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THE TRUE DRIVERS OF MINNESOTA'S ECONOMY

(Mr. EMMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate three small businesses in Elk River, Minnesota, who have been recognized by the Elk River Chamber of Commerce for their outstanding track record over the past year.

I want to congratulate the First National Bank for being named Business of the Year, Serrano Brothers Catering for being recognized as the New Business of the Year, and Sportech for being honored as the Employer of the Year.

Small businesses are a huge driver of our economy in the State of Minnesota, and they are what make each city and town unique. Running a small business is no easy task, and the entrepreneurs who open these businesses take a personal risk to bring jobs, commerce, and excellent products and services to our communities.

We cannot thank them enough for their valuable contribution, which is why I am proud today to thank and congratulate First National Bank, Serrano Brothers Catering, and Sportech for everything they do for our community and for the great State of Minnesota.

CONGRATULATING BISHOP O'DOWD AND McClymonds ON FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me first say how happy I am today to acknowledge the extraordinary accomplishments of two high school football teams in my beautiful congressional district. Until now, Oakland, California, never held a State championship, but now we have two. On December 17, Bishop O'Dowd clinched the CIF State Division 5-AA Championship. They beat Valley View High School 43-24, with former Oakland Raiders running back Coach Napoleon Kaufman leading them to victory. The same day, McClymonds' Warriors claimed the CIF State 5-A Championship with a 20-17 victory, becoming the first Oakland Athletic League team to win a State championship.

McClymonds is a public historic high school in the West Oakland community of my district. Coach Michael Peters has coached McClymonds since 1992 and has shown his commitment over the years to ensuring his athletes succeed both on the field and in the classroom.

Bishop O'Dowd, a Catholic high school, has been an athletic force for years, and I am so proud of their team. They have achieved the historic accomplishment of their championship also.

These young athletes have embodied the spirit, the passion, and the sportsmanship of Oakland and the entire East Bay. Please join me in congratulating them on these championships.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

(Mr. HULTGREN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, during Human Trafficking Awareness Month, I rise in support of the 21 million men, women, and children worldwide who are victims of this insidious enterprise. Human trafficking is nothing less than modern-day slavery. It targets society's most vulnerable, stealing their souls and depriving them of any hope to escape a downward spiral of despair.

Nations must be held accountable for their efforts to eradicate human trafficking within their borders, which is why, today, I am reintroducing the Sex Trafficking Demand Reduction Act. This legislation targets the demand for commercial sex because the evidence is clear that, where markets for commercial sex exist, human trafficking proliferates as well. The bill requires governments to take the initiative to eliminate the demand for purchase of commercial sex in their efforts to combat human trafficking overall.

As a member of the Congressional Human Trafficking Caucus, I am pleased to see Congress taking a leadership role in the fight against human trafficking. We are getting closer to the day when human trafficking will no longer represent a blight on humanity and we will see victims and survivors created in God's image fully restored.

RECOGNIZING FRANK B. MESIAH OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, Martin Luther King Jr. Day is a time in our country to reflect on the progress that we have made on civil rights as well as how much further still as a nation we must go.

When contemplating the progress in western New York, Frank B. Mesiah immediately comes to mind. Mr. Mesiah has been a prominent civil rights leader in Buffalo since 1950, following his service in the United States Army. Following a 20-year stay as president of the Buffalo NAACP, he retired late last year and will continue to be a public watchdog, this time through the lens of an active citizen.

During his years of service, Mr. Mesiah has always been the first to stand up and fight on behalf of our community. He played a leading role in desegregating Buffalo public schools, integrating the Buffalo Police Department, and fighting against noninclusive neighborhoods.

Mr. Mesiah has been a key leader in promoting tolerance and equality in western New York. While his time as NAACP president has concluded, his wisdom and passion endures in our community, and his work will inspire generations to come.

STOP GTMO TRANSFERS

(Mrs. HARTZLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge this administration to stop releasing terrorists from Guantanamo, where they can be returned to the Middle East and rejoin the fight. Approximately one in three former Guantanamo Bay detainees are confirmed to have reengaged or are suspected of reengaging in terrorist activities after transfer.

The White House, despite clear understanding of congressional intent, recently gave four more individuals the opportunity to resume their fight against American ideals by releasing them to Saudi Arabia. This is irresponsible and dangerous.

Even more disturbing are the President's plans to transfer more detainees, further threatening the safety of our troops and the security of the American people. It is appalling to me that the President would consider transferring the likes of Osama bin Laden's security guards and others trained by al Qaeda.

I urge this administration, in its final 8 days, to bear in mind potential consequences of his decision and to halt any more transfers. The security of American families and military personnel are at stake.

LET'S NOT REPEAL THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

(Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned about the repeal of the Affordable Care Act and what it would mean for Americans struggling with debilitating diseases.

Prior to the ACA, the struggle of a debilitating illness like Alzheimer's or cancer could be compounded because of the financial burden from lack of affordable health care. Imagine being denied necessary health care because you or a loved one suffered from a pre-existing condition. These are the concerns that I am hearing from constituents across the Granite State.

Take Sally from West Chesterfield. Her daughter has Crohn's disease, and she is on their family plan because she is under age 26. She will always need access to health care because of her condition, and if the Affordable Care Act is repealed and not replaced, she could lose coverage because of her pre-existing condition. These concerns are all too commonplace.

I agree the ACA is not perfect, and I am committed to working in a bipartisan way to ensure the law will work