

health advocacy, and countless other initiatives.

Jessica's work reveals the critical intersection of science, identity, and culture, demonstrating how diverse perspectives are essential to solving the challenges of our time.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, it is my honor to commend Dr. Jessica Esquivel for blazing trails and reminding us that all is possible when we lift others as we climb.

I congratulate Dr. Esquivel on her success.

RECOGNIZING MARY SANTANA

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mary Santana, a visionary whose leadership has built transformative, creative spaces that uplift our young people in Illinois-03 and beyond.

Mary is the founder and executive director at the Miracle Center, an organization that reflects her belief that community, creativity, and care have the power to change lives. The Miracle Center is a beacon for diverse youth and families, offering mentoring, coaching, training, and academic support, all grounded in the arts.

□ 1015

What started as a small day camp run out of her basement apartment has, over the last 30 years, grown to impact over 20,000 young people across Chicago. Mary has ensured that The Miracle Center nurtures diverse local artists, showcases BIPOC artistry, and uplifts unique perspectives. Under her leadership, The Miracle Center has grown, acquiring a dedicated building near my district office offering Latino artists a platform for performance.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I am proud to commend Mary Santana for bringing the power of art to our communities and establishing The Miracle Center in Illinois Three as a space where young people can explore their creative dreams and know that nothing is impossible when you dream and you have community.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mary and congratulate and commend her on this House floor.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SERGEANT BENJAMIN N. PENNINGTON

(Mr. CRANK of Colorado was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the nation in mourning the loss of Sergeant Benjamin N. Pennington, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 1st Space Brigade in my district at Fort Carson in Colorado Springs.

A Kentucky native, Benjamin had the drive to serve instilled in him from a young age. Even as a kid, he knew he wanted to be an American soldier. Here beside me is one of his drawings he made in kindergarten where he wrote: "I love America because I want to fight for my country," at 5 years old. He

would even spend all day outside playing Army man with his friends and with his neighbors, dreaming of the day he would be able to wear a uniform. He enjoyed watching the Military Channel and reading books about the military. Even his childhood bedroom was decorated with Army prints and military planes hanging from the ceiling.

As a teenager, Benjamin enjoyed playing sports, but he dedicated most of his time to Boy Scouts, later proving his dedication to serving by achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

In growing up, many of his teachers recognized all the qualities of an American hero. With his determination, his compassion, and his natural charismatic demeanor, no act of service was ever too small.

In 2017, at age 18, just one month after graduating high school and his Eagle Scout ceremony, Benjamin enlisted in the United States Army as a supply unit specialist, where he quickly earned the trust of his colleagues and senior officials.

He spent much of his career stationed at Fort Polk in Louisiana, and he served a tour in Korea before ultimately being stationed at Fort Carson. While there, Benjamin fell in love with the beauty of the nature and the mountains of Colorado Springs. It was there that he also found the comfort of home in church, giving his life to Christ through baptism in January of this year.

While talking to Benjamin's father, Tim, a great man, he told me that Benjamin enjoyed going to Major League Baseball games and had the goal to see a game at every MLB stadium.

Benjamin was deployed in support of Operation Epic Fury, answering the call to defend our freedoms from those who sought to harm our country. Tragically, on March 8, Benjamin was only 26 years young when he gave the ultimate sacrifice, succumbing to his injuries during an enemy attack at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia. His sacrifice is a grave and sobering reminder of the dangers our men and women in uniform face in the Middle East and across the globe to defend our Nation and our freedoms.

During Benjamin's time in service, he earned many honors, including the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Army Commendation Medal. In recognition of his true bravery and his true sacrifice, the United States Army has announced that he will be posthumously promoted to the rank of staff sergeant, an enduring testament to the courage and sacrifice to our Nation that will not be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Sergeant Pennington's noble sacrifice.

THE WAR IN IRAN

(Mr. DOGGETT of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, before departing the Capitol last week, I stood at this very spot with Democratic and Republican colleagues, three separate times, to honor, with moments of silence, American servicemembers who have fallen in Trump's reckless war in Iran. If congressional Republicans continue to remain silent, the only result will be more of those ceremonies and more deaths of innocents like the 168 children and teachers who were killed by a U.S. bomb.

