

passion, and optimism she brings to public service. I always say that there is an understanding amongst mayors, and we make some of the best legislators. Together in Utah, we worked on projects that shaped our communities, and I had the privilege of watching her take that same determination to a national stage when she ran for and won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, something I shared with her after I joined her in Washington in 2017.

Mia is young, vibrant, and full of life. She carries herself with an infectious energy, always greeting me in a way that lifts my spirits. No matter the challenges she has faced—whether in governance or as a trailblazer in politics—she meets them with grace and determination. Being a Black woman in the Republican Party comes with its own set of hurdles, but Mia has never let barriers define her. Instead, she breaks them. Her memoir was appropriately titled, “Qualified.” Mia was qualified to break barriers and inspire people to see great possibilities—not because of her heritage, gender, faith tradition, or political party—Mia was qualified because of the content of her character.

In Congress, she was deeply respected by her colleagues and admired by her constituents, not just for her policies, but for the way she made people feel: valued, heard, and empowered. Her decision to stop treatment and cherish the time she has left with her family is a reflection of the strength and clarity with which she has always lived her life.

I am grateful for the time I have known Mia, for the work we have done together, and for the example she continues to set for so many. My thoughts are with her, her family, and all who love her during this difficult time.

TRIBUTE TO MARYALICE CROFTON

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, the spirit of volunteerism is one of Maine's greatest strengths. For the past 30 years, that spirit has been nurtured and enhanced by Volunteer Maine Executive Director Maryalice Crofton, and I join people throughout our State in honoring Maryalice for her outstanding leadership and in wishing her all the best in her retirement.

Volunteer Maine is our State's National Service Commission that supports AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. During Maryalice's tenure, which began just 1 year after those programs were launched, more than 4,200 individuals have served as Maine volunteers, contributing more than 3.9 million hours to support housing, education, environmental conservation, healthcare, childcare, and emergency preparedness efforts across our State. While increasing their job skills and knowledge, student volunteers have earned nearly \$27 million in awards to further their educations.

In addition to advancing the well-being of Mainers and expanding civic

engagement, Maryalice has been an innovative leader at the national level helping to shape workforce development and public-private initiatives. She has been instrumental in efforts to ensure that national service programs are guided by community priorities and local concerns.

At an event celebrating the 30th anniversary of AmeriCorps last year, Maryalice described the importance of people stepping forward to address unmet needs in their communities with these words: “If you're thinking that someone else will take care of it, that's probably not true. You've got to get out there.”

With Maryalice Crofton leading the way, Maine's AmeriCorps volunteers have gotten out there and made a real difference. Her exceptional spirit of service to others will inspire volunteers for years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING 100 YEARS OF THE BENTONVILLE ROTARY CLUB

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Bentonville Rotary Club in celebration of its 100th anniversary. This organization of volunteers and community leaders has made a tremendous impact on northwest Arkansas throughout its history, and I am grateful for the many ways its members live the Rotary mission to promote peace, education, and goodwill through service.

The Bentonville Rotary Club's work has been a key part of the community's extraordinary growth over the last century. When it was first founded, the city's population was 2,300 people. Since then, it has become the focal point of one of the fastest growing regions in the Nation and a hub for global business and entrepreneurship.

This growth has also been seen in the club's leadership and expansion. In 1924, its founding was sponsored by the Rogers' Rotary Club. The first president was Dave Peel, and his successors have often been leaders in other capacities, including Walmart founder Sam Walton, while the club has expanded its impact through sponsoring additional clubs in Bentonville/Bella Vista Daybreak, Holiday Island and Bella Vista Sunrise, in addition to the Bentonville Satellite club.

I am grateful for the many contributions the Bentonville Rotary Club has made and continues to make in the community. These include fundraisers like the New Kids on the Block and Snack Packs for Kids. Rotarians also help beautify the city by planting redbud trees along West Central Avenue, as well as provide opportunities for local residents by sponsoring a library meeting room and an exhibit at the Scott Family Amazeum, donating over \$15,000 in scholarships to students at Bentonville High School and supporting local food banks.

