For example, research shows that plastic has entered into the human body most likely through food like fish and other meats. Animals eat the microplastics thinking they are nutrients; we eat the fish, therefore consuming the plastic in them. This can lead to many

health issues. Studies show that an average of 20 particles of microplastic has been found in 10 grams of human stool. "If our findings are remotely representative, annual microplastic consumption could exceed several hundred thousand [particles]," authors of the Environmental Science and Technology concludes. Even in cases when physical plastics pose little to no risk to human health, potentially harmful chemicals are added to plastics to modify appearance or functionality. Some of these chemicals include BPA and phthalates which have each been found to disrupt hormones in humans. BPA has been linked to increasing the risk of birth defects, metabolic diseases, and other health problems. Among other health risks, phthalate exposure has been found to reduce testosterone levels in male fetuses.

Already, states including California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon and Vermont—have successfully banned single-use plastic bags. In addition to banning plastic bags, Vermont's SB 113 will place restrictions on single-use straws and polystyrene containers. These few states are leading the initiative in a fight against an indestructible material. When it comes to plastic, there are plenty of realistic alternatives that we should be enforcing instead of fighting against it. Developing and making these alternative products affordable and more readily available is a necessary focus in working toward a more healthy environment. Plastic is a major contributor to climate change. A national ban on single-use plastic is a simple start and necessary step toward saving the future of our planet.

GRiffin WARYAS, BELLows FALLS UNION HIGH SCHOOL, SENIOR

Ninety-Seven years ago, Frederick Banting discovered insulin. However, he decided not to put his name on the patent; he believed it was against the Hippocratic Oath to profit at the expense of patients. So, his team sold the patent to the University of Toronto for a dollar, in hopes that anyone who needed the medicine could afford it. Yet, today, ninety-seven years since the patent was sold for one dollar, people are dying because they cannot afford the insulin they need to survive.

Nicole Smith-Holt's son Alec died because of this. When his 26th birthday hit, he was no longer covered by his parent's insurance, and his monthly insulin costs skyrocketed to a staggering \$1,300 a month. Alec could no longer afford his medicine and passed away shortly after.

Unfortunately, this isn't an incredibly rare case. The costs of the most popular types of insulin have tripled over the past decade, the average cost per month has risen to \$450 a month, and 1 in 4 diabetes patients now either is forced to take partial doses or skip over their life-saving medicine. Unfortunately, Insulin is not the only drug being used as a profit machine by corporate monsters.

In 2007, Mylan bought the rights to the EpiPen device. At that time, the cost of a set of two injectors was \$94. A little over a decade later, the cost is over \$700. And with 3.6 million prescriptions being written last year, and the net price to make a set being \$60, Mylan made about 2.3 BILLION dollars in profit. They know people will buy it regardless of price because they have to. This leaves the life of uninsured, poor individuals in the balance.

To fix this, these large pharmaceutical companies need to be trust busted. They are buying off competition and abusing the broken American health care system to pad their pockets at the expense of the working class. Not to mention, they have teamed up with the insurance companies to ensure prof-

it at every corner. While these companies are businesses and should be allowed to operate as such, there comes a time when the government must protect us from them. As the great Teddy Roosevelt once said, "We draw the line against misconduct, not against wealth."

We need to employ the trust-busting laws set up in this nation to prevent these monopolies from preying on our citizens. To do this, we need to take the corruption out of Washington. In the time between January 1st, 2017 and October 16th, 2018, 34 lawmakers received at least \$100,000 including the House Republican majority leader. Drug companies should be banned from funding campaigns to prevent the purchasing of their economic safety. Another law that should be employed is a Sensible Drug Pricing Act. This would allow the companies to continue to make money but also allow poor Americans access to drugs that are relatively cheap to make, with a control on the pricing.

KYLE WILKIN, MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR

Every day people experience struggle of some sort; they struggle in a class or have to work harder than anticipated to complete a goal, but some people struggle more than others. Working hard, people may find it impossible to improve; there may be something blocking their way or restricting their ability to complete a task. In situations like that people search for help; they turn to the people around them hoping to find support, so oftentimes people either find support, or they find indifference. When people's basic needs aren't met, they are left to fend for themselves. In the United States there are a total of 552,830 people were experiencing homelessness on a single night in 2018. People who are homeless are in need of people to support them.

The first potential solution could be to allocate more money to fund social workers to help homeless people. Working with people who are homeless, social workers will be able to help them find housing. According to the Congressional Budget Office, in 2018 \$623 billion were spent on defense; if some amount of that money was given to the comparatively low amount of \$93 billion spent on education, training, employment, and social services combined, more people could work with those who are homeless to find housing. By making more social workers available, people who are homeless will be able to more easily access support.

The second solution would be to support Housing First. Housing First is centered on the belief that everyone can achieve stability in permanent housing directly from homelessness and that stable housing is the foundation for pursuing other health and social services goals. Housing First is a way to find people, who are in need of it, permanent housing while giving them the support they need. By helping people find permanent housing, they are able to continue their lives and pursue goals that will not be available if they did not have housing.

The third potential solution is making mental health facilities more available for homeless people. According to a survey done in 2015 by The Department of Housing and Urban Development, 25 percent of the American homeless—140,000 individuals—were seriously mentally ill at any given point in time. Forty-five percent of the homeless—250,000 individuals—had any mental illness. A serious mental illness is defined as a disruption in normal thinking, feeling, mood, behavior, interpersonal interactions, or daily functioning by Merriam-Webster. By making mental health facilities more available and destigmatized for homeless people, they will be better equipped to live and be successful

on their own. Homeless people need thy help and support of those around them; by giving people who are homeless options and the support they need they will be able to start to support themselves and find permanent.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Roberts, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:44 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 3607. An act to extend public safety officer death benefits to public safety officers whose death is caused by COVID-19, and for other purposes.

S. 3637. An act to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to extend lease protections for servicemembers under stop movement orders in response to a local, national, or global emergency, and for other purposes.

S. 4148. An act to extend the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following resolution:

H. Res. 1054. Resolution relative to the death of the Honorable John Lewis, a Representative from the State of Georgia.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 886) to direct the Attorney General to establish and carry out a Veteran Treatment Court Program.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3504) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for improvements to the specially adapted housing program and educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4920) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for an exception to certain small business contracting requirements applicable to the Department of Veterans Affairs procurement of certain goods and services covered under the Ability One program, and for other purposes.