

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF
CHARLESTON, ARKANSAS

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 150th anniversary of Charleston, AR.

This city in western Arkansas, incorporated in 1874, has a rich history as an education, business, and government hub.

Located within the former territorial area acquired by the United States in the Louisiana Purchase, the community was eventually named for one of its first settlers, Charles R. Kellum, who moved to Arkansas from Massachusetts. He operated a general store, organized a Baptist church, and was appointed as Charleston's first postmaster.

In the decades that followed, Charleston became a stop along the Butterfield Overland Mail Company route and served as a home to many businesses. Its first school was established in 1855 and soon had more than 100 students.

During the Civil War, skirmishes between Union and Confederate soldiers resulted in a tragic consequence when most of the city's buildings and homes were burned. This didn't stop the resolve of Charleston residents. When the war ended, citizens returned to rebuild and laid out a new community.

Because Franklin County was divided in half by the Arkansas River, the State legislature created a second county seat in Charleston to serve the southern portion of the county in 1885. The community was an important stop for the railroad and flourished with cotton, coal, and eventually natural gas.

World War II brought new opportunities to Charleston with the creation of Camp Chaffee less than a mile from the city limits. The new Army fort brought jobs and helped develop a strong economic and cultural bond between the city and military members.

Charleston is also noted as the first school district in Arkansas to desegregate after the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Just days after the ruling, the schoolboard voted to enroll 11 Black students in the Charleston School System.

The community is proud of its native son, Dale Bumpers, who was the 38th Governor of Arkansas before being elected to the U.S. Senate, where he served for 24 years. Bumpers was a soldier and a statesman who was born and raised in Charleston. He was known as the Senate's best orator. In his decades of service, one role he held was the chairman of the Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee, which led him to promote agriculture in Arkansas tirelessly. The results of his advocacy continue to impact farming and rural support programs in the State today.

His story is just one of many that help define the city's growth and progress over more than a century.

Congratulations to the entire community on this 150th anniversary. Charleston continues to be a place people are proud to call home. I am excited to recognize this milestone and look forward to continuing to work with area leaders to support this great Arkansas city and its bright future.●

RECOGNIZING IDAHO'S
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, along with my colleagues Senator JIM RISCH, Representative MIKE SIMPSON and Representative RUSS FULCHER, we once again honor Idaho's community colleges in recognition of April as Community College Month. We thank them for their important work to equip Idahoans for success.

Community colleges across the Gem State are incubators for ideas and catalysts to Idahoans achieving their goals. These academic institutions provide vital hands-on training and high-quality education best suited to support Idaho's workforce, small businesses, and economy. These community hubs are preparing Idahoans for a successful future, whether that be advancing their education or entering the workforce.

With more than 26,000 students enrolled in Idaho community colleges in the fall of 2023, these educational institutions offer significant opportunity for students of all ages and walks of life.

This year's theme for Community College Month is "Cultivating Skills for the Future." Idaho's community colleges truly embody this theme in their efforts to cultivate important on-the-job skills and developing our communities next leaders.

Thank you to Idaho's community colleges for your dedication to continued education. We are blessed to have you in our communities backing Idaho innovation with skills, knowledge, and experience.●

TRIBUTE TO CARL CHALFANT

• Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today, I want to recognize a lifelong Kansan who dedicated nearly 40 years of his life to volunteering in his community. Carl Chalfant has led, served, and provided for his community and family as a dad, grandfather, first responder, and city administrator. Carl was born on a dairy farm near Lancaster and attended Cloud County Community College where he met his wife of 48 years, Vickie. Together, they have two daughters and five grandchildren.

Lots of boys and young men dream of having the heroic job of a police officer, firefighter, or paramedic when they grow up. Carl didn't just settle for one of those jobs; he did all three. It is important to note that in rural states like Kansas, many communities don't have the resources to staff and maintain full-time first responders. Instead, most rural communities will purchase

equipment, like a fire truck or ambulance, and members of the community will volunteer to be trained as first responders and serve as an on-call, volunteer EMT or firefighter. This is how neighbors look out for each in rural communities and how Carl came to be a hero for many of his neighbors and friends.

