

programs, including the mid-range capability program, Army directed energy systems, and the long-range hypersonic weapon as a first-of-its-kind capability.

General Rasch served in both Desert Storm and the global war on terrorism. Over his 36 years of service, he has earned numerous awards, including the Army's Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, and the Combat Infantryman Badge. He is also a Ranger-qualified soldier, holding the prestigious Ranger Tab.

General Rasch's leadership and mentorship will be missed by many, especially those at Redstone Arsenal in Alabama's Fifth Congressional District. Those who served with him describe him as exactly the kind of leader that soldiers trust and are willing to follow into battle. This Nation is grateful for his service and is better because of it. We salute General Robert A. Rasch, Jr.

U.S. SPACE COMMAND HEADQUARTERS

Mr. STRONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on an issue of historic importance for our Nation's security and for the people of north Alabama: the decision to base the United States Space Command headquarters at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama.

For more than 60 years, our community has been at the heart of the American space story. North Alabama has been at the forefront of innovation, from the rockets that carried our astronauts to the Moon, to the systems that now protect our homeland and our warfighters. We have earned the nickname "The Rocket City" because innovation and national defense are in our DNA.

Space Command is charged with ensuring America's superiority in the most demanding, contested domain of the future. To protect the United States, we need a headquarters located where talent, research, and mission readiness intersect. With the support of President Trump, it has been decided that Huntsville is that place.

Redstone Arsenal is a hub for missile defense, with unmatched infrastructure and mission synergy. Our workforce brings together military expertise, leading civilian aerospace professionals, and a pipeline of scientists and engineers. This is not just about geography. It is about capability, efficiency, and effectiveness.

This decision is not about partisan politics. It is about national security. It is about ensuring that our brave men and women in uniform have every advantage. We must be the most lethal force this world has ever seen.

Huntsville offers facilities and partnerships needed for immediate mission success and long-term capability to grow and sustain the Command well into the future. North Alabama demonstrates that patriotism, technical excellence, and innovation exist together. North Alabama is ready. America will be stronger because of it. Our time is now.

HONORING IAN KALVINSKAS

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart but also with a sense of hope. I want to tell you about a remarkable young man named Ian Kalvinskaskas.

Ian was one of my interns this summer. A Pasadena native, he loved soccer and carried a curiosity about the world that was as boundless as his spirit.

As a UCLA student with a deep passion for public service, he dreamed of pursuing a career in foreign policy and one day working for the United Nations.

At just 15, though, Ian was diagnosed with liver cancer. He underwent a transplant at UCLA, and for more than 4 years, it seemed that he had beaten the disease, but in November 2024, his cancer returned. Ian knew his time was short, yet he refused to let that define him. Instead, he came to Capitol Hill because he told us: "I want to make a difference."

Even while battling illness, Ian focused on helping pediatric patients get fair consideration on the transplant waiting list.

Sadly, Ian's internship was cut short. He passed away in June at the age of 20, surrounded by his family in the shadow of the Capitol he so admired.

His doctor, Sue McDiarmid, one of the premier transplant physicians in the world, told me his personal courage was remarkable and an inspiration to her and all who knew him.

His final days were not defined by his illness. They were defined by his courage and idealism, by his determination to use the time he had left to help others.

In honor of Ian's life, I am proud to introduce the Ian Kalvinskaskas Pediatric Liver Cancer Early Detection and Screening Act. This bill would advance the very work that Ian hoped to pursue. It would direct the Department of Health and Human Services, with input from the CDC, Centers for Disease Control, to strengthen education so parents and providers can spot the early signs of liver disease in children.

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It would require the Government Accountability Office to report on what we are doing now, how many children are lost each year while waiting for a liver transplant, and whether adding a simple newborn test could save lives.

Mr. Speaker, Ian's story is not an isolated one. Over 100,000 Americans every day are waiting for an organ transplant.

