

his ceremony and present him with a congressional commendation as well.

We congratulate Bob. This year, his high school education is complete.

Veterans like Bob continue to inspire those in southern Ohio and the whole Nation through outstanding courage, deep patriotism, and remarkable selflessness. It is heroes like him that preserve our Nation's values and the freedoms that we hold so dear.

We thank Bob for his service.

RECOGNIZING COACH CHRIS VEIDT'S 500TH CAREER WIN

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the White Oak High School's head baseball coach Chris Veidt for his 500th career win this year.

As a long-standing head coach of 35 years, Coach Veidt has made his mark not only on the diamond but throughout Highland County as well.

Buckeye baseball has always been in Coach Veidt's blood. After graduating from Logan High School in 1982, he played competitively at the University of Rio Grande and Wilmington College, where he ultimately earned a degree in physical education. He went on to obtain a master's in health and sports science from the University of Dayton. Go Fliers.

Afterward, he applied his extensive knowledge as an assistant coach for the Wilmington baseball team, helping the Quakers clinch the State championship in 1989.

Over the course of his coaching career, Coach Veidt has earned five SHAC Coach of the Year Awards, nine Southeast District Coach of the Year honors, multiple State and regional recognitions, and was inducted into the Ohio High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2024. He earned a place in the Southeast District Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2014, and has served as an OHSBCA State Poll voter since 1993. To top it all off, Coach Veidt was awarded the OHSAA Sportsmanship, Ethics, and Integrity Award at the end of the 2026 season.

It is devoted figures like Coach Veidt whose impact stretches far beyond the baseball field and into the lives of their players, their families, and their communities.

The mentorship, leadership, and commitment he has demonstrated toward hundreds of student-athletes has developed the next generation of leaders. He has cheered his players on for nearly four decades, and now Ohio is rooting for him.

I congratulate Coach Veidt on a storied career and 500 wins.

RECOGNIZING DR. JOHN SEIDENSTICKER

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding southern Ohioan who has served thousands of Chillicothe families for nearly six decades, Dr. John Seidensticker.

Following in his grandfather's footsteps, John attended medical school and started working in internal medicine at the Chillicothe Hospital in 1967. After gaining experience, he moved

over to endocrinology, which he ultimately specialized in.

Over the decades of practicing medicine, John served multiple generations of Buckeye families and witnessed firsthand how advancing technologies changed the medical field.

When the Chillicothe Hospital became Adena Health in the late 1990s, John was instrumental in creating their hospice program after seeing a need for additional care in our local aging population. John took pride in getting to know his patients over the years and became well known in the community for his genuine concern and excellent care.

This year marks his retirement after an incredible 59 years of practicing medicine. John shared that he loves his work and will find it challenging to step back into this new season but is looking forward to spending time in his home workshop making canes and walking sticks. Even in his retirement, he will be contributing in a new way to help people meet their community's needs.

I thank Dr. Seidensticker for his tremendous dedication to our community and congratulate him on his retirement. It is because of outstanding health care providers like him that generations of southern Ohio families are able to live healthier and more prosperous lives.

HONORING CHRISTOPHER DOYLE MATTHEWS

(Mr. KEATING of Massachusetts was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Christopher Doyle Matthews, a friend and longtime member of my staff. We were devastated to have learned just a few weeks ago of his passing.

Chris was born in Boston on December 15, 1989, to Richard and Mary-Ellen Matthews and was proudly raised in Scituate, Massachusetts. He grew up loving boats and the water, his parents' classic rock and roll music, and politics.

When columnist Mary McGrory famously observed that "every baby born in Massachusetts is born with a campaign manager's gene," she could have very well been inspired by Chris.

With political instincts that were second to none, Chris was a go-to organizer in Massachusetts politics. He was, without question, one of the Commonwealth's sharpest political minds, a true generational talent.

□ 1030

Even at a young age, there are not many candidates from the South Shore of Massachusetts who did not seek out Chris' help or his opinion. He served as the chair of the South Shore Democratic Caucus, and as a Democratic leader with the Massachusetts State Committee, the Plymouth County League, and several South Shore town

committees in Massachusetts. Candidates and voters alike trusted Chris because of his belief that government can change people's lives for the better.

