

RECOGNIZING RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Rappahannock County High School class of 2025.

This year's graduating class is a remarkable group of students, including future firefighters, servicemembers, college and trade school students, and workers ready to contribute across many sectors.

In their time at Rappahannock County High School, they have achieved a lot of great things, including bringing home a Class 1 State title for the women's basketball team and winning a Scholastic Bowl regional championship. Whether on the field, in the classroom, in the drama club, or as part of one of Rappahannock County High School's bands, I know they will carry the lessons they have learned as a Panther to whatever comes next.

I congratulate the class of 2025.

RECOGNIZING KETTLE RUN HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the 287 graduates in Kettle Run High School class of 2025.

The graduates, as Cougars, have balanced life as students, teammates, and coworkers, and through it all they have learned the value of perseverance. They have excelled across a wide range of fields: In band, in chorus, and in orchestra, on the stage and in the art room. They brought home a golf State championship and led the football team all the way to the State championship game.

They left their mark on Kettle Run, and I look forward to watching all that they will accomplish in the future.

I congratulate the class of 2025 of Kettle Run High School.

RECOGNIZING LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the 347 graduates of Liberty High School's class of 2025.

The graduates, as Eagles, have achieved so much and, most importantly, have learned how to tackle whatever challenges come next.

As their principal said to them:

You are bold, you are brilliant, and roughly a third of you are bilingual. And you are all just enough unhinged to change the world.

Whether their next stop is college, trade school, the workforce, or the military, I can't wait to see what their future has in store, and I look forward to watching them change the world. The graduates should always remember that once an Eagle, always an Eagle.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Liberty High School class of 2025.

EFFECTS OF TARIFFS IN VIRGINIA

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, in his inauguration address, President Trump declared that America was entering a golden age, a new chapter of economic prosperity.

For Virginians, and millions across the country, that promise remains

unfulfilled. Instead of prosperity, Americans are facing economic hardship and uncertainty.

This administration's steep tariffs are taking a real toll here in Virginia.

I heard from a constituent, like the one who started his own small business selling action figures. After a lot of success selling preorders of the action figures, his business is now facing budget shortfalls because they don't know what the tariffs on China will be from month to month. They don't want to raise prices on customers, but the tariffs have made it impossible to plan for his business and for his future.

They are not alone. Businesses, small and large, are feeling the pain all across the Commonwealth. They are unable to plan, unable to predict what this administration is going to do, and in many cases unable to keep their employees, or keep their doors open in some cases. This uncertainty is weighing on a lot of families as well. According to one poll, 59 percent of Virginians expect to face financial difficulty in the years ahead. This doesn't sound like the golden age. It sounds like fool's gold.

MERIT-BASED HIRING

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of merit-based hiring, especially in the Federal Government, because this administration, which has talked a lot about the evils of diversity and fired veterans left and right, is now focusing its hiring efforts exclusively on one thing, blind loyalty to the President. It is like DEI for MAGA.

According to a recent memo from the Office of Personnel Management, all of the civil servant applicants will now be required to answer a series of questions explaining which of the President's executive orders are their favorites and how they will advance the President's pet projects.

Now, to be fair, there are other countries that do similar loyalty tests, like North Korea, the former Soviet Union, and Iran, just to name a few, but those are authoritarian regimes. That seems to be this administration's model.

I ask instead that everyone should swear loyalty to this country and not to the President, and instead of spying on Federal workers and contractors and firing ones who aren't the most blindly loyal that the best are chosen, the brightest, the most qualified people to serve our Nation, to keep us healthy, safe, and secure.

PROTECTING FEDERALISM

(Ms. GREENE of Georgia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the House about a clause that is in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

This clause would take away States' rights to make laws or regulate AI for 10 years. I think federalism is something that must always be protected, and I warn against the dangers of pro-

tecting a tech industry where we have no idea what the future of this industry will hold.

AI is rapidly developing. AI has developed quickly over the past few years. Imagine what it will be 1 year from now, 5 years from now, and 10 years from now.

When people look to the future, they cannot take away States' rights to regulate or make laws to protect the people in their State or to regulate businesses that operate in their State. That would be destroying the very foundation of this country, which is federalism. Federal power must always be limited and State power protected.

Now, the pushback and the reasons that I have been told about this is that American tech and AI companies must be able to compete with China. Well, American tech and AI companies can compete with China, and they should compete with China. However, don't destroy federalism in order to allow them to do that. That would be a fool's errand.

Here is how this can work: Governors and State legislatures can make their States friendly for tech companies in AI, bringing these companies in by making it easy for these companies to operate in their States. That is how it has been done for every single innovation, industry, manufacturing, and all companies across America. You don't destroy federalism for one industry. You protect it and allow States to compete to bring those companies into their States. That is the right way to handle this going forward.

Here is a lesson for us all. No matter what political party holds office and is in charge, my colleagues should all watch carefully the bills that are passed and should be mindful about protecting not only State rights but the rights of the American people and looking to the future.

When I was a freshman Member of Congress in 2021, I was told that America would be at war with China within 5 years. Well, here we are approaching 5 years later. I don't think America should have to go to war with China. America can beat China economically.

Ask yourself: Why do we send our food to be processed over in China? Why do we rely on China to produce our critical supply chain like medicines? Why would we depend on this country for the American people's supplies, and why would we go to war with them when we can be innovative right here at home, in America, producing critical chain supplies, medicines, and processing our own food?

A war is nothing America should ever strive for, look for, or prepare to have to engage in. Americans should conduct ourselves here at home in a way where we don't have to go to war, we don't have to depend on foreign countries, and we never destroy federalism for the future of an industry that we have no idea what it will do.

With this warning, I urge all of my colleagues that when the House gets to

vote on the One Big Beautiful Bill Act again after it leaves the Senate, that my colleagues make sure that we protect federalism and, at the same time, urge our colleagues in the Senate to pull this clause out of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

This bill should be about tax policy, protecting Americans to not have to have a tax increase of over \$4.7 trillion. It should be about America-first energy and Americans' border security, not about allowing AI to run rampant and destroying federalism in the process.

#### RECONCILIATION

(Ms. STANSBURY of New Mexico was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the cruel and morally bankrupt healthcare agenda moving through this Chamber that would gut Medicaid; gut Medicare; collapse our healthcare systems; and cut food assistance to millions of children, seniors, and veterans across this country.

You don't have to take my word for it because Elon Musk, himself, called this a big, disgusting abomination, this bill that currently stands in the Senate. While here in the House the GOP is trying to gut healthcare and mental health care and addiction services through the budget.

These cuts will be devastating for New Mexico. New Mexico already has a healthcare crisis, where two-thirds of New Mexicans are on Medicaid and Medicare, where even with the best healthcare insurance you can get, you still can't get in to see a specialist, and where thousands of our rural and Tribal residents must travel hours just to get basic care.

Let me be clear. People will die if these cuts go through. What is the GOP doing here in this week? They are running a bill that is at best window dressing, hypocrisy, saying that they are supporting healthcare and addiction programs while they literally gut the programs that fund them. It is a complete lie.

Like so much of what they do, these guts are a scam, not just on the American people, but on themselves because apparently they don't read their own bills.

Let's be clear. Republicans are gutting healthcare and behavioral health programs. DOGE has cut thousands of employees at healthcare agencies, frozen funds for vital medical research, and eliminated mental health and substance abuse programs. They have rescinded a billion dollars in State and local behavioral health programs and cut 40 different mental health programs across the country. They are proposing to literally eliminate the vast majority of SAMHSA, which is the mental health program for this country, in the fiscal year 2026 budget. They just transmitted a rescission package to this Chamber last night that would cut billions of dollars in public health

assistance for starving children and people suffering from AIDS and preventable infectious diseases across the world.

I ask my colleagues: What is this country becoming, where it dismantles our own healthcare system and literally allows children to starve and die across the world? What has literally become of the GOP?

