

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.

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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

treasures, and these are our libraries, especially at our schools.

Libraries are essential in addressing the achievement gap, and as a former first grade teacher, I know how important it is to all children. Libraries provide students with access to books, technology, and trained librarians who foster literacy and academic success.

Yet in Texas, we are seeing a troubling trend. Houston ISD, which is primarily in my district, has cut 28 librarian positions, and Spring Branch ISD has replaced certified librarians with less qualified staff.

Statewide, over one in five schools no longer has a full-time librarian. These cuts disproportionately affect underserved communities where students rely on libraries for resources they lack at home.

At the same time, Texas has approved a Bible-based curriculum for public schools. While this curriculum is optional, it does nothing to close the achievement gap.

Instead of focusing on ideological narratives, we should invest in proven solutions, like restoring librarian positions to provide equitable access to education and ensure all students can thrive.

Books, which could include the Bible, but many other books, are gateways to opportunity, and librarians are essential guides in that journey. Let's invest in real solutions to ensure every child has the tools to succeed.

HONORING THE FACULTY OF TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of several Texas Southern University faculty researchers in the 18th Congressional District and the great city of Houston.

Since the foundation of Texas Southern University, a historically Black college and university, it has remained a pillar to the Third Ward and the African-American community in Houston at large.

It is home to more than 1,400 outstanding faculty and staff members who each play a critical role in helping this historic institution shape and mold the future of America's finest students.

I would like to recognize a few of the contributions of these faculty researchers who have blazed a path in their respective fields of study: Dr. Robert Bullard, whom my mother, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, worked with closely, is the founding director of the Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice. He is a distinguished professor of urban planning and environmental policy and is often referred to as the father of environmental justice.

He has addressed topics such as environmental racism, urban land use, housing, sustainability, climate justice, and community resilience in 18 books. Dr. Bullard has also helped garner the support of more than \$70 million in external funding.

Dr. Howard Henderson is the founding director of the Center for Justice

Research and a professor of justice administration in the Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs. He serves as an advisory board member of the Vera Institute's Rural Jail Research Policy Network. Dr. Henderson is a member of the National Scientific Advisory Committee at the Institute of Justice Research and Development at Florida State University and is a member of the National Science Foundation's STEM Opportunities in Prison Settings workgroup. He has also secured over \$2 million in research funding.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for these great leaders in research.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1432. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the deductibility of charitable contributions to certain organizations for members of the Armed Forces.

H.R. 3821. An act to reauthorize the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018.

H.R. 5863. An act to provide tax relief with respect to certain Federal disasters.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 712. An act to identify and address barriers to coverage of remote physiologic devices under State Medicaid programs to improve maternal and child health outcomes for pregnant and postpartum women.

S. 3242. An act to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to revise the shareholder threshold for registration under that Act for issuers that receive support through certain Federal universal service support mechanisms, and for other purposes.

S. 3738. An act to reauthorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and for other purposes.

S. 4477. An act to reauthorize the Second Chance Act of 2007.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF JOE TANNER

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 mourn the loss of the former Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Joe Tanner, who sadly passed away on Sunday, November 24.

Mr. Tanner had an impressive career in the State government for 26 years, making him the longest serving commissioner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

He was first appointed to the position of commissioner for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in 1972. Mr. Tanner served as commissioner until 1984 and completed a second term of service from 1990 to 1995.

Mr. Tanner accomplished many impressive achievements throughout his

career. He was responsible for over 400 legislative efforts and consolidated 38 State agencies into the DNR.

Mr. Tanner was a dedicated servant to the environment and law, known for establishing a State single-point environmental permitting system.

Mr. Tanner will forever be remembered for his excellence and dedicated service to the State of Georgia. My heart and my thoughts go out to his family, friends, and all those who had the pleasure of working alongside him.

CONGRATULATING CASSANDRA CANNON

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Cassandra Cannon for her placement in Inc.'s 2024 Female Founders 250 list.

Since launching her luxury lingerie company, Lake, Ms. Cannon has expanded her company immensely, growing Lake's revenue by 50 percent, customer base by 185 percent, and roster of employees by 134 percent in 2023 alone.

Prior to launching the company, Cannon was preparing to begin medical school and her cofounder, Anne Read Lattimore, was working in the pharmaceutical industry.

The two realized there were improvements to be made in the women's sleepwear industry and decided to exit the medical field to launch Lake in 2014.

The company boasts a spectacular headquarters on West Harris Street, coupled with a design studio on Broughton Street in Savannah and fulfillment center in Pooler.

Congratulations to Ms. Cannon, Ms. Lattimore, and the dedicated employees of Lake on this stellar achievement. I look forward to watching this company flourish in years to come.

KIA 15-YEAR MANUFACTURING ANNIVERSARY IN GEORGIA

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kia on 15 years of manufacturing in the State of Georgia.

Boasting 2,200 expansive acres of land in West Point, Georgia, Kia's manufacturing plant is the first North American manufacturing site for the corporation, based in Seoul, South Korea.

After its groundbreaking ceremony in October of 2006, Kia has increased its capacity to produce 350,000 vehicles per year.

Soon Kia will complete its \$217 million expansion to allow for the production of electric vehicles in addition to the plant's customary products.

I extend my most sincere thanks and congratulations to Kia and its Georgia team for their hard work and contributions to growing and strengthening American manufacturing.

Congratulations to Kia and its Georgia team on this significant milestone. I look forward to watching the company continue to provide jobs, opportunity, and top-notch products in Georgia for many years to come.

CONGRATULATING GEORGIA TECH

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Georgia Tech