

RECOGNIZING YOUNG ATHLETES

(Mr. TIFFANY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize all the young athletes from Wisconsin's Seventh District who competed in the 2024 Wisconsin football State championships.

I congratulate the Owen-Withee Blackhawks on winning the program's first-ever State championship, the Edgar Wildcats and Coach Jerry Sinz on winning the Division 7 State championship title for the second year in a row, and the Stratford Tigers on winning the Division 5 State championship title for the third year in a row, setting a WIAA State record with their 10th State football title in school history.

I also wish Stratford's head coach, Jason Tubbs, all the best in retirement after 13 seasons with the Tigers.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate all of these athletes and their coaches on an incredible season.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which is observed annually on December 3.

Mr. Speaker, 1 in 4, approximately 70 million, adults in the United States report having a disability. In the Virgin Islands, my home, approximately 10,000 people report having a disability.

Despite significant progress within the disability rights movement, in December 2022, 40 percent of adults with disabilities reported experiencing unfair treatment and discrimination.

As elected officials and legislators, we have a special responsibility to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. We must pass legislation that supports their right to affordable, accessible, and quality housing; educational opportunities; healthcare; technology services; transportation; and rights of work.

We must continuously champion policies that improve and make the world a more equitable place for all Americans.

Today and every day, I remain dedicated to creating a barrier-free world that values the diversity and uniqueness of each individual.

RECOGNIZING IMPORTANCE OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the importance of our Nation's correctional officers.

The correctional officers at the Bureau of Prisons facilities across my district and nationwide are the backbone of our correctional systems. These dedicated professionals work tirelessly and are critical to maintaining safety and security within our Federal correctional facilities and detention centers.

Unfortunately, the Bureau of Prisons has faced unprecedented challenges in recruiting and retaining correctional staff. Multiple BOP facilities in Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District are understaffed by at least 20 percent of their authorized levels.

Under current law, these essential workers may not receive pay during a government shutdown. Uncertainty over when the next paycheck will arrive should not exacerbate the staffing shortages and difficult conditions of working in a prison environment.

Yesterday, I introduced the Keep our Correctional Officers Paid Act, which would guarantee that correctional officers who are required to show up to work every day of the year continue to receive a paycheck in the event of a government shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, this crucial legislation recognizes the unwavering, dedicated work of correction officers in ensuring public safety and provides the Bureau of Prisons' staff with certainty. I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation.

RECOGNIZING AARON POINTER

(Ms. STRICKLAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and service of Aaron Pointer, who is retiring from the Metro Parks Tacoma board after more than 20 years of service.

During his career in professional sports and public service, Aaron has broken records and barriers and expanded recreation opportunities in Pierce County.

While growing up in Oakland, California, Aaron was passionate about all sports and played basketball and baseball at the University of San Francisco.

In 1961, he signed a contract with the Houston Colt .45s, which is today known as the Astros. Aaron was often the only Black player on the team and faced prejudice and discrimination, including being forced to eat, travel, and stay in lodging separate from his White teammates.

Despite this, Aaron broke records on the field and became the last pro baseball player to hit over .400.

After retiring as a player, Aaron continued his exceptional career in sports through officiating football. He was the first Black official in the Pac-10 Conference, and in 1978, he became an NFL referee, where he officiated for 17 years.

He empowered the next generation of athletes with Pierce County Parks,

where he supervised sports leagues and athletics for young people. He has also been a longtime member of the Tacoma Pierce County Black Collective, working for more equitable education, healthcare, and economic opportunity for the Black community.

I am so proud to recognize Aaron for his impactful career at the highest levels of professional sports, and I thank him for his years of service to our community.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S SEVERE, REPEATED AUDIT FAILURES ARE EMBARRASSING

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the Biden-Harris Education Department has once again failed America's hardworking taxpayers.

For 3 years in a row, the Education Department failed its audit. In other words, the Education Department has been unable to manage effectively, efficiently, or with any sense of accuracy the resources entrusted to it.

Accuracy, transparency, and consistency are critical when it comes to managing finances. The Education Department has taken a different approach. Its student loan data was full of errors, and it made up estimates it could not defend to its auditor.

Bungling and bad budgeting appear to be the Education Department's blueprint. I can't tell if this is due to general ineptness or deliberate wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars, but I can tell you it is an embarrassment. The American people deserve better.

THANKING REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE LESKO

(Mrs. RODGERS of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank and celebrate the leadership and commitment of my good friend, Congresswoman DEBBIE LESKO from the great State of Arizona, for her 16 years of public service in the Arizona House of Representatives, the Arizona Senate, and now the United States House of Representatives.

As chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, I have witnessed Congresswoman DEBBIE LESKO as a fierce advocate for her district and a real ally in advocating for American technological and energy leadership. She has also served as our Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee vice chair.

Her spirit and determination have made our committee and the House of Representatives as a whole a better place.

I look forward to seeing Congresswoman LESKO succeed in her new role, and I know she will bring that same

spirit and determination to the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

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RECOGNIZING JUSTIN CAMP

(Mrs. LESKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LESKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a member of my staff, Justin Camp, for his dedication and service to myself and the constituents of Arizona's Eighth Congressional District.

