

unproven nature of the technology. While some nuclear reactors of this scale exist in other countries, no commercial SMRs have ever been built in the United States.

Counting Illinois, 11 states currently have some level of nuclear construction bans on the books. Since 2016, five other states have either repealed or weakened their bans. Several of the states that have lifted their bans have done so to pave the way for SMR technology.

But the biggest U.S. player in that industry has seen several recent setbacks.

In November, NuScale Power—the only company with a federally approved SMR design—announced that it was canceling its highly watched “Carbon Free Power Project” in Utah, which would have been the first commercial project with a NuScale reactor. Still, its leaders say the company will continue with its other projects, which are at varying steps of regulation and planning.

Rezin told Capitol News Illinois last month she hopes Illinois’ and other states’ moves to reverse their construction bans will encourage nuclear energy development in the U.S.

Pritzker did not issue a statement but signed the bill along with 15 others that were sent to his desk following November’s fall veto session. That included a measure that would require the state to purchase exclusively “zero-emission vehicles,” such as electric vehicles, after Jan. 1, 2030.

Senate Bill 1769 excludes law enforcement vehicles and vehicles purchased by the Illinois Department of Transportation as part of a program that provides buses to some mass transit systems.

COMMEMORATING THE MALAKOFF TIGERS STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. LANCE GOODEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. GOODEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the extraordinary achievement of the Malakoff Tigers in clinching the 3A Division 1 State Football Championship. Their remarkable undefeated season, culminating in a 16–0 record, has not only brought home the school’s first-ever football title but has also showcased the exceptional talent and spirit of Henderson County.

Special congratulations to Head Coach Jamie Driskell, quarterback Mike Jones, the Offensive MVP, and middle linebacker Parker Poteete, the Defensive MVP, for their outstanding leadership and skill. The unwavering dedication and hard work of the entire team and coaching staff are inspirational. The Malakoff Tigers have set a high bar for excellence, and I eagerly anticipate more triumphs and great success for both the team and Malakoff High School in the future.

LARRY HELMUTH

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Larry Helmuth for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Larry has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Larry, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Larry’s hard work, determination, and perseverance at Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Larry Helmuth on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT MARION LEE

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a gifted carpenter, church leader, and good friend. Robert “Marion” Lee transitioned from this life on January 6, 2024. His love, kindness, warmth, and generosity will be well remembered and sorely missed.

Robert Marion Lee was born on December 20, 1932, in Charleston County, South Carolina. He was raised by his grandmother, Mary Middleton, and attended Charleston County schools. As a young boy, Marion learned the values of family and hard work, having worked on the family farm while also caring for his siblings. He maintained this devotion towards family as he became a father to his first son, Marshall Lee Cohen, and later married his wife of 49 years, Vermel Lee. This union was blessed with a daughter, Vera.

As an adult, Marion learned the trade of cabinetry and worked as a contractor. He built homes for countless families in Charleston County, and he took great pride in ensuring families had access to clean water in John’s Island, Peters Field, Hollywood, and other rural areas. He later worked as a rehabilitation specialist and a building inspector until he retired to care for his wife. Marion was known for building picnic tables for members of the community and delivering them in his old blue truck.

I came to know Mr. Lee through his activities throughout the Sea Islands of Charleston County. He served on various residential home builder commissions, the St. John’s Constituent School Board for District 9, the St. John’s Precinct No. 2 Election Commission, the Sea Island Health Care Center Board of Directors, the Rural Missions Board of Directors, the SC Fire Commission, and the St. John’s Water Company on the Board of Directors and as Treasurer. In addition, he and his wife fed and clothed people in need, visited the sick and shut in, and wrote encouraging letters to incarcerated individuals throughout their lives.

A man of deep faith, Marion joined Ferry Field Baptist Church in 1947, where he worshiped for 76 years. He was ordained a Deacon in 1967, served on the prayer and tarry service, and used his carpentry skills to repair and enhance the church’s beauty. He was equally devoted to the church’s youth, transporting carloads of children to Sunday school every week, and serving as Sunday school teacher and Superintendent. Marion also believed strongly in scripture’s words to “come

as you are.” As a young man, he often had to attend church service in work clothes, which imbued him with a commitment to making Ferry Field a welcoming place for all people, regardless of their attire. Marion loved singing hymns that embodied his love and trust in God and served on the Senior Choir and Male Choir for many years.

