

Irene Molloy, for her artistic accomplishments both in Hollywood and in our home of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

This week, Irene will begin a new path in her illustrious career, as she will make her debut as director of the Bucks County Center for Performing Arts' rendition of "The Fantasticks." This production of the 1960s musical will take place at Delaware Valley University in Doylestown Township.

A native of Chalfont and a graduate of Archbishop Wood Catholic High School, Irene had worked both on Broadway and in Los Angeles before founding the firm Radiant Bloom Productions.

I applaud Irene for using her artistic talents to make Bucks County a more vibrant place.

I would also like to recognize Howard Perloff of Carversville, the founder and artistic director of the Bucks County Center for the Performing Arts for his contributions to our community and those where he has produced a multitude of plays over a decades-long career.

SUPPORT AMIGOS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join me in fostering increased investment in the United States economy by one of our oldest allies, Portugal. As a co-chair of the Congressional Portuguese Caucus, I am proud to join Congressmen CICILLINE and VALADAO in leading the AMIGOS Act, which we introduced earlier this spring.

Earlier this month, Senators WHITEHOUSE and HATCH introduced the companion measure of the AMIGOS Act in the United States Senate. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would make Portuguese citizens eligible for specific visas that allow them to enter the United States to conduct substantial trade or to invest a substantial amount of capital. We do this with other nations. This will spur investment in our economy, and it helps create jobs.

In 2015 alone, trade between Portugal and the United States reached \$4.2 billion, and it is only growing. The AMIGOS Act will strengthen this reciprocal economic relationship, one of our longest and strongest allies.

Strengthening relationships that benefit both countries is the best way to grow the economy and to increase the number of jobs in the long term, not trade tariffs.

We have extended these visas before. In 2012, Congress granted, most recently, eligibility to Israel.

Our friendship with Portugal and the contributions of hardworking Portuguese immigrants in America are an important part of our country's history and heritage. Portugal was one of the first countries to recognize the United

States after we declared our independence, and Portugal joined us in being a founding member of NATO.

The AMIGOS Act is commonsense, bipartisan, and bicameral. It is the type of trade policy we should be leading, not engaging in trade wars. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the AMIGOS Act and working together for strong and stable investment in America's economy and American jobs.

With bipartisan efforts in the House and in the Senate, these are the kinds of things that we can do, and I am hopeful that this legislation will be enacted into law before the end of the year.

IMMIGRANT HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Immigrant Heritage Month.

At a time when heinous action is being taken in the name of securing our borders—and we must secure our borders—I stand here to call on every one of my colleagues in Washington, local leaders across the United States, and individual Americans and their families. I call on all of us to come together and remember we are a Nation of immigrants, immigrants past and immigrants present.

For more than 250 years, immigrants have made our country what it is today. Every generation of immigrants contributes new ideas, fresh energy, and vibrant culture to our Nation that makes up this mosaic web of an incredible place we call America.

I grew up in California's San Joaquin Valley, which I have the honor and privilege to represent. Our valley is a rich combination of people whose families have come from all over the world. It is part of this fabric, this mosaic, I talk about. They have made California and our Nation what it is today through hard work, family values, and lasting contributions in so many different ways: the agriculture economy, businesses, education, and healthcare systems.

Their story is our story. It is the story of achieving the American Dream. The American Dream lives on. It lives on in all of us.

Last week, I met with a group of students from my district on the Capitol steps, many of whom are children from immigrant families. These young people came to Washington to learn about our government and how to make a difference. They are our future leaders in the next generation who want to achieve this American Dream.

At a time, Mr. Speaker, when children and Dreamers are being leveraged to ram shortsighted and ineffective immigration reform through Congress, let us pause. Let's step back. Let's think about what our country stands for, our common bonds and our values. I call on all of us to come together to reflect that.

Let us commemorate American Heritage Month with something real. The Fourth of July is next week. We celebrate our country. We come together in

a patriotic fashion, remembering what has made America great. Part of what has made America great is generations of folks coming from all over the world, wanting to live this dream.

We must reject that immigration policy being forced through the Congress, and we must come together to fix our broken immigration system with real, bipartisan reform that provides long-term solutions while respecting the dignity and humanity of all people who are part of this American Dream.

As we celebrate the Fourth of July next week, let us never forget that our common values and our bonds are far stronger than whatever differences we may have.

LAMPETER-STRASBURG SOFTBALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of the Lampeter-Strasburg High School women's softball team located in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, that recently reached the pinnacle of its sport by winning the State championship. I am especially proud, Mr. Speaker, of this win because this is the school in my home school district where my family and I reside.

The Lampeter-Strasburg Pioneers beat West Allegheny on Thursday, June 14, to claim its first-ever PIAA 5A softball State championship. After losing by a slim margin 2 years ago, the Pioneers overcame adversity and returned to the State finals this year to win 6-2. The team's 14-3 win over Donegal—which won last year's 5A State championship title—in the Lancaster-Lebanon section 3 playoff is further evidence of its success during the postseason.

I spoke to Coach Gene Charles last night by phone. He credited the victory to the team's clutch hitting and key defensive stops later in the game. Coach Charles has coached at Lampeter-Strasburg for more than 20 years, building an extensive network of active alumni who frequently travel to games with his family.

We are lucky to have leaders and mentors in our district like Coach Charles who inspire our student athletes to strive for success and to learn from failure.

Junior Brynne Baker also pitched a noteworthy game, holding the opposing team to just one earned run. In her postgame interview, Baker said this was a huge win for the team, especially the graduating seniors, and a proud moment for the Lancaster-based community.