A native of California, Justin joined my staff as a legislative correspondent and worked his way up to becoming a legislative assistant. Justin is a committed team member who has the important job of communicating our work to our constituents and overseeing a legislative portfolio that includes education and social issues.

I thank Justin for his hard work and dedication to me, our team, and the constituents in Arizona.

As I leave Congress, I have no doubt Justin will go on to do great things as he continues his public service. I wish him nothing but the best in all of his future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Justin.

UNFAIR TAXES

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Senate finally passed the Federal Disaster Tax Relief Act which includes in that my own bill to stop taxing wildfire survivors after they received damages and after everything has been burned out in Paradise, California, and several other northern California fires in recent years.

The IRS has treated disaster relief like a payday for themselves, taking from the survivors who have already lost so much. Now that ends.

This bill ensures wildfire victims will keep their settlement funds, money they need to rebuild their own lives. It also stops the unfair taxes on legal fees. Get this, Mr. Speaker, they have to pay the taxes on the fees that the attorneys would get when they cut their 30, 33 percent out of those award damages. It also restores their lost wages, taxes, and other recovery costs.

Taxpayers can claim refunds for taxes wrongly paid since 2020, putting over \$500 million back where it belongs: with the people.

This isn't just dollars and cents. It is about doing what is right for those facing disaster.

After years of work, I am really glad to see this legislation can finally clear both Houses of Congress and get these folks the relief they have needed for so long after nearly being disaster victims of wildfire.

KEEP COMMUNISM OUT OF OUR SCHOOLS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, there are over 500 schools in the United States that are subverted with Chinese Communist Party propaganda. The endorsement of communism in American classrooms has led to a disgusting 28 percent of young adults who have a favorable opinion of communism, and another 19 percent believe that a dictatorship is the best political system.

American families must stand up against Communist atrocities and support democracy, which is why this week House Republicans will consider the Crucial Communism Teaching Act, introduced by the courageous Congresswoman MARIA ELVIRA SALAZAR. This bill will provide truthful curriculum to students about the failures of communism and totalitarianism.

House Republicans, led by Speaker MIKE JOHNSON, will safeguard democracy and not allow communist infiltration.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent, as warned by the FBI. Trump will reinstate existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

DISASTER TAX PACKAGE

(Ms. TOKUDA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TOKUDA. Mr. Speaker, I share Representative LAMALFA's appreciation that last night the Senate finally unanimously passed the bipartisan Federal Disaster Tax Relief Act, sending it to the President's desk.

This bill includes language that I introduced over a year ago to help Maui fire victims deduct their disaster-related losses and keep money in their pockets. This bill will also exempt wildfire disaster settlement payments from being taxed.

As Maui and other fire-impacted communities across the country focus on their recoveries, they deserve certainty that the financial relief they receive will go entirely to them and to their "family," "ohana."

For months, this bill and the financial relief it provides to our Maui "family," "ohana," have been among my top priorities in Congress. I am proud to have been part of a majority in the House in signing a discharge petition, forcing a vote on this bill, and passing it overwhelmingly back in May, where it has remained with the Senate.

I am grateful to have been part of this bipartisan effort with my friends:

Congressmen GREG STEUBE, DOUG LAMALFA, and MIKE THOMPSON. While this has been a long journey together, I am proud we have gotten this over the finish line, and I hope President Biden will sign this bill into law as soon as possible.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF KIRK SCHURING

(Mr. RULLI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RULLI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today before you to shine light on the recent passing of my dear friend, mentor, and colleague, Kirk Schuring, a true giant amongst men and known around the State as the legislators' legislator.

He passed away on November 22, 2024, following a courageous battle with cancer.

Kirk Schuring was my mentor. He was the finest thing that ever came from Ohio. Being green, getting into the Ohio Senate, he mentored me as the chair of small business, and then I became chair for 4 years of government. When I was chair, he taught me how to really do policy. He also told me that every voice in Ohio must have a voice.

He was proud of doing hard work in policy and doing amendments so all Ohioans could be represented. That was his point of focus, to do policy work, the hard, heavy lifting that most people will never see.

Some of his accomplishments were he allocated \$7 million for the jumpstart of the expansion of the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. He was instrumental in getting \$50 million from the brand-new movie of "Superman" that was filmed in Cleveland, Ohio.

He was an advocate of the Canton Urban League, the Stark County Young Republicans, the Canton Jaycees, and a lot more than that.

Kirk Schuring will be missed. He was a dear friend, and Ohio is better that he existed.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to speak about my mentor.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MR. THOMAS CORK, SR.

(Mr. MCGARVEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life, legacy, and service of Mr. Thomas Cork, Sr., a United States Marine Corps veteran from my hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, who recently passed away at 95 years old.

In 1948, Thomas Cork left Louisville to serve our country as a Montford Point marine, making history as part of the first group of Black men to enlist in the Marine Corps.

As part of the famous 1st Marine Division, his bravery and service directly