

At his retirement earlier this month, Buffalo's mayor surprised Otis with the renaming of the basketball courts in Martin Luther King, Jr. Park as the Otis T. Barker Sr. Basketball Courts, a fitting tribute to someone who has helped make athletics more accessible for our young people.

Otis' impact extends into Buffalo's faith and music communities, where he directs and assists choirs at St. John's Baptist Church and the Var-Son Community Choir. His voice, both in leadership and in song, has lifted up so many in our community.

Buffalo will miss him in city hall, but I am confident that his mentorship, leadership, and boundless generosity will continue throughout his retirement, and I have no doubt he will continue his commitment to our city as he also enjoys more time with his wonderful family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I thank OTB for making our community a better place to live, work, and raise a family. I wish my friend a well-earned and rewarding retirement. We love him. Congratulations and Godspeed.

HONORING NORTH CAROLINA STATE SENATOR MARSHALL A. RAUCH

(Mr. MOORE of North Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MOORE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor North Carolina State Senator Marshall Arthur Rauch, who recently passed away at the age of 102, leaving behind a legacy of service, leadership, and generosity that will be remembered for generations.

As the longest serving Jewish State senator in North Carolina history, Senator Rauch was a trailblazer and a man of deep principle.

Senator Rauch dedicated much of his life to public service, serving on the Gastonia City Council, chairing the North Carolina Senate Finance Committee while he was a member of the senate, and championing racial harmony, education, and fiscal responsibility. He was also a World War II veteran and a successful businessman who ran, at one time, the world's largest Christmas ornament company.

Senator Rauch's work to integrate schools peacefully in Gaston County, support higher education, and help folks achieve self-sufficiency left an impact that will continue for generations.

Senator Rauch was known for his kindness, his wit, and his unwavering belief in the power of public service to make people's lives better.

I was someone who was very lucky to get to know him. As a young person, I was a senate page and had the opportunity to serve there. I got to know Senator Rauch all those years ago, and I stayed in contact with him over the years. He stayed very active pretty much till the end.

One of his favorite things to do, Mr. Speaker, was periodically he would

have a hot dog roast during the week and invite folks over for hot dogs. He invited folks from all backgrounds, from all political parties, with an opportunity to sit down and fellowship, have a meal together, and just get to know folks. That is the kind of generous man that Marshall Rauch was.

Mr. Speaker, Marshall Rauch is going to be deeply missed, and I join the people of Gaston County and the people of North Carolina in honoring his extraordinary legacy.

DON'T TOUCH SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. COURTNEY of Connecticut was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, last year, candidate Trump, President-elect Trump, and now-President Trump repeatedly told the American people that he won't touch Social Security. We are now 2 months into his administration, and we are finding that the opposite is true.

A headline yesterday in The Washington Post read: "Long waits, waves of calls, website crashes: Social Security is breaking down."

Next to me is a poster board from The Wall Street Journal. Some people may say that The Washington Post is always critical of President Trump, but this is The Wall Street Journal, an impeccable, center-right newspaper whose headline states: "Dealing With Social Security Is Heading From Bad to Worse."

The agency that administers benefits is cutting staff and restricting benefits as part of the Department of Government Efficiency review, or DOGE, the Trump initiative.

Let's be more specific. What are some of those intentional policies that are being put into place? We know that there was a wave of those fork-in-the-road retirements that hit Social Security and reduced staff. We know that Social Security has already announced that the workforce is going to be reduced from 57,000 all across America to 50,000.

Some may say: What is wrong with that? We should sort of downsize our workforce, make them more efficient.

The fact of the matter is, if you look at how many people are beneficiaries today, with the baby boomer retirements that are swelling the ranks of Social Security beneficiaries, it is 73 million Americans now who are receiving Social Security benefits. These are people with retirement benefits, children who have lost a parent, and people on disability.

We now have a bigger-than-ever population of people collecting Social Security benefits and a reduced staff.

To put this in perspective, in 2010, not that long ago, the size of the Social Security workforce was 68,000, 18,000 more than what the Trump administration is targeting for today, and the number of beneficiaries in 2010 was 54 million Americans as opposed to 73

million Americans today. We have more people who need help with the Social Security system and fewer staff to help them navigate it.