Back home in the San Joaquin Valley, Austin Salinas, a young boy, has spent his life battling hydronephrosis, a serious kidney condition that has meant countless surgeries and now the use of an ostomy bag. For more than 11 years, he has defied the odds with remarkable resilience.

Like Ian's, Austin's journey is more than endurance. It is about survival and the hope of a lifesaving transplant. It is about inspiration. It is about courage. These young people really want to live and have a full life.

Families like Ian's and Austin's shouldn't have to fight alone. They deserve a system that works for them and gives them every chance to live a full and healthy life.

This legislation, therefore, is about the gift of life and giving better opportunities for over 100,000 Americans awaiting an organ transplant every day.

I encourage my colleagues and their staff to take the time to read this bill and consider joining me.

By supporting this legislation, we ensure that Ian's fight and legacy will live on for the lives of children and their families that will be saved in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ian Kalvinskaskas and his son—a student and, now, through this legislation, a catalyst for change.

God bless Ian. May his memory continue to light a path forward for all of us.

HONORING VERONICA PITTS

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

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate an extraordinary educator from my hometown of Selma, Alabama, Ms. Veronica Pitts, of Selma High School, for being named the National Civics Teacher of the Year by the Bill of Rights Institute.

Each year, only one teacher in the Nation is selected to receive this prestigious honor, and I am thrilled that, this year, the teacher hails from Alabama's Seventh Congressional District.

Ms. Pitts exemplifies the very best of what it means to be an educator and a public servant. With a deep passion for education and tireless commitment to her students, she has dedicated her career to teaching not just government and economics but the importance of civic engagement and community leadership.

Through her engaging lessons, Ms. Pitts has helped her students understand that democracy is not a spectator sport. It requires informed, empowered, and active participants. Her classroom is a place where students don't just learn about the government. They learn about their role in shaping it.

As the daughter of two lifelong educators who worked at Selma High School for over 36 years, I know firsthand the transformational power of good education, especially good education in Selma. I have seen what our students can do and achieve with the help of amazing teachers and wonderful role models.

Teachers like Ms. Pitts do more than prepare young people for tests. They

prepare them for life. They nurture curiosity, instill core values, and light the spark of leadership that will carry students far beyond the school walls.

Located less than 2 miles up the road from the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge, it is only befitting that from Selma High School would emerge a teacher who is building the next generation of civic leaders, activists, and change agents.

After all, it was the people of Alabama's Seventh Congressional District that brought us the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. These were ordinary Americans who dared to make this Nation live up to its highest ideals of equality and justice for all.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Alabama's Seventh Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Veronica Pitts. We are all so proud of her, and we are grateful for the work that she does each and every day to create opportunities for our students to thrive.

FUNDING CUTS TO SCIENCE

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because we face a critical moment for American leadership.

Amid mounting pressure to compete with China in energy, biotechnology, and AI dominance, any smart country would invest in itself and invest in the future. Unfortunately, this administration seems committed to doing the exact opposite.

Funding cuts to the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation have kneecapped the world-class research ecosystem that has made America great in the 20th century.

The politicization of science hurts the health and well-being of hard-working American citizens, and it compromises our ability as a nation to compete with other nations.

During August, I held a townhall with hundreds of my constituents who are researchers and graduate students in science, technology, engineering, and math. During the townhall, I discussed the dangers of this administration's agenda for public health, national security, and global competitiveness, and they asked that I tell you some of their stories.

One researcher studies ocean and Earth sciences at San Diego's prestigious Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Her research focuses on addressing the threats that toxic algal blooms pose to public health, fisheries, and coastal recreation.

With cuts to NASA, NOAA, and the National Science Foundation, she has seen labs at Scripps shut down and watched her coworkers lose their jobs.

Another scientist whose research focuses on ensuring energy security has felt the consequences of this adminis-

tration's policy. She has had her research censored by an administration that is indifferent to and may be hostile to scientific research. She has watched critical datasets and research tools disappear from government websites overnight. As she so aptly put it: "I have sacrificed so much of my livelihood for the betterment of our planet, only to see it all burn down in less than half a year."

