

home healthcare providers, massage therapists, and acupuncturists.

I have personally met with these local providers to hear their stories, and I have convened meetings of affected stakeholders in New Hampshire and here in Washington.

Here is the bottom line: Without real progress, the MISSION Act will never fulfill its promise, and care for our veterans will be compromised.

Last week, at a hearing of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I received a promise from Secretary Wilkie that the VA will take immediate action to fix these persistent payment issues for community providers in New Hampshire and across the country. We have to hold the VA to this commitment.

My office is bringing VA leaders, veterans, providers, and third-party administrators to the table to solve these problems once and for all.

When our veterans return home, they shouldn't have to fight to receive the care that they have earned, and local providers shouldn't have to fight a stubborn bureaucracy just to get their bills paid, to keep their doors open, and to continue treating our veterans.

We can and must do better on this front.

EMPOWERING PARENTS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Mr. PAPPAS. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about empowering parents in New Hampshire to develop the skills they need to pursue the American Dream.

No parent should have to choose between caring for a child and providing a better life for their families.

That is why I am introducing the American Job Centers Family Accessibility Act, which will create a competitive grant program for job centers to provide access to childcare for individuals receiving services at their centers.

In 2018, more than 5.4 million unemployed workers, including more than 500,000 veterans, took advantage of career services at job centers in their communities. But despite clear evidence that job centers are effective, barriers to access for jobseekers still remain.

In New Hampshire, State officials tell me that the number one obstacle to job training is access to childcare. No one who works hard and wants to develop new skills should be denied that opportunity simply because they can't find quality, affordable childcare for their kids.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the American Job Centers Family Accessibility Act so that working mothers and fathers aren't unfairly denied the chance to earn a better job and a better life for their families.

CONGRATULATING STACIE KONVICKA

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

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to congratulate Mrs. Stacie

Konvicka, who was this year's recipient of the Educator of the Year Award from the Wharton County Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture.

This award is given to a teacher who exemplifies professionalism, dedication, leadership, and enthusiasm.

Mrs. Konvicka is a fourth grade math and science teacher at Wharton Elementary School.

Having been a teacher for 22 years, she has learned the value of going above and beyond for her students in the classroom.

Wharton Elementary School is a title I campus, which means over 90 percent of the students come from economically disadvantaged homes.

Mrs. Konvicka invests so much into her students. At the end of the day, she wants to ensure that they feel cared for.

Many have benefited from her high-quality instruction as they are pushed to do their best.

American ragtime composer Scott Hayden once said: "Teachers have three loves: the love of learning, the love of learners, and the love of bringing the first two loves together."

Mrs. Stacie Konvicka has these three loves, and we, as south Texans, are thankful for her service in lovingly shaping the minds of future generations.

REMEMBERING MARIE JORDAN SPEER

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Marie Jordan Speer, who passed away at 98 years of age in Corpus Christi, Texas, on October 19, 2019.

Marie's kindness and compassion touched the lives of those around her, and through her various achievements, she served her community well.

In 1942, she married Mr. Edward Jordan, but 2 years later, he was drafted to fight in World War II and heroically, but tragically, died in combat.

Marie ultimately used her suffering and loss to help others. She founded the Gold Star Wives of America in order to comfort and create a community for other widows who had lost their husbands in the war.

The first meeting she organized was a lunch with other military widows from town. This lunch morphed into a small volunteer group, which, in time, grew into a national organization that today has 35 chapters throughout the United States.

The Gold Star Wives not only provide comfort and support for families who have lost loved ones; on Capitol Hill, they fight to secure victories for the spouses and children of fallen soldiers.

We owe these families a debt that we cannot repay. Their husbands and fathers have made the ultimate sacrifice in order to protect our country.

Today, and every day, we pray for God's peace for these families.

Marie continued to work on behalf of the Gold Star Wives, eventually settling in Corpus Christi, Texas, where she started three local newspapers and became heavily involved in the Coastal Bend community.

South Texas is a better place because of Marie. Her life truly is a testament to the power of sacrificial love, determination, and compassion.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Marie's family for sharing Marie with our Nation. We are sorry for their loss.

LEADERS DOING GREAT JOB ON CORONAVIRUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the coronavirus.

I want to reassure folks that since we first learned about this virus, our government has been very proactive in its response.

The President took charge and assembled a task force, headed by the Vice President, that brought together the best and the brightest doctors, scientists, and health experts that our country has to offer.

The President also took the crucial step of implementing a travel ban on China to slow down the spread of the outbreak within our borders.

While our government is appropriately handling the spread of the coronavirus, our citizens can help as well.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to go to cdc.gov, follow the latest developments, and learn about easy ways that you can avoid getting sick.

America must always be ahead of the game on viral threats like these, and I am proud to say that our leaders are doing a great job.

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ESSENTIAL SUPPORT FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDE FOR COMMUNITIES

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the essential support that faith-based organizations give to the communities around them, including during times of crisis.

During Hurricane Florence, in 2018, volunteers from Samaritan's Purse were on the ground after the hurricane had devastated thousands of homes across my State.

Lorraine Jenkins, a resident of New Bern, my mother's childhood home in North Carolina, said that she "had faith but needed a little more strength" when she returned to her home to find it flooded with 18 inches of water. Thankfully, several volunteers from Samaritan's Purse were there to pray with Lorraine to give her the strength that she needed.

During Hurricane Dorian, in 2019, the Salvation Army provided over 43,000 meals, 55,000 drinks, 25,000 snacks, and 48 full cleanup kits to victims.

Mr. Speaker, faith-based organizations also provide key support services to children, many of whom are victims of the opioid crisis. This crisis has left over 92,000 children in foster care and in need of loving homes. