

For nearly a decade, Brian has been a driving force behind the rapid growth and rise of Equality Illinois, turning it into a powerful multi-issue advocacy organization dedicated to advancing LGBTQ+ civil rights across the State.

At a time when we are seeing the LGBTQ+ community face relentless attacks, Brian has been at the helm of Equality Illinois fighting back and ensuring our State remains a safe, inclusive place for everyone.

As he enters this new chapter in his life, I wish him the best of luck and am confident that he will continue the good fight protecting and empowering the LGBTQ+ community in Illinois and across the country.

#### BENEFITS OF THE ONE BIG, BEAUTIFUL BILL

(Mr. ROSE of Tennessee was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, the House Ways and Means Committee has run the numbers for the American people. They all point to this fact: The One Big Beautiful Bill Act is good for this Nation, good for everyday Americans, and certainly good for the men and women I represent in Tennessee.

Here are the numbers. The bill, which this body passed and which I was proud to vote for, some experts say could produce an annual GDP growth rate of more than 5 percent in the next 4 years, with longer term annual growth reaching 3.5 percent.

The bill is also set to preserve between 6 and 7 million manufacturing jobs nationally. That would impact a whole lot of families. In my district alone, this bill protects 12,000 manufacturing jobs, more than \$1.1 billion in wages, and more than \$2.2 billion in economic growth. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to pass this bill without delay.

Mr. Speaker, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act is about restoring fairness and awarding work, and it begins with Americans' taxes.

In Tennessee, the bill we passed here in the House would put an average of \$11,700 more in the pockets of a family of four every year. Under this bill, everyday Americans will see lower income tax rates, a larger standard deduction, and an expanded child tax credit. That means more take-home pay, more money for groceries, gas, and healthcare. Filing will be simpler. Refunds will be bigger.

This bill doesn't just cut taxes. It makes them fairer. It puts kitchen-table concerns at the center of policy and shifts the balance back toward the middle class. With the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, we are saying yes to opportunity, yes to working families, and yes to an economy that grows from the bottom up.

Mr. Speaker, it would be hard for me to count the number of job creators I have met in Tennessee's Sixth Congressional District since I came to Con-

gress in 2019, but I can tell you that nearly all of them emphasized to me the need for tax certainty and for tax and regulatory relief.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act includes something called R&D reprieves. That sounds like jargon to most people, but if a piece of equipment is the only thing separating you from expanding your business or hiring more employees, you know the term well.

Research and development tax credits have been the lifeblood of growth for small businesses and for our Nation's economy for several years. Estimates tell us that the immediate expensing for R&D will accelerate more than \$20 billion in investment. I have seen this firsthand in my own small business that I continue to operate. This bill is further proof of promises made, promises kept, and I was proud to support the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

Mr. Speaker, the men and women who put a badge on every morning, every afternoon, every evening want to leave the world better than they found it. Yet we civilians don't fully appreciate just how much time they spend away from their families to protect ours. They stay late writing reports or working events. They are often required to testify in court on their days off to ensure the conviction of a suspect they have arrested. That time, overtime, is needed to truly serve their communities. They do it without complaint.

They do receive extra pay, of course, for their overtime, yet that often comes with the burden of extra income taxes. It puts many of our law enforcement officers in a tax bracket that costs them more money.

Fortunately, it is not about the money for most of our men and women in uniform. Fortunately, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act ensures that our brave law enforcement officers won't be taxed on their overtime pay.

#### OPPOSING PROVIDER TAX RESTRICTIONS IN THE GOP RECONCILIATION BILL

(Ms. BARRAGÁN of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, Senate Republicans are making Donald Trump's big, ugly bill even uglier with steeper cuts to Medicaid that will leave more kids, parents, and seniors without healthcare. This is all so they can reward their billionaire donors with even bigger tax breaks.

This bill would deeply cut Medicaid and hurt our most vulnerable. Don't take my word for it. Republican Senator THOM TILLIS shared this chart on the State-by-State impact of Senate Republicans' newest cuts.

