

employees—the standard to be considered a small business—and these collectively employ 44 percent of the region's workforce, about 1.2 million people.

Houston adds more than 9,200 new startups annually. In 2021 startups attracted a record \$753 million in venture capital funding, up from \$702 million in 2019.

The creation of small businesses in Houston is likely to keep growing. Last year, real estate investment group Roofstock released a report ranking Houston among the Nation's top 10 metros for startup formation.

Houston also ranks number 5 among the nation's largest metro areas when it comes to the percentage of minority-owned startups.

Nearly 5,600 startups in the Houston area are minority-owned or about 30 percent of all companies less than two years old.

Together, these minority businesses employ more than 22,700 workers in the region.

But in a region where minorities make up 64 percent of the population, clear inequities in entrepreneurship remain in Houston that mirror the rest of the Nation.

There are currently close to 170,000 minority-owned startups in the U.S. employing more than 700,000 workers and generating close to \$100 billion in annual revenue.

Nationally, Hispanics represent about 18 percent of the population but just 7 percent of startup owners. For Black Americans, those figures diminish to just 12 percent and 3 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, Non-Hispanic Whites make up 60 percent of the U.S. population but own nearly 80 percent of the nation's startups.

Mr. Speaker, the reauthorization of the SCORE program funding is essential to the thousands of minorities and women entrepreneurs in this country.

People who have been historically disadvantaged are the people who benefit most from programs like SCORE and we must ensure that they continue to receive assistance.

I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 6450 the SCORE for Small Business Act.

IN RECOGNITION OF CAROL DAWSON'S DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVICE TO VIRGINIA'S FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Carol Dawson for her service to this country and to Virginia's First Congressional District. Carol served in several positions in the Department of Energy during the Reagan administration, served across numerous Boards in Virginia, and most recently as a prominent member of the Lancaster County Republican Party Committee. Carol's dedication to service and to citizen-leadership is an inspiration to others and I am thankful for her tireless efforts for Virginia's First District.

Carol has worked tirelessly, not only as a federal employee, but also as a state and civil servant. Carol served on the board of directors of the National Conservative Campaign, as well as a member of the Virginia Racing Commission under former Virginia Governor McDonnell. When I was informed that Carol

would be leaving Virginia's First District to move closer to her family in Florida, I was saddened that this district would be losing an outstanding citizen.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you rise with me today to recognize Carol Dawson and her dedication to the constituents of Virginia's First District. Carol has and continues to live a wonderful life, and I wish her the best of luck on her future journey in life.

CONGRATULATING JEANNINE TRUSWELL ON HER RETIREMENT AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF UNITED WAY OF WELD COUNTY

HON. KEN BUCK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Mr. BUCK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the hard work and dedication of Jeannine Truswell, who announced that she would be retiring after 36 years with the United Way of Weld County. Her fierce commitment and vision have improved the lives of countless members of the Weld County community.

Jeannine began her tenure as the President and CEO of the United Way of Weld County in 1986, after seven years as the Executive Director of the Weld County Partners Mentoring Youth program. When she took over the organization, its annual fundraising was a little over \$500,000. Through her tireless work and determination, the United Way of Weld County now raises almost \$5 million annually. In 2011, Jeannine launched Weld Project Connect, a yearly, one-day initiative hosted through the United Way that has served over 8600 people. This program brings awareness to problems in the local community, coordinates governmental agencies, and seeks to inspire Weld County citizens to help one another.

Over the years, Jeannine has guided countless service projects, genuinely connecting and engaging with volunteers as they participated in various events. With Jeannine at the helm of United Way, her focused mission of selfless service has brought positive community-wide solutions through projects and partnerships, including the Weld County Child Abuse Coalition and Founding 211 Colorado. Further, Jeannine has received recognition as A Women's Place Outstanding Women of Weld County and BizWest's Most Influential Business Leader and Woman of Distinction.

On behalf of the Fourth District of Colorado, I extend my congratulations to Jeannine for her honorable service to the people of Weld County.

HONORING THE MILITARY MEDICAL TEAM THAT SERVED AT THE ERIE COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER (ECMC)

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Madam Speaker, today we recognize the exceptional mem-

bers of the Military Medical Team completing a mission at Erie County Medical Center (ECMC).