Left to cherish his memory are his two devoted children, six grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, nine great-great-grandchildren, four adopted grandchildren, God-grandchildren, nieces and nephews, cousins, caregivers, and the entire neighborhood of Lincrest Road.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and our colleagues join me in recognizing the life and legacy of Robert “Marion” Lee. Marion often remarked that he felt “mighty blessed” for all the people and experiences he encountered throughout his life. I and the entire Charleston community are likewise blessed for having known Marion. His rich legacy will continue to touch generations of Charlestonians for years to come.

APPRECIATING AMBASSADOR HASAN MURAT MERCAN

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Türkiye Relations and Turkish Americans, I am grateful to recognize the Honorable Hasan Murat Mercan, Ambassador of Türkiye to the United States, for his past three years of service reinforcing Türkiye as a crucial NATO ally of America. This significant alliance is mutually beneficial for our nations, NATO membership with courageous troop participation in the Korean War in 1950, promotion of important fuel pipelines for European energy independence, facilitation of grain shipments to Egypt and Africa, restored economic relations with Armenia, to early crucial drone support of Ukraine, and Swedish admission to NATO.

Prior to being appointed as Ambassador of Türkiye to the U.S., Mercan served as Ambassador to Tokyo, in Japan, Deputy Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and Chairman of the Turkish Foreign Affairs Committee during the 23rd Term of the Turkish Parliament. Mercan also served as Chairman of the Turkish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Interparliamentary Defense and Security Assembly as well as the vice-president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Türkiye has been well represented with Ambassador Mercan and Mrs. Inci Mercan.

A highlight of my service in Congress was in August of last year, when I presented a wreath on behalf of the American people at the Mustafa Kemal Atatürk Memorial at Antikabir in Ankara. I am grateful for my opportunity to coordinate with Ambassador Mercan in supporting the warmest relationship for Türkiye with their appreciated ally America and look forward to continuing that work with his successor.

RECOGNIZING BILL HANEKE

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize First District constituent and U.S. Army veteran, Bill Haneke upon his retirement from the Families of the Wounded Fund Board.

A graduate of Hampton High School and a 1966 graduate of the United States Military Academy, Bill Haneke attended both the Army Ranger and Airborne Schools. After several Infantry assignments in the U.S. and Germany, he served as Commanding Officer of Camp Gates, Marktredwitz, West Germany. He then attended the Army Special Warfare School at Ft. Bragg, NC, where he was trained as an Advisor in preparation for a tour with Advisory Team 37 in Hoa Da District, Binh Thuan Province, South Vietnam in 1968.

Captain Haneke was instrumental in establishing and directing this new Advisory Team with the Vietnamese Regional Forces/Popular Forces. He was awarded three Bronze Star Medals (one with "V" for Valor), a Purple Heart, the Combat Infantry Badge, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for his service in Vietnam.

On November 13, 1968, Bill suffered massive traumatic injuries when he was blown up by a Viet Cong Command Detonated Mine, causing multiple amputations, massive head injuries requiring five neurosurgical operations, severance of his carotid artery, and severe shrapnel wounds over 90 percent of his body. Following his extensive treatment and successful rehabilitation, he earned a master's degree in healthcare and business administration from Virginia Commonwealth University. He has worked for over thirty years managing organizations in all sectors of the Healthcare Field and is a true patient advocate.

Haneke has been a member of MOAA, Blinded Veterans of America, the DAV, Vietnam Veterans of America, as well as continuously volunteering as a patient advocate and counselor for Amputees, Head Injured, and those with severe traumatic injuries. Bill was presented with the prestigious award of the National Veteran of the Year by the Daughters of the American Revolution and is currently serving on the Veterans Service Board of Virginia.