Chris' untimely and sudden death has sent shock waves through our congressional family. He served in various positions with us for a decade and a half. He started as a 20-year-old volunteer on my first campaign for Congress and, over time, moved to be my district outreach and communications director when he passed away suddenly and untimely at the age of 36.

At a time in America when some have doubts and when hope can seem remote, remember Chris Matthews if you ever begin to lose faith in this country.

Remember that Chris was more than a congressional aide. He took the belief that through our actions, we can all bring forth needed change, and he brought it with him through many interstate bus rides to canvass distant pivotal States and to the doors of the families he inspired.

Remember through his example that public service is a genuinely noble vocation. As a trusted member of our office, he helped countless veterans, families, and those who could not advocate for themselves.

Remember his laugh and his wry, often biting, humor, insightfully contrasting the way things are to the way things should be. Remember his authentic belief that in this country, people can bring about progress and meaningful change. It was real to him, and his sincerity shone through.

I imagine if Chris wanted us to remember anything, it would be that he was a loving partner and father figure to Molly and Eli, that he was a compassionate and reliable son and brother, and that he was the most steadfast of loyal friends.

Though we wish we had more time with him, his memory will continue to give us faith that one person can significantly make better the lives of all those around him, and all of us in our office certainly know this to be true.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have known Chris Matthews and to honor his life. I ask my colleagues to join with me in recognizing his commitment to this institution and to the people of Massachusetts. May his memory be a blessing.

RECOGNIZING PAMELA IRVINE

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

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary Virginian whose life has been defined by service to others. After 45 years of leadership, Pam Irvine is retiring as president and CEO of Feeding Southwestern Virginia.

When Ms. Irvine founded the organization in 1981, it began with little more than a vision—and even the food bank's first truck caught fire on the road. Undeterred, she persevered, building

one of the Commonwealth's leading hunger relief organizations.

Under her leadership, Feeding South-west Virginia has grown from distributing 1 million pounds of food annually to more than 20 million pounds, serving 26 counties and 9 cities, and helping more than 127,000 neighbors each month.

Guided by compassion, faith, and an unwavering belief that no one should go hungry, Pam Irvine has transformed the fight against hunger throughout southwest Virginia.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Virginia's Sixth Congressional District, I thank Pamela Irvine for her extraordinary service, congratulate her on an exceptional career, and wish her every happiness in her well-deserved retirement.

RECOGNIZING LURAY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Luray Fire Department of Luray, Virginia, as it marks an extraordinary milestone: 125 years of dedicated service to the people of Luray and Page County.

Founded in 1901 and chartered in 1933, the Luray Fire Department has stood as a proud, all-volunteer, and nonprofit organization with the goal of protecting the lives and property of so many for over a century. From its early days when the department attended its first State Firefighters Convention in Staunton and a year later sent its first reel team to a State contest in Portsmouth, the department has remained the cornerstone of community safety and pride.

With a membership of nearly 100 volunteers, the LFD has celebrated many milestones and accomplishments since then, and it continues to strengthen community ties through annual traditions such as the concert and ceremony held on September 11 as well as its raffle and fundraiser held on September 12.

Today, we honor the men and women, past and present, whose selfless service reflects the very best of our Commonwealth. Join me in celebrating the strong and brave Luray Fire Department on 125 years of steadfast commitment to not only their community but to the Nation.

PROVIDING CERTAINTY FOR AMERICA

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the passage of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2027 out of the Budget Committee last week.

Congress' primary responsibility is to defend the American people and preserve the strength of our Nation, and this resolution reflects that duty. It invests in our warfighters; supports our ranchers, farmers, and producers; and secures the integrity of our voting systems with the SAVE America Act.

For rural districts like Virginia's Sixth, this resolution delivers real support and stability for our farmers. It empowers our national defense, stands behind our warfighters, secures our food supply, and ensures American elections are decided only by American citizens.