In just 1 week from today, they are pretty much going to shut off phone service for Social Security beneficiaries who are trying to sign up with their bank information to get on Social Security. This is something that has been normal practice, using very precise identifiers to make sure that waste, fraud, and abuse do not occur.

By the way, Social Security's accuracy is 99.7 percent. That has been verified by outside audits and by the Social Security trustees. Yet, despite that track record, what they are going to tell Social Security beneficiaries, who sometimes struggle with online enrollment in other areas of their lives, is that they are not going to have the opportunity to use a phone service, which, again, has been in practice in the past for decades.

They are also closing 47 Social Security offices across the country. Again, at a time when the number of people who need to interact and interface with the Social Security system is bigger than ever, they are shutting down offices, laying off staff, and shutting off phone service.

The wait times, in terms of people trying to get appointments in person, are going to get longer. Just in the Northeast, we have already been told that the White Plains office in New York is going to be closed, and they are telling people to go to New Haven, Connecticut, my State. That is about a 2-hour drive for people if they want to have an in-person appointment who are now going to basically have a shuttered building in a very densely populated area outside of New York.

The notion that the Social Security system, by this administration, is not being trusted, the opposite is true. DOGE is behind this, as The Wall Street Journal reported. Elon Musk, in an interview with FOX News, made it crystal clear his goal is to eliminate Social Security and get \$800 billion to \$900 billion of savings out of the Social Security system, which we know today is probably one of the most efficient agencies in the Federal Government in terms of the accuracy of their payouts.

The pathway ahead of us is very crystal clear. Congress has to stand up as a coequal branch of government that enacted Social Security in 1935 and for 90 years—we are celebrating the 90th anniversary of Social Security—has been a pillar of middle-class retirement security and helping children who have lost a parent.

Mr. Speaker, it is not an entitlement. It is not welfare. It is an earned benefit that people pay into. They should get that benefit when it is their turn to get the help from Social Security that we promised as Congress.

Defend Social Security. Stand up for Social Security. Don't touch Social Security.

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FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

(Mr. LAMALFA of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, foreign influence in American education, higher education especially, is a growing threat that cannot be ignored.

For years, adversaries, like the Chinese Communist Party, have funneled billions into U.S. colleges and universities through undisclosed donations and contracts, gaining influence over research, curriculum, and even campus policies.

These backdoor financial arrangements jeopardize academic integrity and national security, allowing foreign governments to push their own agendas under the guise of educational partnerships. Foreign regimes, including the Chinese Communist Party, have capitalized on loopholes in the Higher Education Act to expand their influence. Many U.S. institutions fail to disclose foreign gifts, as required, allowing foreign entities to quietly infiltrate and manipulate academic environments.

The DETERRENT Act, which will be taken up soon, introduced by my colleague from Washington, Representative BAUMGARTNER, takes a decisive stand against this threat by enhancing foreign gift and contract reporting requirements. By slashing the reporting threshold to just \$50,000 and implementing an even stricter zero-dollar threshold for countries and entities of concern, the bill ensures universities disclose all foreign funding regardless of its size or source. Lowering that threshold will bring more and more of them into the light.

China alone has sent over \$1 billion to U.S. universities in the past decade, much of it undisclosed until recently. These financial ties have been linked to research theft, censorship of critical discussions, and undue pressure on faculty and students. A congressional investigation uncovered nearly \$40 million in unreported contracts between two top U.S. universities and the CCP.

Foreign-backed research centers are often used as footholds for regimes to infiltrate American institutions, steal intellectual property, and push their political agendas. Some universities, either unknowingly or in pursuit of financial gain, have allowed foreign-funded centers to operate on campus, shaping curriculum, limiting academic freedom, and suppressing dissenting viewpoints.

The DETERRENT Act strengthens reporting requirements, ensures greater transparency to Congress and the public, and imposes strict penalties for noncompliance. It requires universities to disclose foreign gifts and contracts to individual faculty members, who are often the most targeted by adversarial regimes. It also holds private institutions accountable by revealing foreign investments in their endowments.

