

to be lost in history, well, I am here to say they have got another thing coming. Dow must pay what is owed to the people of Bhopal.

**MICHIGAN EDUCATION COMPLIANCE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Ms. TLAI B. Mr. Speaker, this is a plea on behalf of 182,000 families who will have students with disabilities in Michigan. Year after year, we continue to fall short on the promise to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which many call IDEA.

Failing to help our students to obtain the services they need to learn is, again, years that we cannot get back for our children. With this shortfall, we continue to undermine our students with disabilities.

The education gap is continuing to widen. There is currently a 22 percent drop-out rate for students with disabilities in Michigan, where, for non-disabled students it is only 8 percent.

□ 1015

Schools use assessments to measure student proficiency and achievement, and under the IDEA, students with disabilities are expected to participate in State assessments.

However, every year between 2017 and 2022, the State of Michigan has requested the Department of Education to approve a waiver to increase the 1 percent gap required by the Federal Government for the number of students with disabilities who can take Michigan's alternative assessment. It is because we are at double.

We often don't do enough to support our kids who need to go through this, nor do we advise our parents properly. Budget cuts often shortchange individualized learning, plans that are crucial for students with disabilities.

However, according to the Autism Alliance of Michigan, the dropout rate for students with disabilities is double the amount. Disparities are even worse for students of color with disabilities.

We need to fully fund IDEA, and we know that will help Michigan serve our students. It will help reduce the amount of inappropriate assessments and improve access to information and support for our school districts.

It is disheartening to see the State of Michigan's Department of Education now before an administrative hearing judge because they are not in compliance with the Federal laws. This is the first time in 27 years that our U.S. Department of Education had to drag a State through an administrative hearing process. It is shameful that we are at this point after over a year of negotiations.

We have to do better. These are our children, and again, we cannot get these years back for them. We have to do right.

**TRUMP TARIFFS WOULD BE DEVASTATING**

Ms. TLAI B. Mr. Speaker, Detroit is not only the most beautiful, Blackest city in the country, but it also houses the most important trade corridor in the Nation. Mr. Speaker, 27 percent of trade comes through our amazing city.

Tariffs are one tool, but they have costs and benefits that must be considered regarding trade. Used strategically, we know they can help new industries, support resilient supply chains, and even promote high-road labor as well as environmental practices.

However, the cost of Trump's tariffs proposal would be devastating for our families—take our auto industry, for instance. The U.S. relies on \$97 billion worth of auto parts and millions of finished vehicles from Canada and Mexico, but Trump's tariffs, as it is now, would raise the price of new cars by \$3,000. Our families cannot afford that cost.

What about our grocery costs? More than half of our fruits and vegetables come from Canada and Mexico. My residents are already struggling to cover the rising prices of groceries. Again, we cannot toy with our residents' ability to put food on the table or provide for their families.

**JUST SAY NO TO GRANTS**

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

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, most of the stories we read every day about outrageous government waste stems from a category of government funding called grants.

From the \$3 million grant to study how hamsters fight each other to the \$3.7 million in grants given to the Wuhan virology lab that likely unleashed COVID upon the world, these are the very essence of government waste.

Government grants fall into two major varieties: gifts of public money for every cause under the Sun and grants for local projects of every variety.

They are all for good causes. They go to universities, companies, NGOs, civic groups, charities, local governments, State governments, and do-gooders of every kind, all promising some public benefit.

Unfortunately, by their very nature, they are plagued with lax oversight, political favoritism, little followup, and questionable benefits. Indeed, much of the grant money doled out each year disappears into the salaries of various groups and agencies that will then write glowing reports of their work and apply for more grants next year in an ever-expanding litany of waste.

There is never a shortage of highly paid grant application writers eager to make that case.

"Personally, I liked the university," says Dan Akroyd's character in "Ghostbusters." "They gave us money and facilities. We didn't have to produce anything. You have never been out of college. You don't know what it is like out there. I have worked in the private sector. They expect results."

If the Federal Government needs a particular good or service that it can't produce itself, it should send out a request for a proposal specifying what it needs and then award a contract to the lowest responsible bidder to provide it. Then, the contractor should be held accountable for delivering that good or service.

Another major class of grant recipients are local and State governments. Who can begrudge grants for law enforcement, wastewater treatment, transportation, homeless shelters, or schools? Yet, all of these grant programs beg a fundamental question: If a project exclusively benefits a local community, shouldn't it be paid for exclusively by that local community?

Why should the taxpayers in Pocatello be forced to pay for sidewalks in Poughkeepsie? Robbing St. Petersburg to pay Saint Paul turns our Federal Treasury into a grab bag for local pork projects that destroys the entire concept of New Federalism.

Local decisions and local money should be made and spent locally.

By definition, local grants are lower priority projects that simply can't make the cut when local governments are measuring their own local needs against their own local resources. They only make economic sense if somebody else can be stuck with the tab, and that is what grants do.

Money flows from politically powerful communities to politically powerful ones, often for frivolous projects that don't merit a place in local budgets. Because these Federal grants come with lots of strings attached, they are also inefficiently applied. But who cares since it is all free money?

A very simple test should be applied to this class of grants. If the project exclusively benefits a local community, that local community should pay for it. With that burden also comes the freedom to spend those dollars exactly as they are most needed. Federal resources should be reserved for projects that benefit the entire country. That is the difference between the Federal interstate highway system and a local street.

This is not a small matter. Between 2016 and 2020, Federal grant spending ballooned from \$675 billion to \$972 billion, and that is exclusive of Medicaid grants to States. That is nearly half of the annual Federal deficit right there.

Weeding them out or reforming them is no easy task because a thriving political ecosystem of wealth and favor supports them. In last year's spending spree, both parties indulged themselves with 8,222 congressional earmarks, a particular subset of grant spending where individual Congressmen hand-pick their recipients.

Here is a modest proposal for the DOGE boys: Stop the cash bonanza to every self-described deserving cause and influential community with a good grant writer. Budget writers and appropriators should look with extreme skepticism on every grant that awards

money without results or that robs taxpayers in one community to pay for projects in another.

It is time that we protected and reserved the Federal Treasury for the general welfare of the United States, as our Constitution envisioned.

#### CELEBRATING KAMBRIDGE ELDER AND COSI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise with a heart full of pride to celebrate a little magic from my district in Columbus, Ohio, a place where innovation, creativity, and community come together.

Today, that magic has an exciting connection to the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree. What is the magic? The magic is the bright young mind of Kambridge Elder and the incredible work of COSI, the Center of Science and Industry.

While I am here, I also want to encourage my colleagues to support the bipartisan National STEM Week Act because brighter futures don't happen by chance. They happen by choice.

Let's start with the tree. This year's Capitol Christmas tree traveled over 4,000 miles from the breathtaking forests of Alaska to Washington, D.C., making 14 stops along the way. One of those special stops was in my congressional district, where the tree picked up an ornament designed by Kambridge Elder, a seventh grader in my district at the Arts IMPACT Middle School.

Through a partnership with the Ohio Arts Council, COSI invited students from all 611 Ohio school districts to design ornaments inspired by the theme "Building STEAM in Ohio."

STEAM—science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics—isn't just a buzzword, Mr. Speaker. It is a foundation for progress.

Kambridge's ornament, a train with four carts representing each of the STEAM elements, was inspired by a train at her school that she loves. Her ornament isn't just a decoration. It is a vision. It is a symbol of what happens when we invest in our children and give them the tools to dream big.

Kambridge's story reminds us of the vital role institutions like COSI play in sparking curiosity, discovery, and innovation.

Under the bold leadership of Dr. Frederic Bertley, COSI has become a powerhouse of education and inspiration, earning its title as the Nation's number one science museum 4 years in a row with USA Today Readers' Choice Awards. Forbes calls COSI "a beacon of scientific engagement," and that is exactly what it is.