I want to share a brief history of Carl's service as a first responder, mostly in volunteer capacities.

EMT—starting in 1986, Carl served as an EMT in Marshall County, Jefferson County, and recently retired from being an EMT in Washington County.

Firefighter—Carl started volunteering for the local fire department in 1976. He served as the assistant chief in Marshall County until 1990, at which time he moved and served as the volunteer fire chief in McLouth. He retired from firefighting in 2013.

Police—Carl worked as part-time police officer for Marshall and Jefferson Counties for a little more than 10 years.

His daughter recalls how his many volunteer activities earned him the title of a "weekend warrior." And these were just Carl's volunteer or part-time jobs. Carl has worked in a number of positions for communities across Kansas and is currently the city administrator for Washington, KS.

For many folks across Kansas, Carl has been the one to shop when things were scary or dangerous. He has saved countless lives through his service to the community. Serving others is a way of life for Carl and a character trait he has passed on to his two daughters and five grandchildren. Whether helping students at 4H events, girl scouts, or the local theatre, you can often find Carl and his whole family pitching in to help out.

After decades of service, Carl has retired from being an EMT, but nevertheless is still an active member of the community. He sits on the Kansas Rural Water Association as a board member and is an active member of the Masons. Carl's decades of service, commitment, and leadership have impacted hundreds of lives. He is an inspiration to others, a hero to his family, and brings a smile out of everyone he meets.

Thank you, Carl, for your contributions to your community and the State of Kansas. I hope you enjoy retirement and spending more time with your loved ones.●

REMEMBERING DONALD OVERTON
NEAGLE

• Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise to honor the passing of a great Kentuckian, Donald Overton Neagle. He passed away on February 20, 2024, at the age of 86.

Don was born on November 3, 1937, in Green County, KY. While Don accomplished many things in his life, it was his 65-year career in radio that made him a well-known name across South

Central Kentucky. His storied career brought him to radio stations across the Commonwealth, from Greensburg to Harrodsburg, and Bowling Green, before settling in Russellville in 1958 with WRUS Radio Station. During his six decades with WRUS, he became part owner of the station and hosted and directed multiple programs.

He was best known for his program "Feedback," where he interviewed politicians, listeners of the show, and other notable figures. I had the privilege of being regularly interviewed on his show and always enjoyed the chance to speak with him and his audience. My wife Kelley is a Russellville native and grew up listening to Don's shows. He has been a household name for both the Pauls and the Ashbys, and he will be greatly missed.

While we share in the sadness of his passing, it is with great joy we look back at his life, his many accomplishments, and the positive impact he had on his community and Kentuckians across the Commonwealth. We honor Don and his family, and may he rest in peace.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Kelly, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

ECONOMIC REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT TOGETHER WITH THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS—PM 45

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Joint Economic Committee:

To the Congress of the United States:

When I was elected President, a pandemic was raging and our economy was reeling, and trickle-down economics had undermined our nation's growth long-term. I was determined to rebuild from the middle out and bottom up, not the top down, because when the middle class does well, we all do well. We can give everyone a fair shot and leave no one behind. Our plan has brought transformational progress.

In the near term, my Administration moved quickly to help hardworking families and businesses make it through the pandemic, with a historic rescue plan that vaccinated the nation,

delivered immediate economic relief to people in need, and sent funding to states and cities to keep essential services going. We worked with the private sector and labor unions to ease bottlenecks and shortages in our supply chains, getting goods flowing again and making our economy more resilient for the future. Today, America is in the midst of the strongest recovery of any advanced economy in the world.