After more than 100 years, the Bentonville Rotary continues to be truly dedicated to “service above self” through leadership and action. Its impact provides inspiration throughout the State, and I am grateful for the many ways its members continue working hard to make northwest Arkansas a special place to live. ●

RECOGNIZING PLANTPEDDLER

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Plantpeddler of Cresco, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

On June 28, 1980, newlyweds Mike and Rachel Gooder purchased Cresco Greenhouse, a local, century-old greenhouse that they planned to revitalize. As recent graduates of Iowa State University with degrees in horticulture, the couple updated the existing infrastructure, optimized production methods, and diversified the variety of plants grown. They rebranded to Plantpeddler and grew their small business quickly. In 1984, the couple successfully launched a wholesale division with the support of their second retail location. This new department led the way for the Gooders to serve independent and middle-market retailers with their premium crops, ranging from garden mums to begonias. The Gooders traveled to Europe in an effort to learn longstanding techniques in transportation, horticulture, and genetics. By 2001, Plantpeddler introduced the young plants division, becoming a major producer of vegetative genetics for the floriculture industry. Plantpeddler continued to invest in state-of-the-art greenhouse technology and currently boasts a production space of over 500,000 square feet.

Today, the company excels as a global leader in supplying young plants, finished plants, and specialty horticultural products, and its impact is felt far beyond Iowa. Plantpeddler serves 3,200 growers across the U.S. and beyond, shipping plants to all 50 States and another 15 countries worldwide. The Cresco-based powerhouse operates as the United States' No. 1 propagator of begonias and ranks second for poinsettias, shipping over 15 million plants annually.

In 2014, Mike and Rachel's son John Gooder joined the company to follow in his parents' footsteps. With a degree in horticulture from Iowa State, John took on a key role in the company to explore advancements in automation and genetic research. A decade later, in 2024, John became a part-owner, helping manage the business and a team of 99 community employees.

In 2017, peers in the greenhouse industry selected Mike Gooder for the inaugural class of the Horticultural Industries Leadership Awards. In 2023,

Mike and Rachel won the Iowa State University Outstanding Horticulture Alumni of the Year award for their small business success and service to the Cresco community. In 2024, the two received the Iowa Leadership in Agriculture Education Award in recognition of the business' "Educate the Educators" program, which trains and mentors teachers on greenhouse production, horticulture genetics, and real-world horticulture practices. Currently, Mike serves as the chairman of the Iowa State Horticulture Advisory Committee.

Plantpeddler's excellence remains widely recognized. As an active industry leader, Plantpeddler is a member of the Cresco Chamber of Commerce, Choose Iowa, and several regional and national horticulture industry groups. In 2022, Plantpeddler played an active role in providing funding for a greenhouse project at Mike and John's high school alma mater in Cresco. Additionally, the Gooders founded and host a biannual event with roughly 400 growers and industry leaders to share and learn about best practices in floriculture genetic testing. This June, Plantpeddler looks forward to celebrating its 45th anniversary in Iowa. When I visited Plantpeddler in 2020, I witnessed their entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to excellence that allow them to play such an essential role in the floriculture industry. I want to congratulate the Gooders and the entire Plantpeddler team for their hard work and dedication to providing exceptional products and services to families and businesses across Iowa and beyond. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success.●

TRIBUTE TO VALDEMAR DEHERRERA

● Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and share the inspiring story of native New Mexican Mr. Valdemar DeHerrera, a World War II veteran and prisoner of war, who celebrated his 105th birthday on October 8, 2024. Valdemar is one of the last American survivors of the fighting in Bataan and Corregidor in the Philippines during the end of World War II.

Valdemar was raised near Taos in the town of Costilla as the third of 14 children. Valdemar helped his family with farming, raising sheep, chickens, cattle, pigs, horses, and crops until dropping out of school in the 10th grade to join the Civilian Conservation Corps. Valdemar did manual labor for conservation projects on rural lands owned by State, local, and Federal governments until he was drafted into the Army at 22 years old. He was sent to train in Fort Bliss, TX, and later deployed to the 515 Coast Artillery in the Philippines.