Do you live in North Carolina? If you do, you stand to lose \$38.9 billion and kick up to 600,000 people off Medicaid. Many States, including Republican States, lose tens of billions of dollars in Medicaid funding.

How about Virginia? Virginia will lose \$24.8 billion. Louisiana, the Speaker's home State, will lose \$20 billion. South Carolina will lose \$20 billion. States with small budgets would get hammered.

Iowa loses \$4.1 billion. What did Senator ERNST from Iowa have to say about it? She is not concerned. She says: "Well, we all are going to die."

Kentucky loses about \$12 billion. What does Senator MITCH MCCONNELL have to say about that? He says: "They'll get over it."

What?

Are you, the American people, going to just get over losing your healthcare so that a billionaire can buy a bigger yacht? Do you want to die young in the emergency room so that a Fortune 500 company can add a few more seats to their private jet?

Here is what Senate Republicans are doing that caused Senator TILLIS to make this chart. Right now, States use a variety of tools to help pay for their share of Medicaid, which is the health insurance program for low-income families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

One of the most important tools is called a provider tax. That is when hospitals or health plans agree to pay a small tax to keep Medicaid running. In return, the Federal Government matches those dollars. It is a Federal-State partnership that keeps hospitals open, staff paid, and patients covered, but the Senate Republican bill would limit how much States can use that tool. It puts new restrictions on States that expanded Medicaid to low-income people, saying they can't collect as much from hospitals or health insurance companies as they do now.

It means the Federal Government would be telling States that you can't use the money you have depended on for years to keep Medicaid going. That is going to cause a lot of damage. Hospitals would lose funding. States will face bigger budget gaps.

What happens then? You will see cuts: cuts to healthcare, cuts to services, and cuts to the very people who need help the most. This means tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars lost. Those are not just numbers on a page. Those are real people losing health insurance. Those are real patients getting turned away and real communities, especially rural and low-income communities, being left behind.

This morning, the Senate Parliamentarian ruled that these provider tax restrictions cannot be included as drafted, but this fight is still very real.

We have seen Republicans rework the text of these radical cuts to get the Parliamentarian's approval, and at least one House Republican suggested today that they just ignore what this Parliamentarian has said.

I have no doubt that the plan Republicans come up with will slash Medicaid and devastate hospitals to fund their tax breaks.

Now a few Republicans here in the House have said these new cuts go too

far. Yet, are they really willing to stand up for their constituents and vote “no” if the Senate sends over these deep cuts? I am not going to hold my breath because Republicans have already caved last month and voted to kick millions of people off Medicaid. House Democrats and Senate Democrats are united to stop this big, ugly bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Republicans in Congress to join us to do the right thing and oppose this bill. Republicans should stand up for hospitals, stand up for patients, and stand up for the millions of Americans who count on Medicaid every day.

#### RECOGNIZING PALMHURST POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

(Ms. DE LA CRUZ of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Palmhurst Police Department for 20 years of service and dedication to public safety.

Since 2005, the department's officers and telecommunicators have gone above and beyond the call of duty. They have received recognition for their Mothers Against Drunk Driving efforts, completed advanced rapid response and active-shooter training, and worked hand in hand with local, State, and Federal agencies.

Their services extend beyond law enforcement and public safety. The Palmhurst Police Department is also dedicated to giving back to the community by hosting Coffee with a Cop and other events, such as organizing toy drives in partnership with the local schools and bringing neighborhoods together through their annual National Night Out.

Mr. Speaker, for 20 years, they have not only protected the safety of Palmhurst but they have also brought Texans together. I thank them for their tireless work and dedication and congratulate them on 20 years of exceptional service to the people of Palmhurst and the great State of Texas.

#### EMANCIPATION DAY

(Ms. PLASKETT of the Virgin Islands was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, as Americans celebrate this Independence Day, July Fourth, the day the Founders declared their intention to be free from England, the day before in the Virgin Islands, July 3, we celebrate one of the most historic and spectacular days for those of us who have ancestral ties or call the Virgin Islands our home.

It is the commemoration of our emancipation because on that day, July 3, 1848, the Virgin Islands became one of only two places in the Western Hemisphere for individuals to gain

their freedom from enslavement by organized violent overthrow.