Congratulations to all the players, coaches, their families, and all those who made this championship for Lampeter-Strasburg possible. Your community is proud of you and will continue rooting for you season after season.

MASS TRANSIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, there is a recent article in The New York Times about the Koch brothers and its stealth campaign to try to attack mass transit projects around the country. It was disturbing on several levels.

First and foremost, it is misguided in terms of the economic impact. Mr. Speaker, it is clear that there is \$4 of economic activity generated for every \$1 that is invested in transit. It increases business sales, and it results in higher real estate values and jobs created.

It is important to note that, right now, we have a road system that is heavily subsidized by the general fund. The road user charge has long since failed to pay for it. We have had to transfer \$140 billion just to keep the failing Surface Transportation Program afloat.

The Koch brothers argue, through their organization, that American cities really don't have the population density to support mass transit systems. That is false. It is clear that there are some very dense systems serving Chicago and New York, but there are very successful programs in Phoenix and Houston with much lower density that are providing essential services.

It is important to remember who gets that service, because transit is much less expensive for men and women to be able to have access to jobs and employment. The average vehicle costs almost \$10,000 a year to operate. In most families, it is the number two item in the family budget after housing. For many poor people, transportation is actually ahead of housing.

Transit provides access to jobs, so that people don't have to spend 42 hours a year trapped in traffic behind the wheel of a vehicle, as happens on average.

The notion that somehow we are going to be forced to look at a lack of density, well, communities across the country in the metropolitan areas are getting more and more dense. They are attracting young people, retired people, and more economic activity in the 49 largest metropolitan areas around the country. In those areas, transit is the most cost effective and environmentally sensitive way of providing that service, to say nothing of the fact that we kill almost 40,000 people a year on our roadways. Transit is amazingly safe by comparison.

One of the most disingenuous arguments is that transportation programs for mass transit are bad because they promote gentrification of our cities. Look at that argument for a moment. One of the things that is happening in cities across the country is that there is a new urban renaissance. Young millennials are moving back to the cit-

ies. Those are the engines of the economy. Aging baby boomers are finding it much more attractive to move into those urban cores than to be isolated out in the suburbs with a large-lot subdivision and forcing people to burn a gallon of gas to buy a gallon of milk.

Those urban areas are our future. Not everybody is going to do it, but the majority of people are. We ought to be investing in transportation systems for our future, not undermining them by limiting investments to transportation of the past.

We are in the process of a rapid revolution in transportation technology and people's approaches. More and more young people, actually, are choosing not to buy a car, which sits idle about 22½ hours a day and is very expensive. They are instead choosing transit, ride-share, bike-share, and being able to have transportation when they need it—Lyft and Uber—without having an anchor of an individual car bearing down on them.

Frankly, gentrification is a function of how we plan and develop our cities. That ought to be an invitation to think about how to do it better, as many cities are doing now, not to undermine progress by assailing transit.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMUCKER). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it has been more than a year since the House of Representatives unanimously approved the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act.

I am proud to see that, this week, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will consider career and technical education legislation. It is welcome news that this important topic will be examined by our congressional colleagues in the United States Senate. Career and technical education, or CTE, has helped countless men and women acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the workforce.

By empowering State and local leaders, improving alignment with in-demand jobs, increasing transparency and accountability, and ensuring a limited Federal role, we can modernize and strengthen career and technical education and help more individuals build successful and fulfilling careers.

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Career and technical education can help restore rungs on the ladder of opportunity. All Americans deserve a good-paying, family-sustaining job, and they might just need some new skills to get one.

America is still facing a widening skills gap that puts our workforce at a disadvantage to succeed in a 21st century economy. Today, there are an es-

timated 6.7 million jobs that are open and available in the United States.

While companies across the country have openings for high-paying jobs, and are anxious to hire, many workers lack the skills and adequate education needed to qualify and compete for these jobs, Mr. Speaker.

We have also seen students pushed down the college-for-all pathway. That just doesn't work for some students. There are many different pathways to success and life in this country.

One of the biggest challenges facing career and technical education is the stigma associated with it. Through the years, we have seen wrongheaded claims that students involved in the trades lacked ambition. Those misplaced assumptions are slowly subsiding, but not soon enough.

CTE has established itself as a path that many high-achieving students choose in pursuit of industry certifications and hands-on skills they can use right out of high school, in skills-based education programs or in college.

By modernizing the Federal investment in career and technical education programs, we will be able to connect more educators with industry stakeholders and close the skills gap in this country. There are good jobs out there, but people need to be qualified to get them.

I remain dedicated to working with my colleagues in the Senate on this effort. All education is career education and every American deserves a fair shot at learning the right skills to obtain a good-paying job.

WARRIORS TO WASHINGTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Warriors to Washington, a praiseworthy nonprofit organization from Erie County, Pennsylvania.

Founded in 2013, Warriors to Washington was created to honor veterans from the northwest Pennsylvania region who were deployed and served our Nation in the Armed Forces as a result of the attacks on 9/11 by taking them to historical and national sites in Washington, D.C.

Warriors to Washington raises money to fund an annual trip to Washington, D.C., by which post-9/11 veterans are treated to an all-expense-paid experience, which includes visits to Arlington National Cemetery, the Vietnam Memorial, the World War II Memorial, the Flight 93 Memorial Park, and many other sites of national significance.

Warriors to Washington focuses on camaraderie and connection, while providing all attendees with a rewarding experience. The founder and president of Warriors to Washington, Joe Pfadt, believes it is important to give this opportunity to those who enlist and risk everything for our freedom.