Along the way, we've achieved one of the most successful legislative records in generations, bringing new opportunities to communities of all sizes nationwide. We're tackling years of underinvestment in public infrastructure, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing, making sure the future is made in America by American workers. We're making the biggest investment in American infrastructure in generations, including over \$400 billion for 46,000 projects in 4,500 communities to date. These projects are rebuilding the nation's roads, bridges, railroads, ports, airports, public transit, water systems, high-speed internet, and more, in every part of the country. We're also making the most significant investment in fighting climate change in history—advancing breakthroughs in clean technology, boosting energy independence, lowering electricity costs for hardworking families, and revitalizing fence-line communities smothered by a legacy of pollution. At the same time, we're working with the private sector to strengthen America's semiconductor and advanced manufacturing industries as well, empowering workers and small businesses to share in the benefits.

Already, my Investing in America agenda has attracted \$650 billion in private investment from companies that are building factories here in America. We've ignited a manufacturing boom, a semiconductor boom, a battery boom, an electric-vehicle boom, and more. My agenda is creating hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs, so folks never have to leave their hometowns to find work they can raise a family on. Today, America once again has the strongest economy in the world. A record 15 million jobs have been created on my watch, giving 15 million more Americans the dignity and peace of mind that comes with a steady paycheck. The unemployment rate has been below 4 percent for the longest stretch in over 50 years, and we've seen the lowest unemployment rate for Black Americans on record. Economic growth is strong. Wages are rising faster than prices. Inflation is down by two-thirds. We have more to do, but folks are starting to feel the results. Real income and household wealth are higher now than they were before the pandemic, and consumer sentiment has surged more in recent months than any time in decades. Americans have filed a record 16 million new business applications since I took office, and each one of them is an act of hope.

Importantly, we're paying for many of these historic investments by making our tax system fairer. We've cut

the deficit by \$1 trillion since I took office, one of the biggest reductions in history, and I've signed legislation to cut it by \$1 trillion more over the next 10 years, in part by raising the corporate minimum tax to 15 percent and making the wealthy and big corporations start paying their fair share.

It's clear that we're making tremendous progress for the American people, but we have more to do to finish the job. My Administration is going to keep fighting to lower costs for hardworking families, on everything from prescription drugs, to housing, childcare, and student loans. Folks in Washington have tried to reduce prescription drug costs for decades; our historic Inflation Reduction Act is getting it done. It for example caps the cost of insulin for seniors at \$35 a month, down from as much as \$400; and starting next year, no senior on Medicare will pay more than \$2,000 a year in total out-of-pocket drug costs, even for expensive medications that can cost many times more. It also protects and expands the Affordable Care Act; as a result, more Americans have health insurance today than ever.

We're also making real gains in expanding access to housing: More families own homes today than did before the pandemic, rents are easing, and a record of around 1.7 million housing units are under construction nationwide. We'll keep working to lower housing costs and boost supply, by expanding rental assistance; speeding builders' access to federal financing to build more affordable homes; and reducing mortgage payments for first-time homebuyers. Meanwhile, we're standing up for workers and consumers, and cracking down on unfair hidden "junk fees" that companies like airlines, banks, and insurers slip onto people's bills.

At the same time, we're working to get every child in America the strong start they need to thrive. The American Rescue Plan expanded the Child Tax Credit, cutting child poverty nearly in half in 2021. We'll keep fighting to restore it, and to guarantee the vast majority of American families access to high-quality childcare for no more than \$10 a day. Our rescue plan also made the biggest investment in public education in American history; today, we're pushing to further boost funding to schools in need, to expand tutoring and afterschool programs, and to ease teacher shortages. I'm keeping my promise to ease the crushing burden of student debt as well. Despite legal challenges, we've canceled \$138 billion in student loans for nearly 3.9 million Americans, including more than 750,000 teachers, nurses, firefighters, social workers, and other public servants. Such widespread debt cancellation is freeing people to finally consider buying a home, having a child, or starting the small business they always dreamed of. In all, our agenda is making the promise of America real for