On that day in 1848, after months of organization and planning, thousands of enslaved people, including my ancestors, left plantations throughout the island of St. Croix and converged at Fort Frederik in what was the Danish West Indies and demanded their freedom.

Unfortunately, while the Governor of the time, Peter Von Scholten, declared all formerly enslaved in the Danish West Indies free, we now know that freedom is not easily free, and a declaration without full rights and privileges is a hollow declaration.

Even today, anyone who decides to live in the Virgin Islands must give up a portion of their freedom: the right to vote for President, the right to have full voting representation in both Chambers of this body, and the right to receive SSI. The list goes on and on.

How often when asking for equal treatment, even tax law, I have to remind people that we are not foreign. We are, in fact, a possession of the United States, drafted into wars, loving this country with no path to full inclusion. Imagine if Wyoming or Iowa or Vermont were indefinitely to remain territories with no path to full citizenship.

In the 116th and 117th Congress, language was added into H.R. 1 which created a Congressional Task Force to not only create a recommendation to a pathway for greater inclusion for the territories and voting participation in this body but also to examine what has been the cost to the people economically, socially, politically, for hundreds of years not having those rights, including Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

I will be introducing this legislation this term, and I ask my colleagues to join.

□ 1030

Mr. Speaker, let me say to my fellow Virgin Islanders: We, as well, have work to do in our own freedom. As the prayer and chant says, “We must free our minds from mental slavery,” the chains that bound us in a psychological and cultural legacy that persist long after the physical chains are broken. Liberation involves more than legal freedom. We Virgin Islanders have had our legal freedom for almost two centuries, and yet we still struggle with violent crime against one another, crumbling sociopolitical infrastructure, and blaming others for the state of our community instead of assigning ourselves work to make it better.

True emancipation and liberation require breaking free from internalized oppression, self-limiting beliefs, and our own social systems that continue to marginalize ourselves and our children.

Our ancestors made the brave, bold decision to take a history of bloodshed, pain, and inhumanity—a history of

being stolen and trafficked from Africa to the West, and exposed to some of the most inhumane and grueling conditions—and transformed it into achievement of their freedom.

The environment of self-hatred and hatred of others that persists on our islands must stop. That is not the sacrifices our ancestors made. Our ancestors could not have accomplished the incredible feat of defeating the Danish Army with every odd stacked against them without being unified. Unity and love are inseparable.

Let this Emancipation Day serve as both a commemoration and a call to action for us to honor our ancestors who resisted and survived as we do the work of full liberation. Let this day remind us that freedom is both a historical achievement and an ongoing process of our individual and collective self-determination, progress, and development.

Blessed Emancipation Day.

#### HONORING MELINDA WOODHURST

(Mr. NORMAN of South Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize an extraordinary public servant, Ms. Melinda Woodhurst, whose unwavering dedication to our Nation's veterans has left a lasting mark on York County, South Carolina. Her strong advocacy and innovative thinking has transformed the landscape of veteran services and has created meaningful change for our servicemembers and their families. She is a prime example of servant leadership.

Since 2017, Ms. Woodhurst has served as the York County veterans service officer. Month after month, she attends meetings with numerous Veteran Service Organizations and the York County Veterans Advisory Council to stay closely connected with the needs of her community. Her involvement also extends to partnerships with the hospice network of York County and other vital support institutions.

Ms. Woodhurst's service to our community has been far-reaching, particularly through her work with the Disabled American Veterans. The chapter's aging transportation van, affectionately known as the bag of bolts, finally gave out during a trip to Dorn Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Even when fundraising progress stagnated, Melinda stepped forward on her own time to raise over \$30,000, enabling the purchase of a new van. She also worked to submit an application for a Disabled American Veterans Trust Fund grant, bringing the potential total funding to nearly \$60,000.

Ms. Woodhurst's leadership goes much further than fundraising. Understanding that the certification process for volunteer drivers through the Dorn VA could take up to 9 months, she collaborated with VA representatives and identified a solution. Thanks to her coordination, Melinda streamlined the