During their time in Buffalo, New York, this team of dedicated and talented physicians, nurses, respiratory technicians, and support members have extended great compassion, risked their own health, and provided life-saving care to our friends, family, and neighbors.

Western New York was one of several deployments made by this unit through a Department of Defense effort providing assistance to civilian hospitals in over 100 cities across the nation since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Time and again, members of the United States military answer the call when our country and our people are in need.

Frontline healthcare workers here at ECMC and throughout the nation have made great sacrifices throughout the pandemic.

We are deeply grateful to these members of the United States Navy for the expertise and support they provided during this national health emergency.

Our community and country are healthier, safer and stronger thanks to their service.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF CRAIG SALO

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Craig Salo for his service as the Marquette County Veterans Service Officer and the Head of Marquette County Department of Veteran Affairs. Through his tireless work and steadfast devotion to our Veterans and local communities, Craig has become an indispensable part of the State of Michigan and the United States of America.

Craig Salo was born in Republic, Michigan, and graduated from Northern Michigan University in Marquette. In December 1991, he was commissioned by the U.S. Army as a Distinguished Military Graduate and attended the Infantry Officer Basic Course in Fort Benning, Georgia. Following the end of his training, he served as a Rifle Platoon Leader and Company Executive Officer in the 4th Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment in Sandhofen, Germany. In addition to being deployed in both Afghanistan and Iraq, Craig went on to serve 22 years in the U.S. Army and retired as the U.S. Army Africa G2-X Division Chief in 2014.

Following his retirement from the military, Craig was hired as the first-ever Marquette County Veterans Service Officer and Head of the local Department of Veteran Affairs. Under his outstanding leadership, the Marquette County Department of Veteran Affairs has proudly served many of our Michigan Veterans, and his work has led to the establishment of many local Veteran programs including the creation of the Marquette County Phone App and a transportation network for retired servicemembers. His efforts have greatly benefited the local Veteran community and will certainly inspire future successors of the position.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Craig Salo for his years of service to our country and his diligent work for our Veterans and community. Michiganders can take great

pride in knowing the First District is home to such a dedicated citizen. On behalf of my constituents, I wish him all the best in his new position and his future endeavors.

WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTERS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2022

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6441, the Women's Business Centers Improvement Act, to amend the Small Business Act and improve the Women's Business Centers program.

The Women's Business Centers Improvement Act reauthorizes the WBC program for four years, increases the authorization level from \$18 million annually to \$31.5 million, and increases the cap on individual center grants for the first time since the program began.

The bill also establishes an accreditation program run by the Association of Small Business Development Centers to ensure all WBCs provide excellent service and counseling and will increase access to resources and opportunities for female entrepreneurs across the country.

WBCs help women succeed in business by providing training, mentoring, business development, and financing opportunities.

Compared to men, women comprise a smaller percentage of entrepreneurs and start fewer businesses in the United States. Currently, only 24.5 percent of startups in their first two years are owned by women, according to the American Survey of Entrepreneurs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the changing face of employment has seen a lot of people go into business for themselves. Women are part of the entrepreneurial trend in Houston. Nationally, Houston ranks fourth in the number of women-owned businesses.

In the metro area, more than half (252,000) of businesses are minority-owned and 40 percent (172,000) are women-owned.

Houston is a place where community members take pride in their homes and businesses, and when faced with challenges, like Hurricane Harvey in 2017, they come together in their determination to move forward.

Despite these strengths, disparities prevent minorities and women from fully participating in wealth-building through small business ownership.

These challenges are not unique to Houston: nationally, women and minorities face proportional barriers to starting and sustaining businesses.

Women and minority business owners are not reaching the size of their male and non-minority peers.

The expansion of funding outlined in H.R. 6441 will be pivotal to the success of women-owned businesses as they continue to grow, giving women the resources to reach their full potential.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill because we must support the women entrepreneurs of our great Nation.