From the COSI Science Festival to the wildly successful STEM Kit Program, COSI is making science accessible and exciting for families and kids—not just in Columbus, Mr. Speaker, but across the Nation.

Kambridge's creativity, fueled by COSI's mission, is proof of what is possible when we nurture curiosity and celebrate imagination.

That is why I am here to urge my colleagues to support the National STEM Week Act. This bipartisan bill, which I am a cosponsor of, will dedicate a week each year to highlighting the importance of STEM and STEAM education.

It is about bringing together Federal, State, and local governments with schools, families, and organizations like COSI to close the knowledge gap holding too many of our children back.

It is about giving every child, no matter their ZIP Code, a shot at a better future.

It is about ensuring America remains a global leader by fostering creativity and problem-solving skills that drive innovation.

It is about young people like Kambridge, who I hope is watching today, showing us what is possible when we invest in their potential.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the Capitol Christmas tree, let us remember that every ornament tells a story. Kambridge's ornament isn't just her story. It is ours.

Let us commit to building a future where every child can dream, create, and achieve, securing their future and the future of this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Kambridge Elder and her principal, her teachers, and her family for being a big support to her.

#### SMALL BUSINESSES UNDER SIEGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIFANY). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEUSER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the strength of our economy, employing half of all Americans and driving prosperity across our communities and our country. We all know that.

Yet, these businesses are continually put under siege by an avalanche of Federal regulations. The Biden administration has imposed \$1.5 trillion in regulatory costs and 326 million hours of paperwork on small businesses. That is hard to believe, but it is true. That is time and money that entrepreneurs should be spending to grow their businesses and, of course, create jobs.

That is why I strongly support the Prove It Act, which we will be voting on today. This legislation forces Federal agencies to analyze the true costs of their regulations and consider the direct and indirect burdens on small businesses, which is so very important.

□ 1030

It allows small businesses to challenge unfair rules, ensures greater transparency, and even exempts entrepreneurs from regulations if agencies fail to comply with these requirements.

Small businesses should be able to focus on expanding operations, hiring

workers, and serving their customers, not navigating the Federal Government's continuous red tape.

The Prove It Act will empower businessowners, protect jobs, and restore common sense to our regulatory process. Let's defend the American entrepreneurial spirit by passing the Prove It Act and unleashing the full potential of every small business throughout our country and certainly throughout my State, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

#### NATIONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Mrs. LEE CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize National Influenza Vaccination Week and to emphasize the importance of protecting our communities through vaccination.

Each year, the flu affects between 9 million and 41 million Americans, leading to 12,000 to 52,000 deaths depending on the severity of the season.

In the 2022-2023 flu season alone, we saw approximately 360,000 hospitalizations and 21,000 deaths nationally.

In Houston, home to the world-renowned Texas Medical Center, our healthcare professionals are on the front lines during peak flu season, managing increased patient loads and saving lives.

The flu is not just a seasonal inconvenience. It is a serious health threat, particularly for children like my own, older adults, and those with chronic conditions.

Vaccination is our best defense. According to the CDC, getting a flu shot reduces the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

I am highly concerned about the anti-vaccine messaging that is spread throughout social media and even on the news, and I am highly concerned that our next administration is selecting potential nominees for our most revered health agencies that have anti-vaccination messaging.

I would encourage all Americans to get vaccinated against the flu to help our vulnerable populations, including pregnant women and infants who cannot be vaccinated themselves. Each year, unfortunately, vaccination rates fall well short of recommended levels.

The National Influenza Vaccination Week serves as an important reminder that it is not too late to get vaccinated.

The flu season can last all the way through May, and every vaccination helps to protect not just the individual but also their family, friends, and neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Houstonians and Americans to do their part to prevent the spread of influenza and protect public health in the United States.

TEXAS LIBRARIES

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss one of our national