

our global standing, putting our workers, farmers, manufacturers, and businesses on a level playing field with countries like China and other nations.

I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment and to support small manufacturers.

□ 1015

CHINA'S PANDA PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Carolina (Ms. MACE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MACE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to shed a very serious light on what appears to be a seemingly light-hearted subject.

As the world prepares for the Olympic Games, I rise to denounce the Chinese Communist Party and its worldwide panda propaganda campaign.

From the COVID-19 fiasco started in a lab in Wuhan to China's coverup, to the ongoing genocide against the Uyghurs and the repeated and increasingly hostile incursions by Chinese fighter jets over the island of Taiwan, including when a bipartisan delegation visited Taiwan just last November, this administration has decided to answer Chinese aggression with a diplomatic boycott of the Winter Olympic Games. I am sure Chairman Mao is trembling in his Tiananmen mausoleum at the thought of our diplomats staying home.

Well, two can play at this game.

Not many people know the Chinese Communist Party has leveraged the cuddly panda in an effort to soften their image around the world. Indeed, Bing Dwen Dwen, the panda dressed in an astronaut suit, is the official mascot of the Beijing Olympics. His costume is meant to demonstrate their embrace of the future and technology. Or perhaps it is a warm and fuzzy attempt to soften China's ambitions in space.

China claims all pandas the world over belong to China, and they charge zoos a half-million dollars per panda per year for the privilege of loaning these gentle creatures to us. Ultimately, every last panda must be returned to China, property of the Chinese Communist Government.

Every year, millions of Americans enjoy these pandas, not knowing the sinister plot behind their all-too-brief stay here. We should not fund China's panda propaganda campaign.

In the words of Sun Tzu: "Begin by seizing something which your opponent holds dear; then he will be amenable to your will." Let's get serious with our diplomacy and hit China where it hurts. Give freedom to the pandas and allow them to stay here in the United States.

HONORING ROBERT SMALLS

Ms. MACE. Mr. Speaker, America has always been a place known for its citizens and its heroes who have gone

above and beyond. In honor of Black History Month, the State of South Carolina and the First Congressional District in South Carolina has one such hero, a citizen by the name of Robert Smalls. Robert Smalls is the epitome of a true South Carolina hero.

Robert Smalls was born a slave in Beaufort, South Carolina, in 1839. Robert Smalls faced countless afflictions in the early years of his life, but he never gave up. During the Civil War, he hijacked a Confederate ammunition ship and turned it over to the Union Navy, delivering its 17 African-American passengers from slavery to freedom.

Robert Smalls then became the first African American to pilot a U.S. vessel taking the helm of a Union warship in the first battle of Charleston Harbor in 1863.

At the war's conclusion, Robert Smalls received a commission as brigadier general in the South Carolina militia and eventually went on to serve the South Carolina State General Assembly and Senate.

But his tireless work for the people of South Carolina did not end there. Smalls would then go on to serve five terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, from 1874 to 1886, for South Carolina's First Congressional District, the district that I represent today.

So, on behalf of the Lowcountry and the people of the First District, I am deeply honored to offer a bill being considered today in committee that will designate the U.S. post office at 11 Robert Smalls Parkway in Beaufort, South Carolina, as the Robert Smalls Post Office.

HONORING CHRISTOPHER CELIZ

Ms. MACE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the bravery and heroism of Sergeant First Class Christopher Celiz, an Army Ranger and proud son of South Carolina who made the ultimate sacrifice for his Nation during his fifth deployment in Afghanistan.

Christopher was born in Charleston in 1986 and graduated from Summerville High School in 2004. After graduating, Christopher joined the United States Army, where he became a well-respected leader among his peers.

During a mission in the Paktia province of Afghanistan, Sergeant Celiz and the First Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment were taking heavy fire from enemy combatants. When one of his men was hit, Christopher used his own body to shield the wounded soldier as he was being evacuated.

Sergeant Celiz took heavy fire and was wounded multiple times during this moment, but instead of having the evacuation helicopter come back to retrieve him, he instructed the aircraft to leave so his fellow soldier and many other lives could be saved that day.

Christopher's sacrifice is an inspiration to us all. His heroic actions deserve the recognition of our Nation, and I want to thank President Biden for posthumously awarding Sergeant First Class Christopher Celiz with the

Medal of Honor. No one is more deserving.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION LEADS POSITIVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the continued positive economic recovery led by the Biden administration.

In December, the Texas unemployment rate dropped all the way down to 5 percent compared to 12.9 percent at the height of the pandemic.

Service sector employment is now up above prepandemic levels, but a strong economy for the future is only possible with smart investment today. That is why the benefits the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will bring to my home State of Texas are critically vital. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is bringing jobs, opportunities, and a better quality of life for Texans.

For Texas, the infrastructure bill means more than \$35 billion in projects alone, and that is just our State. These projects include replacing old lead pipes from schools, increasing broadband access, road and bridge repairs, and the maintenance of ports. And all this means jobs, jobs, and more jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to outline some of the biggest provisions for Texans.

First, Texas is expected to receive \$537 million to repair 818 bridges across the State, many in my district. This is huge.

Next, Texas will get about \$1.2 billion for infrastructure development for airports. Airports are critical, not just for travelers, but because they are hubs for workers. And, of course, that means jobs.

And Texas will receive at least \$100 million to help provide broadband internet coverage across the State. These dollars will provide access to at least 1,058,000 Texans who currently lack high-speed internet. Mr. Speaker, every time I go back home to south Texas, I am one of those Texans at my sister's house. She has no high-speed internet.

As we have learned from the pandemic, internet is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity. So this funding is critical.

Mr. Speaker, \$2.9 billion is headed to Texas to improve water infrastructure. This will ensure that clean, safe drinking water is accessible in all communities, in their homes and their schools.

For decades, Texas infrastructure has suffered due to lack of investment. We have seen it plenty of times, especially from last year's electrical grid failure to the damage to pipelines, roads, and bridges due to regrettably more frequent natural disasters.

It is time for Texans to have working infrastructure that protects them, not hurts them.

This law will kickstart new projects, create jobs, and put Texas on the right track. And that, Mr. Speaker, means that working families will have a better quality of life across the State.

JOE BIDEN IS ROOT CAUSE OF SOUTHERN BORDER CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, it has been a year since Joe Biden took office, and the southern border has all but collapsed.

A year has passed, and he still cannot find the elusive root cause of his self-inflicted border crisis. Since he is clearly having some trouble finding the cause, I will save him some time. Joe Biden is the root cause of the border crisis.

The number of illegal crossings at the border has escalated at a faster rate under him than at any time in recent history. Since Joe Biden took office, nearly 2 million illegal immigrants have been apprehended at the southern border.

But wait, there is more.

More illegal immigrants have crossed the southern border in the last 3 months than in all of fiscal year 2020. And now, we have learned that illegals are being funneled to cities across the United States in the dead of night.

That is right. While Americans are asleep, this administration is trying to cover up its own failures. Some of these illegals are known to have criminal records, yet they are being given a free pass.

Across the world, people are watching this unfold. Across the world, people are getting the message that you can waltz into this country illegally with no consequences. Consider the fact that people from 160 different countries are coming to the southern border. It is clear that the message is the wrong one to be sending.

In December, a Saudi Arabian national with ties to known Yemeni terrorists was arrested after he crossed the border wearing a fake paramedic uniform. If he were released into the United States, the consequences would have been disastrous.

Mr. Speaker, instead of securing the southern border and protecting the integrity of our national security, this administration has doubled down on its own failures. Because of this worsening crisis, every State has now become a border State.

Border security is national security. And thanks to Joe Biden and congressional Democrats' open border policies, America has neither.

HELP FOR UKRAINE

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

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a looming crisis that we see in Eastern Europe.

Last week, as a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I had a chance to accompany some of my colleagues on a bipartisan delegation to both Brussels and Ukraine.

What I saw when we were in Ukraine, as we met with their senior leaders and President Zelensky, was a country that has resolve. They reminded us that they have been at war with Russia for the last 8 years since Russia invaded Crimea and occupied the Donbas territories. So, this is a country that has been fighting Russia. They are prepared to defend themselves.

When I went out on the streets with my colleagues and talked to ordinary Ukrainian citizens, there is a resolve. They have no intention of living under Soviet rule. They have tasted freedom.

It is important for us as the United States of America to stand with this young democracy. We are the oldest democracy in the world. When I have been asked by the media why the United States should be concerned about what is happening in Eastern Europe, it is because we value the freedoms that we enjoy; we value the liberty; and we value the ability of individual citizens to choose their own path forward. That is what this is about.

When we went to Brussels, we had a chance to meet with our NATO allies, with other members of the European Union. Think about what we accomplished working with those countries in the 75-plus years post-World War II. We created peace on the European Continent after two world wars. We created thriving democracies. We created prosperity. That is what is at risk.

Think about what Mr. Putin wants to do. He wants to reestablish the Soviet Union. He is an autocrat. That is what is at risk in the 21st century.

It is not a given that democracy will win the 21st century. We have to fight for democracy. We have to fight for those liberties. We have to fight for those individuals to choose their path forward.

That is why this is important. That is why it is important for us to stand with the people of Ukraine. That is why it is important for us, along with our European allies and our NATO allies, to stand together and speak with one voice and tell Mr. Putin we are not going back to the Soviet era; we are going forward to a peaceful, prosperous 21st century for all people.

HONORING KEN DUKE

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reflect upon the career of Ken Duke, a professor in the College of Pharmacy at the University of Georgia.

Ken has, for 37 years, served our future pharmacists invaluable as they venture into their careers. Ken has helped develop and foster in his stu-

dents a passion for our field that is the distribution of lifesaving medicines.

Ken graduated from the University of Georgia School of Pharmacy in 1977 and began his career at the University of Georgia in 1985. Since that time, Ken has tirelessly and selflessly worked to educate and mentor future pharmacists of America.

Ken's spirit and drive for this occupation is something that he has instilled in his students for nearly four decades. In the later years of his career, Ken served as the acting assistant dean for the Pharmacy College's expansion campus in Savannah, which he helped found.

In his retirement, Ken is excited to be living on the coast and by the water, as well as spending time in Athens for Georgia football games and, hopefully, another Georgia National Championship.

Ken's service has been remarkable. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ken and wish him a blessed retirement.

HONORING JAMES MATHEWS BLITCH, SR.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Jimmy Blitch, Sr., a veteran and a remarkable Georgian.

Jimmy was born in Savannah in 1933, the eldest of three children, and spent most of his early life in the city, eventually moving to Statesboro to farm Blitch Place, where he found his love for farming.

Jimmy then went on to graduate high school and attend the University of Georgia at only 15 years old, where he graduated with honors. Most 15-year-olds can barely handle the stress of high school, let alone college, but Jimmy was not like most people.

Upon graduating, Jimmy entered the U.S. Army as a marksman, spending his time between Fort Jackson and Fort Benning, eventually being honorably discharged from the service as a second lieutenant.

After returning to his hometown in Statesboro, Jimmy would meet the love of his life, Patricia Brannen, getting married in 1958.

They built their lives on Blitch Place Farms, raising three daughters and a son.

Thankfully, Jimmy was able to see the University of Georgia win their third National Championship before his passing.

A loving father and husband, an outdoorsman, an honorable veteran, and fellow Georgia sports fan, Jimmy is sure to be missed.

□ 1030

RECOGNIZING GRIFF LYNCH AS GEORGIAN OF THE YEAR

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Georgia Ports Authority Executive Director Griff Lynch for being named Georgia Trend's 2022 Georgian of the Year.

Griff is a graduate from Maritime College in New York, which led him to work in the maritime industry for 34 years and eventually our Georgia