Let me just say this. This is personal for me. This is personal in New Mexico, as somebody who grew up in a low-income family, as somebody who grew up relying on public healthcare and assistance programs, as somebody who has lost friends and family from the fentanyl crisis, and as somebody who represents one of the strongest and resilient set of communities in the country but who struggle every single day.

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This is not leadership. This is a moral failure.

It is why I show up every single day to this Chamber with my full heart and my full fight for our communities.

It is why I have reintroduced my bill this week to expand Indian Health Service. It is why I introduced legislation to stop fentanyl, to address the public health nursing crisis, and to ensure that our rural communities can access telehealth and that they can actually stay in business with our rural clinics.

It is why I have secured millions for New Mexico for mental health and addiction recovery. It is why I submitted funding this year for the fiscal year 2026 budget to build a state-of-the-art trauma center in Valencia County and mental and behavioral health services in Sandoval.

It is why I have secured millions for transitional housing for veterans; a sobering center; behavioral health centers in Albuquerque; mobile school health centers in APS; and new fire and EMS stations in Moriarty, Sandia Pueblo, Peralta in Valencia. This is what leadership looks like.

I will just say this: In New Mexico, we know, of course, that we are all going to die, but we do not allow people to die because of policy failure and moral corruption.

We are here to fight. We will fight this abomination of a bill. We will fight the draconian cuts in the budget, and we will fight this corrupt rescission package. I will keep working every single day for New Mexicans because that is who we are.

#### RECOGNIZING SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY'S NCAA DIVISION III MEN'S VOLLEYBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP VICTORY

(Mr. CLINE of Virginia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a momentous achievement by the men's volleyball team at Southern Virginia University in Buena Vista, Virginia, which has brought home the

school's first-ever NCAA Division III National Championship victory.

On Monday night in Salem, Virginia, the Knights defeated powerhouse Springfield College in a thrilling straight-set sweep of 25–20, 25–23, and 27–25, capping an extraordinary 35–1 season. This victory wasn't just a win on the court but the culmination of years of hard work, perseverance, and belief.

Led by veteran Coach Tom Peterson, who has now guided three different programs to NCAA titles, the Knights embodied excellence in every sense. Senior outside hitter, Christian Sheaffer, named the tournament's most outstanding player, led the charge with 13 kills, while his teammates, including Kristo Bianchin, Kyler Evans, Justin Madsen, and sophomore setter Gehrig Tolman, delivered in every critical moment.

From a heartbreaking quarterfinal loss last season to the national championship podium this year, this team exemplifies resilience and heart.

I congratulate the Knights, Coach Peterson, and the entire SVU community. This championship belongs to all of them.

HONORING 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORFOLK AND WESTERN CLASS J NO. 611 LOCOMOTIVE

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 75th anniversary of a true icon of American railroad history, the Norfolk and Western class J No. 611 steam locomotive.

Built right in Roanoke, Virginia, in May of 1950, this bullet-nosed, coal-fired marvel remains a shining example of American innovation and craftsmanship. Spanning 110 feet and weighing 872,000 pounds, the 611 generated a staggering 5,400 horsepower and reached speeds of up to 100 miles an hour. For nearly a decade, it connected communities from Virginia to Ohio, proudly pulling passengers across the heartland.

In 1952, it famously hauled President Dwight D. Eisenhower's campaign train from Columbus, Ohio, to Kenova, West Virginia.

Thanks to the vision and tireless efforts of local advocates like Bev Fitzpatrick and the dedicated team at the Virginia Museum of Transportation, the 611 has undergone two major restorations, in 1982 and again in 2014, and it continues to operate as a living monument to our railroading past.

Named a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark in 1984, designated Virginia's Official State Steam Locomotive in 2017, and added to both the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places in 2023 and 2024, the 611's legacy endures.

Mr. Speaker, as we mark this milestone, let us salute 611 and all of those in Roanoke and beyond who have kept its whistle echoing through the Blue Ridge and across the Nation.