During the war, Valdemar was captured as a Japanese prisoner of war. He survived the Bataan Death March by escaping to Corregidor Island. Shortly after, Valdemar and his fellow escapees

were captured by the Japanese. During his 3 years and 7 months in captivity, Valdemar was forced to work at a textile plant in Manchuria. He survived on rations consisting of one cup of rice, two cups of water a day, and foraging for grasshoppers, monkeys, and wild spinach. Valdemar was liberated in Manchuria when World War II ended. He returned to Santa Fe, weighing just 80 pounds, spending months recovering. Valdemar credits his faith and the presence of his guardian angel for his survival.

Valdemar has lived a full and meaningful life since his time in the Army. Upon his return home to Costilla, he married Consuelo DeVargas. Valdemar and Consuelo were married until her passing in 2019. Valdemar worked for the State of New Mexico highway department and the Molycorp Mine. Family has played an integral role in Valdemar's life as he raised his 8 children, 19 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, and 3 great-great grandchildren. Valdemar still attends the Bataan Memorial Death March memorial ceremony each year at White Sands Missile Range.

I had the pleasure of speaking to Valdemar prior to his 105th birthday. I thanked him for his service and sacrifice during World War II. Valdemar, your service will never be forgotten, and I am forever grateful for your role in fighting for our freedom.●

TRIBUTE TO JO ANN VERDUCE

● Mr. McCORMICK. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize Pennsylvania's own Jo Ann Verduce.

Starting as a young intern in the communications office for the Diocese of Scranton, she later met the late Sister Marian Denise Walsh, IHM, during the first capital campaign for St. Joseph's Center. Since first joining the St. Joseph's Center Auxiliary, she has spent over 20 years serving as the director of development for the center. As the daughter of Anthony and Josephine Verduce, she was born and raised in Archbald, PA. She lived in other States due to her father's work schedule in construction, which made her a pro at meeting new people across this great Nation. While she attended school in Florida and Hawaii, she graduated from Valley View High School and received a BA in communications and an MS in counselor education from Marywood University. Her deepfelt connection with the IHM Sisters of Marywood led her to a 19-year stretch in public relations for the university.

She is also involved with the Steamtown Marathon team of St. Joe's, and the Go Joe Bike Ride every July with WNEP meteorologist Joe Snedeker. She served on the board of the Scranton chapter of UNICO, promoting Italian heritage, and as president of the ladies auxiliary of the Scranton chapter of UNICO National. She is the president-elect of the Asso-

ciation of Fundraising Professionals NEPA Chapter and was featured in Happenings Magazine and as the Scranton Times Northeast Woman and NOW.

It is with great pride that I recognize the achievements of Jo Ann and bring the attention of Congress to this successful daughter of Pennsylvania; March 5, 2025.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:03 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 579. An act to amend parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to improve foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention, and for other purposes.

H.R. 919. An act to codify Internal Revenue Service guidance relating to treatment of certain services and items for chronic conditions as meeting the preventive care deductible safe harbor for purposes of high deductible health plans in connection with health savings accounts.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 579. An act to amend parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to improve foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 919. An act to codify Internal Revenue Service guidance relating to treatment of certain services and items for chronic conditions as meeting the preventive care deductible safe harbor for purposes of high deductible health plans in connection with health savings accounts; to the Committee on Finance.

MEASURES DISCHARGED PETITION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, hereby direct that the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 7, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to "Addressing the Homework Gap Through the E-Rate Program" and, further, that the joint resolution be immediately placed upon the Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

Ted Cruz, Pete Ricketts, John R. Curtis, Deb Fischer, Eric Schmitt, Bill Hagerty, Todd Young, Marsha Blackburn, Ted Budd, Shelley Moore Capito, Mike Lee, Tim Sheehy, James C. Justice, Ron Johnson, Rand Paul, Joni Ernst, Thom Tillis, Jerry Moran, Jim Banks, Tommy Tuberville, Mike Crapo, Bernie Moreno, John Barrasso, John Cornyn, Tim Scott, Markwayne Mullin, Roger F. Wicker, Cynthia M. Lummis, Tom Cotton, Ashley Moody.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following joint resolution was discharged from the Committee on