With the current administration failing to investigate this growing threat, the DETERRENT Act provides a necessary course correction.

Foreign influence not only threatens the integrity of academic research but also compromises national security by giving adversarial governments access to sensitive technological advancements. These financial entanglements, if left unchecked, will continue to erode the independence of U.S. institutions, putting both intellectual freedom and national interests at risk.

Higher education should be a place where students are taught how to think, not what to think, especially by foreign entities with their own agendas that go against United States interests.

Increased oversight is essential to ensure that universities serve the interests of students and the Nation, not those of adversarial regimes. With the previous administration failing to take this step, it is essential that we do that now with the DETERRENT Act.

CONGRATULATING HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS

(Ms. SEWELL of Alabama was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, with the eyes of the Nation on Alabama and Auburn men's basketball as they compete in the NCAA March Madness championship tournament, I would like to also shed a light on the outstanding high school basketball players in Alabama's Seventh Congressional District who led their teams to championship victories this season.

That includes the girls' 7A champions at Hoover High School, who dominated their competition and brought home the gold at the end of their 29-3 season. Way to go, ladies.

Likewise, Hoover High School's boys were also crowned 7A champions at the end of their undefeated season. Go, Hoover Buccaneers.

In Tuscaloosa, we recognize the boys of Paul W. Bryant High School, who took home the Division 6A Championship title following their 27-7 season.

In Clarke County, we congratulate the Jackson Academy boys, who finished their 21-4 season when they won the Division 4A championship.

Last, but certainly not least, I congratulate Uniontown's own R.C. Hatch boys' basketball team. In February, the Bobcats set a new record for boys' basketball in the State of Alabama when they took home their 11th State title as Division 1A champions.

As the proud daughter of the late Coach Andrew A. Sewell, who coached the Selma High School Saints for over 30 years, including in numerous State tournament games, I know firsthand the amount of dedication, talent, and teamwork that goes into earning a State championship title.

On behalf of Alabama's Seventh Congressional District, I ask my colleagues

to join me in congratulating our outstanding high school basketball champions. I am confident that these young student athletes have bright futures ahead of them.

This weekend, the city of Birmingham will host the NCAA women's basketball Sweet 16 and Elite 8 in the Magic City. We welcome all of the teams to Birmingham, Alabama, and wish them much success.

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR DAY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize yesterday as National Medal of Honor Day, a solemn occasion when our Nation pauses to reflect on the extraordinary heroism and selflessness of those who have received our country's highest military award for valor, the Medal of Honor.

National Medal of Honor Day is an opportunity to pay tribute not only to their acts of courage but also to the profound sacrifices made in the defense of our freedoms.

Over 150 years ago, on March 25, 1863, the very first Medals of Honor were presented, establishing a tradition of recognizing those who displayed unparalleled bravery in the face of overwhelming danger.

More than a century later, in 1990, Congress designated March 25 as National Medal of Honor Day, ensuring that future generations would never forget the servicemembers who went above and beyond the call of duty.

Since its inception, the Medal of Honor has been awarded 3,547 times to servicemembers who have demonstrated extraordinary bravery and devotion to their fellow troops and our Nation. Among those, 380 recipients have called Pennsylvania home, a testament to the courage and selflessness of the sons and daughters of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

One of those remarkable Pennsylvanians was Army Specialist Ross McGinnis, a young man from Clarion County who, at just 19 years old, made the ultimate sacrifice to save the lives of his fellow soldiers.

On December 4, 2006, while on patrol in eastern Baghdad, Specialist McGinnis and his unit came under attack. An enemy insurgent positioned on a rooftop hurled a grenade into his Humvee.

Without hesitation, Specialist McGinnis threw his body onto the grenade, saving the lives of his fellow soldiers. For this incomparable courage and sacrifice, President George W. Bush posthumously awarded him the Medal of Honor in 2008.

Today, the post office in Knox, Pennsylvania, bears his name, ensuring that his legacy of heroism endures in the community he once called home.

Another Pennsylvanian whose bravery is etched in history is Private First