

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.

In 1850, four Ursuline Sisters and an English laywoman left their monastery in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France and traveled by ship to the United States, where they established the first Catholic schools in the newly formed Roman Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio. They had been invited to Cleveland by the Most Reverend Louis Amadeus Rappe, the first bishop of the diocese and former chaplain to this group of Ursulines in Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Within a month of their arrival in Cleveland, the Ursulines opened an academy for 300 pupils. As their congregation grew, they opened more Catholic schools across Greater Cleveland.

In 1871, Mother Mary of the Annunciation Beaumont, the first superior of the Cleveland Ursulines, obtained a charter from the State of Ohio to establish Ohio's first Catholic college for women. The new college was located in the same building as the motherhouse on Cleveland's Euclid Avenue—focused on the liberal arts.

In its first 95 years, Ursuline College had five different locations in the City of Cleveland before opening its current campus in the Cleveland suburb of Pepper Pike, Ohio in 1966. There, it continues to emphasize the leadership role of women in a wide array of professions.

In 1975, the Diocese of Cleveland closed its Saint John College and asked Ursuline to absorb St. John's Division of Nursing. Ursuline's current Breen School of Nursing and Health Professions grew from this strong foundation to become a nationally recognized Center of Excellence, as designated by the National League for Nursing in 2021. Nursing is Ursuline's highest-enrolled field of study, and Ursuline nursing graduates today help staff Cleveland's top hospitals.

In 2000, Ursuline athletes began competing in inter-collegiate sports. The Ursuline Arrows are now a member program of the Great Midwest Athletic Conference at the NCAA Division II level.

Now, 150 years since its founding, Ursuline remains the only women-focused college in the State of Ohio, and one of the few in the U.S. founded and continuously led by women. True to its original vision, Ursuline continues to transform students for service, leadership, and professional excellence. Its thousands of alumnae, in turn, bring compassion and competence to their service to others in professional and community roles including nursing, business, law, teaching, historic preservation, social work, counseling, art therapy, and more.

Together, we look forward to celebrating the next 150 years of this remarkable institution.

107TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Ms. MENG. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the solemn 107th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The atrocities began on April 24, 1915 and lasted until 1923. It is our responsibility to recognize the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians 107 years ago.

The Armenian Genocide is an important reminder that crimes against humanity must not

go without recognition and condemnation. By recognizing the Armenian Genocide, we pay tribute to the perseverance and determination of those who survived. We also honor the Americans of Armenian descent who have helped strengthen our country.

As a Member of the Armenia Caucus, I have consistently supported resolutions sponsored by my colleagues in the Caucus in recognition of the Armenian Genocide, which state that it is the policy of the United States to commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance and reject efforts to enlist, engage, or otherwise associate the United States Government with denial of the Armenian Genocide or any other genocide. We need to remember the past and correct ongoing tragedies in front of us.

As part of those remembrance efforts, I am also an original cosponsor of the Armenian Genocide Education Act, H.R. 7555, which would direct the Library of Congress to carry out Armenian Genocide education programs, including the dissemination of materials to state and local education leaders encouraging the adoption of Armenian Genocide curricula in secondary and post-secondary education.

I stand with my constituents of Armenian descent in commemorating the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. With that, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in commemoration.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT 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. 6445—the Small Business Development Centers Improvement Act of 2022, which reauthorizes the Small Business Development Center Program through FY2025 and amends the Small Business Act to require an annual report on entrepreneurial development programs.

H.R. 6445 will authorize the appropriation of \$175 million for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2025 for the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) program. The program awards grants to centers that counsel and train current and prospective small-business owners.

The Small Business Development Centers Improvement Act would help strengthen the SBDC network and allow the center to do more to build awareness of their programs and services.

More specifically, H.R. 6445 will prohibit entities other than institutions of higher education from receiving new grants under the program; allow centers to collect fees related to private partnerships or co-sponsorships; authorize centers to market their services directly to small businesses; and modify or establish provisions related to program funding, operations, data collection, and reporting.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Business Dynamics Statistics, about 97 percent of businesses in the greater Houston area are considered small businesses.

Companies that employ less than 500 people collectively employ 44 percent of Houston's workforce, or 1.2 million people.

Eighty-two percent of businesses operating in the Houston area have fewer than 20 employees. Together, these businesses employ just under 400,000 workers, or about 14 percent of the regional workforce.

According to a study done by Self Financial, a personal finance service, there are nearly 170,000 minority-owned startups in the U.S., employing over 700,000 people and generating close to \$100 billion in annual revenue.

The study states that Houston ranks fifth in the Nation for minority entrepreneurship.

Nearly 35 percent of Houston-area small businesses employing 50 or fewer people are minority-owned.

And based on demographic trends, these numbers are likely to grow as the population continues to diversify on racial and ethnic lines.

As a senior Member of the House Committees on Judiciary, Homeland Security, and Budget, I have and continue to advocate and fight for funding for the self-employed, independent contractors, sole proprietors, and small businesses.

In the early stages of the pandemic, I introduced H.R. 6292, the COVID-19 Small Business Recovery Grants Act, to help struggling farmers, ranchers, and small businesses that suffered an economic loss due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Specifically, this legislation would have established a \$1 billion fund to provide direct relief to eligible parties who were experiencing financial losses due to the coronavirus.

The bill supported the American people by preserving the economic viability of small businesses that have been devastated by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Entrepreneurship is the backbone of American commerce, especially small businesses that are significant drivers of economic growth and job creation in the U.S.

Small businesses provide opportunities for entrepreneurs, jobs for neighbors and gathering places for communities. They're rooted in the landscape where they grow, and foster local economies, keeping money close to home.

Small Business Development Centers are an essential resource for small business owners, especially those who have been historically disadvantaged. SBDC's provide them with business advising, access to training, tools, and resources to help small businesses start, grow, expand, and succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6445 the Small Business Development Centers Improvement Act because we must support our country's small businesses to ensure that our economy is prosperous.

IN HONOR OF THE 2021-2022 AAAA STATE CHAMPIONS: THE SPENCER GREENWAVE BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Georgia High