Myiesha, a researcher at UCSD, overcame her own traumatic brain injuries and chronic illnesses so she could study the effects of infectious diseases on vulnerable patients. Now, Myiesha faces a new challenge: overcoming an administration that has cut her authorized research, cut her working hours almost in half, and cut her income significantly.

Mari is a Ph.D. candidate studying biomedical sciences at UCSD. She researches the neuroscience behind drug addiction so we can fight the opioid crisis. Just as her field gained momentum—overdose deaths declined in 2024 for the first time in over two decades—her lab was threatened with funding cuts. Mari has watched her lifesaving research be halted and had two of her own fellowship applications withdrawn because of the administration's actions.

Eugene is a Ph.D. candidate at Scripps. He is researching how to repurpose bacteria to stop certain cancer-causing proteins. The lab next door to Eugene's was doing a \$129 million trial on monkeys, working to develop an HIV vaccine. After the Trump administration canceled the lab's grant, the monkeys were killed needlessly, funding already spent was wasted, and patients will now have to wait even longer before we find an HIV vaccine.

Maya, a UCSD grad, cofounded BrainStorm Therapeutics, a biotech startup researching treatments for brain diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and epilepsy. Maya has seen the grants that support startups like hers cut. This threatens the transformational science that she and her colleagues are working on.

The final story I will tell, and maybe the most emblematic of the issue, is that of Dr. Ardem Patapoutian. He is a world-renowned researcher who won the Nobel Prize for his work on researching the sense of touch.

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Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that is the kind of talent we strive to encourage in this country.

When his research funding was delayed by the Trump administration, Dr. Patapoutian received a call from China within 2 days. They offered him his pick of whatever research institution he wanted in China, guaranteeing his funding for the next 20 years.

Although his funding is still delayed, Dr. Patapoutian chose to stay here because of the world-class research ecosystem in the United States that is currently being eroded and under attack.

These stories show the risks we take when we cut funding that supports critical scientific advancement. China is far outpacing us in the research and development space. If we are going to keep up, we have to put up. If those of us in this body are truly serious about putting America first, this is simply not the way.

It is encouraging that, despite the administration's attempt to politicize science, a bipartisan bloc of the Senate Appropriations Committee has chosen to modestly increase scientific research funding rather than cut it. I am very thankful for that. I hope we will do the same here in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the commitment to investing in America's future. We in the House should do the same. We need to invest in science and not undercut it.

HONORING FRANK JOHN SMITH

(Mr. HARIDOPOLOS of Florida was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Frank John Smith. Frank served 4 years in the United States Air Force as Airman Second Class, specializing in communications and navigation reports.

His service took him from Japan to Ripley, Tennessee. He and his small team successfully maintained multiple remote communication stations. For his dedication, Frank was awarded the Good Conduct Medal.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Florida's Space Coast and Treasure Coast, I thank Frank John Smith for his faithful service to our Nation. His commitment reflects the best of Brevard County and the United States Air Force.

RECOGNIZING SPACE COAST HONOR FLIGHT

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, our office was honored to take part in Space Coast Honor Flight send-off. Veterans from across the Space Coast traveled to Washington and were recognized for their faithful service.

I am proud that five members of our district team joined those families and supporters at the Melbourne Orlando International Airport to send off our heroes. These veterans represent each branch of our Armed Services, and their courage and sacrifice are a powerful testament to the freedoms we enjoy today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honor Flight organization and volunteers whose work ensures these patriots receive the honorable recognition they deserve. As the son of a veteran and parent of a son who serves in the United States Air Force, on behalf of the Space and Treasure Coast, I thank the veterans and the Active members of our service for their incredible sacrifice.

RECOGNIZING CHANDLER BRAID

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chandler Braid,