175TH ANNIVERSARY OF OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY

HON. TROY BALDERSON

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Mr. BALDERSON. Madam Speaker, this year marks the 175th anniversary of Otterbein University—a regionally accredited private liberal arts university located in Ohio's 12th Congressional District. Founded in 1847 by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, the university has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to preparing its students for success in their careers and in life. I rise today to commemorate this momentous occasion for Otterbein University and recognize a record of excellence in higher education.

Since its inception, Otterbein University has firmly established itself upon the principles of lifelong learning and opening doors of opportunity for its students. A pioneer in a time of societal inequality, Otterbein was one of the nation's first universities to enroll both women and people of color.

Today, Otterbein University has an enrollment of approximately 2,600 undergraduate students, and 400 graduate students working toward one of its several master's degree programs. Reaching near and far, Otterbein boasts a vast network of over 25,000 alumni scattered all across the world. Otterbein maintains a strong commitment to its core values of opportunity, diversity, equality, and lifelong learning. Reflected in its long list of honors and awards, Otterbein takes great pride in its dedication to community service. In 2015, Otterbein earned the distinguished Carnegie Community Service Classification—a leading national designation for institutional commitment to service.

The future of Otterbein University is bright as it continues to provide opportunities in higher education for generations to come. To this day, Otterbein embodies its core values which have guided the university since the beginning. I am proud to join Otterbein University's faculty, students and staff in celebrating this remarkable milestone. After 175 years in higher education, Otterbein has much to be proud of. Congratulations.

HONORING GREG LAIS, FOUNDER OF WILDERNESS INQUIRY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Greg Lais, upon his retirement after more than 40 years as the founder and executive director of the nonprofit Wilderness Inquiry. Greg is a visionary leader whose disability advocacy, commitment to equity and enthusiasm for nature has opened a gateway to the outdoors for Minnesotans and people across the country of all backgrounds and abilities.

Shortly after graduating from college in 1978, a lifelong passion for the outdoors led Greg Lais and his fellow graduate Paul

Schurke to start organizing outdoor trips. What seemed like a somewhat ordinary idea became a trailblazing endeavor. Building on the success of a week-long trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness with a group of people with a variety of physical abilities, Greg and Paul began "Wilderness Inquiry"—a transformative nonprofit dedicated to providing access to the outdoors through world-class wilderness experiences to anyone, regardless of abilities.

Under Greg's leadership over more than 40 years, the nonprofit has grown to offer a wide variety of trips and experiences, both across the nation and around the world, that welcome people from all walks of life and all abilities. Whether it's a first canoeing trip down a local river, camping in a national park, or exploring the farthest reaches of the world, Wilderness Inquiry empowers everyone to access adventures. Their amazing team of staff and outdoor leaders create trips that are fun, memorable and life-changing for students, families and business teams alike.

Greg knew early on that the strength of Wilderness Inquiry was its valued partnerships with many different organizations. Today, Wilderness Inquiry fulfills their mission to share the outdoors with everyone with the help of more than 100 different entities. Collaboration with U.S. Interior Department agencies like the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on its CanoeMobile initiative is one of its most successful endeavors. The CanoeMobile "floating classroom" experience works with urban cities and school districts, countless volunteers and other organizations to bring students from all backgrounds out on waterways around the country in beautiful, hand-crafted 24-foot Voyageur canoes to learn about science, history, geography and culture.

Based on his own outdoor experiences, Greg understands how powerful interaction with the natural world is to our health, happiness and desire to protect our natural resources. Through these shared adventures, presumptions are challenged, people grow, and community is strengthened. I can vouch for the fact that these adventures are fun and inspiring. But the best proof is in the smiling faces of the more than 40,000 people that Wilderness Inquiry serves each year.

Even as he approaches retirement, Greg continues to offer his expertise and energy to help nurture the next generation of outdoor leaders. This week, Greg's family, coworkers and many friends will join him to celebrate a remarkable career with Wilderness Inquiry.

Madam Speaker, please join me in rising to pay tribute to the leadership of Greg Lais as he retires from Wilderness Inquiry after more than 40 years, and in honor of his ongoing commitment to conservation, equitable access to the outdoors and vision to create positive change.

CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF URSULINE COLLEGE

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on the 150th anniversary of the oldest women's college in Ohio, Ursuline College. Here is a bit of its outstanding history.