An arrogant Hegseth dismisses all of this with a shrug as "bad things happen." To Trump, he sees it as a fundraising opportunity as he solicits money using the pictures of these fallen heroes.

But for the families who lost a father, a son, or a daughter, a spouse, it means an empty seat at Thanksgiving. It means a bride walking unaccompanied down the aisle. It means an untouched pillow on the bed. It means years of grief without the good advice, the laughter, the hope, and the bear hug that will never come.

While Iran certainly has a tyrannical regime that has murdered thousands of its own citizens and in prior years was responsible for the deaths of some Americans, Iran posed no imminent or immediate threat at the time President Trump chose to suddenly abandon negotiations and launch an assault. Republicans are rubber-stamping a war that lacks any plan or any set goal. More than 200 American servicemembers have already been wounded, and Trump is certainly not dispatching more ground troops to the area for the sunshine.

We are now in week 4 of what he told us was a 4- to 5-week war. All we have to show for it is death and destruction, a depleted weapons supply, soaring gas prices, and an Iranian regime that is intact and more hardline than ever.

Israeli officials have advised that any Iranian protestors will be "slaughtered" by a brutal regime that is "not cracking." What is much worse about this is that Trump knew. He was told by close advisers that this would be the outcome before this war began. As one said: "It wasn't just predictable, it was predicted."

Instead of acknowledging this complete failure, Trump continues to endanger all of us. Now, he is submitting to this Congress a bill for American taxpayers of \$200 billion. Let's face it, Iran has grabbed Trump by the Hormuz, with no path out of a quagmire that could be like Iraq where we lost 4,400 servicemembers and wasted over \$2 trillion.

With Trump's \$200 billion bill, about 22 million Americans could have affordable access to healthcare, not just this year, but with restored tax credits for the next 7 years. Our veterans, 9 million veterans could get their VA healthcare paid for for the next 2 years. With \$200 billion, we could double the National Institutes of Health budget to explore research for Alzheimer's and

other dreaded diseases. We could fully fund Pell grants and educational opportunities for 7 million Americans over the next 7 years, actions that could have been taken here at home, but Trump yielded to pressure from abroad.

We know that under Trump it is Netanyahu first and Americans second. Too weak to prevent this war by saying no to him, he continues to blindly follow strongmen. Amazingly, when Trump is told that war criminal Vladimir Putin is helping Iran target American servicemembers, he shrugs it off. He is so desperate that he has now not only lifted sanctions on Russian oil, fueling the Russian war machine to attack innocents in Ukraine, he has actually removed sanctions on Iranian oil to fund the Iranian Government and the missiles that they continue to send our way.

While Trump declares himself the “acting president of Venezuela” and says that he can do “anything I want” to Cuba, while one of his many lies contradicts the next one, he really believes that he is not just king of America, but king of the universe. Yet, it is Americans that will pay the very severe price for his gigantic ego and constant whims that embark us in danger around the globe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

RECOGNIZING WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY'S ROAR PROGRAM

(Mr. BAUMGARTNER of Washington was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, on March 21, we celebrated World Down Syndrome Day. Today, I rise to honor a program that reflects that spirit of inclusion—Washington State University's ROAR program—and to celebrate one of its newest admitted students, Cole Rodgers.

Cole has a dream shared by many young people: to go to college, study alongside great students, and cheer on the Cougs. He is energetic, kind, and passionate about serving others, and he brings a love of music, basketball, and Cougar sports wherever he goes. He hopes to study communications and government affairs, build his public-speaking skills, and explore career paths that will help him live independently.

WSU ROAR makes those dreams possible. As part of a federally-supported initiative under the model Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities, otherwise known as TPSID, ROAR reflects a proven model being implemented successfully on campuses across the country.

The program provides inclusive coursework, on-campus living, hands-on internships, and real preparation for life after college, opening doors for students with intellectual and develop-

mental disabilities to learn, grow, and thrive. Just last week, ROAR received a \$2.48 million Federal grant, funding I was proud to help secure.