Moreover, Bill is the Co-Founder and Board Member of The Families of the Wounded Fund, Inc., a charity gathering donated funds to provide assistance to family members and caregivers of combat wounded or injured military patients receiving treatment at McGuire Veterans Administration Medical Center, Ft. Belvoir Warrior Transition Medical Center, Walter Reed Medical Center, Hampton Road Medical Center and recently, combat wounded Special Immigration Visa holders from Iraq and Afghanistan service in supporting U.S. & Coalition forces. Under Bill's leadership, Families of the Wounded Fund has awarded 800 family caregiver grants totaling \$5.2 million since 2005.

Bill Haneke's memoirs were published with the title *Trust Not* which recounts the harrowing events in Vietnam where he was given up for dead, until he was miraculously saved by a caring Army medical staff and a voice from above to reassure him.

I congratulate Bill on his recent retirement from the FOTWF Board after 18 years of service. Bill represents the best of Virginia, a Commonwealth made stronger through our ability to keep our promises to our veterans, our military families, and our allies. I thank Bill Haneke for his advocacy, his compassion, and his deep and abiding sense of service to our veterans, our country and our Commonwealth.

MAURICIO GARCIA

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mauricio Garcia for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Mauricio has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Mauricio, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Mauricio's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Arvada K-8 School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Mauricio Garcia on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

RECOGNIZING FRED JOSEPH JOHNSON, JR.

HON. TROY A. CARTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Fred Joseph Johnson, Jr., on the occasion of his recognition as a 2024 Southern University at New Orleans Center for African and African American Studies Living Legend. Mr. Johnson is receiving this high honor because of his dedicated service to the citizens of New Orleans.

For over 30 years, Mr. Johnson has dedicated his life to counseling families and individuals in the process of becoming and maintaining the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of homeownership. In 1993, Mr. Johnson served as a co-founder of The Black Men of Labor Parade Club. BMOL focus is on preserving the history and culture of traditional jazz music, which is passed on from generation to generation, seeking to preserve traditional New Orleans Jazz by hiring musicians that play New Orleans Jazz Music as it was performed by such great Brass Bands as the Olympia, the Onward, the Tuxedo and the Eureka.

Fred J. Johnson, Jr. is known best as a community and cultural activist who focuses on creating social change. He has been employed with the Neighborhood Development Foundation since its inception in 1986 and was appointed as Chief Executive Officer in 2009. He remains committed to directly serving the needs of clients in asset building through the homeownership process. As a counselor and advocate for homeownership

who has a no-nonsense delivery of the message, he is often asked to deliver that message by participating in numerous community lectures, forums, and television and radio talk show appearances.

As a counselor, Mr. Johnson provides housing and financial counseling to individuals and families seeking to build their assets through the purchase of property. He assists clients in the development of action plans to build their assets and resolve credit issues and advocating for clients throughout the entire home purchase process. Moreover, Mr. Johnson provides educational services to non-profit organizations and businesses around the country to enable them to provide those same services to their communities. As a housing advocate, Mr. Johnson participates in several housing organizations that shape housing policies and the industry that is responsible for its governance. He is presently the President of the Louisiana Housing Education Collaborative and a Board Member of the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance.

I am humbled to know and call him a personal friend. Fred is such a great man who has done so much to improve the lives of countless residents across my district. We are so honored to have Mr. Johnson, a true advocate for mankind.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SYLVIA R. GARCIA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, due to severe weather in D.C., my flight was rerouted and I was unable to vote during the Quorum Call on January 9, 2024. Had I been able to vote, I would have voted: PRESENT on Roll Call No. 1.

COMMENDING ROBERT EDMUND ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Robert Edmund on his retirement.

On June 24, 2022, Robert Edmund retired from Edmund Optics as its Chief Executive Officer. Over the years Robert Edmund has made a substantial impact during his tenure and fulfilled many achievements that advanced the growth of the small family company into a successful and accredited industry.

Prior to his accomplishments in the optics world, Robert Edmund graduated from the University of Buffalo's Organizational Development Program. He also received a Bachelor of Science in Business Management at Georgetown University's School of Business. Not only was Robert Edmund a vital part of Edmund Optics, Inc., he was in the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, and was a former instructor officer, and vice-captain. He was also the past president of the Barrington Lions Club, as well as a SPIE Fellow in 2021, founding chair of the Advisory Board at the University of Arizona College of Optical Sciences,