This budget reflects a commitment to responsible governance while restoring the faith and confidence of voters in our election system.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution reflects a vision of a stronger, safer, and more prosperous America. It demonstrates our commitment to defending our Nation, supporting the American people, and governing with responsibility. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution this week and join us in advancing policies that strengthen our country for generations to come.

CONSIDER NEW APPROACH TO CUBA

(Mr. MCGOVERN of Massachusetts was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about United States policy toward Cuba, or rather our lack of a coherent policy and our decades-long failure to help the people of Cuba.

Cuba is our neighbor. We have lived side by side for centuries. Our histories are intertwined. Our futures are, too.

Almost 10 million people live on the island of Cuba. They go to school and work, raise families and go about their lives, and crave freedom and justice, but the people of Cuba struggle to realize their aspirations.

The Cuban Government deprives the people from enjoying their civil and political rights. Freedom of expression and assembly are severely curtailed. The recent release of 2,000 prisoners was welcome, as is the recent release of Luis Manuel Otero Alcantara, a political prisoner in the Defending Freedoms Project of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, but over 700 prisoners of conscience remain behind bars, according to Human Rights Watch.

Yet, for all the abuse of the Cuban people by the Cuban Government, so too has the United States deprived the Cuban people of enjoying their economic and social rights. The crushing U.S. embargo has stunted their economic development and caused immense hardship. These U.S. policies are human rights violations.

America's cruel and illegal blockade is creating a severe humanitarian crisis, denying energy imports, which the Cuban people depend on for their healthcare, food distribution, and livelihood.

Cubans recently experienced the eighth collapse of their power grid since October 2024. Some 3 million Cubans experience water shortages every single day, and the U.N. reports that infant mortality has doubled to 9.9 per 1,000 births. Childhood cancer survival rates have fallen from 85 to 65 percent. Supplies of essential medicines are only 30 percent of normal.

What we are witnessing in Cuba, as some have characterized it, is basically Gaza in slow motion: man-made starvation with the help and complicity of the United States of America.

Meanwhile, arrogant politicians in Washington tell Cubans on the island that they must suffer violations of their economic and social rights as the only way to restore their civil and political rights. This is an insult to their dignity, and it is wrong.

The six-decade embargo has been a miserable failure. Over and over we see that it does not work. It only emboldens hard-liners and makes things worse for regular people.

Now, we hear that the administration is plotting military action against Cuba. This would be horrible, wasteful, inhumane, and illegal.

Cuba is not doing anything that would legitimize a war. Congress has approved no declaration of war, no Authorization for Use of Military Force. Military action against Cuba would make America a rogue State, aligning us with Russia, China, Iran, and others that believe that international rules don't matter.

If we want to know why invading Cuba would be such a disaster, look no further than Venezuela. Meet the new boss; same as the old boss. The Venezuelan people still have no democracy or human rights, while listening to Marco Rubio lecture them with empty promises about freedom and self-determination. Their economy was still in shambles even before the earthquake.

Trump and Rubio are pals with the new President. The U.S. has immense leverage, but we are not using it to restore democracy, improve human rights, or fight hunger. The security apparatus remains in place. Political prisoners remain in jail. Oil revenues go to the elites.

The people of Venezuela deserve better, and the people of Cuba do not deserve to be screwed over in the same undignified and illegal manner.

Cubans deserve to shape their own future, not have it selected for them by arrogant politicians in Washington.

There is a better way. Ten years ago, the U.S. tried a better approach. We tried diplomacy. We tried engagement. We tried talking to each other, working through our differences, and guess what. It started working.

American tourists went to Cuba. We dropped barriers. We opened up relations. Things started getting better for the Cuban people, and there was hope that some day they could shape their own future.

My U.S.-Cuba Trade Act, H.R. 7521, would reverse our decades of failed policies toward Cuba. It would repeal the statutory basis of the embargo. It would give us tools to work with the Cuban people on economic and political progress. It would ensure that Americans and Cubans can be good neighbors.

We must chart a shared path to the future, built not on fear and threats or marked by invasion and blockade. The future we must build is one of good will and diplomacy, reinforced by trade and exchange.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to consider a new approach to Cuba. It is