WSU ROAR opens up doors for students like Cole and other students across campus to develop the skills and experience needed to contribute meaningfully to our communities and economy.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of Cougar Nation, I know what it means personally to be a Cougar. Cole is a Cougar, too, and programs like WSU ROAR ensure that every student with a dream has a chance to pursue it.

CONGRATULATING SERGEANT MIKE SWIM

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sergeant Mike Swim of Stevens County on his well-earned retirement after 29 years with the Stevens County Sheriff's Department.

Sergeant Swim has spent his entire life in service, from Explorers Search and Rescue at age 12, to the U.S. Navy, to nearly three decades protecting the community he loves.

His courage was tested on September 27, 2017, when a suspect fired nine rounds into his patrol vehicle at point-blank range. Miraculously, he survived. The bullet-ridden door he keeps in his garage is a powerful reminder of both the blessings and the dangers that law enforcement faces every day.

Even in retirement, Sergeant Swim will continue serving as a special deputy, assisting with crime scenes, cold cases, and emergency response.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Sergeant Swim for his extraordinary dedication and wish him the very best in his next chapter.

CONGRATULATING GONZAGA BULLDOGS AND UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO VANDALS BASKETBALL TEAMS

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Gonzaga Bulldogs and the University of Idaho Vandals, both men's and women's basketball teams, for outstanding seasons. It has been incredible to watch them bring true determination and passion to the court.

Like many young people who grew up in the Inland Northwest and on the Palouse, I followed all of our local sports teams, including the Cougs, the Zags, the Eags, the Vandals, and the Whitworth sports teams.

This year, the Zags and Vandals gave us plenty to cheer about. The Gonzaga men's team showed their relentless Bulldog spirit, powering through the season with a 31-4 record and a WCC championship. The Gonzaga women's team delivered a thrilling season of their own, finishing 24-10 and capturing their 11th WCC championship title.

I also recognize the Vandals men's team for an impressive 21-15 season that kept fans on their feet and their appearance in the NCAA Tournament. Finally, I recognize the Vandals women's team that lit up the court with a phenomenal 29-6 record, earning their first NCAA Tournament appearance

since 2016, capped by a huge 60-57 win over rival Montana State.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate all of these teams for an electric season and their truly remarkable performance. Go Zags. Go Vandals. All of the fans of the Inland Northwest should never forget how spoiled they are with all of our wonderful teams.

□ 1030

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the Member from Delaware (Representative MCBRIDE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCBRIDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend and pastor, the Reverend Dr. Gregory Knox Jones, and to congratulate him on his retirement after 22 years leading Westminster Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Delaware.

I have had the pleasure of seeing Reverend Jones' ministry up close, as a lifelong member of Westminster where I have been witness to a community shaped by his dynamic leadership, incisive mind, eloquent sermons, and his big heart.

Since joining Westminster in 2004, Reverend Jones has led with compassion, putting his faith into action time and time again. He has tirelessly centered peace and justice in his ministry both here in the United States and around the world from Central America to the Middle East.

Throughout his ministry, he has followed the example of Christ by welcoming the stranger and building bridges with those too often cast into the shadows of society. At a time of deepening divisions, he has fostered interfaith relationships and partnerships across Delaware's Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities.

His tireless devotion to his neighbors is matched only by his faithful counsel of our Westminster community, supporting congregants and their families through love and loss—a privilege he has delivered with exceptional care and grace. My own family and I are eternally grateful for his guidance and support through the challenges we have faced in our own lives.

While he has served as pastor to a First Lady and a U.S. Senator, Reverend Jones has been there personally and professionally for all of God's children, no matter who they are, where they come from, how they look, or whom they love. As Westminster enters its 140th year, Reverend Jones' impact is deep, and his example is profound.

I thank Reverend Jones and Camila for their remarkable stewardship of Westminster, and I wish them all the best in their next chapter.

I congratulate Greg on a well-deserved retirement.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Ms. MCBRIDE. Mr. Speaker, this week marks 16 years since the Affordable Care Act became the law of the land. And for millions of Americans,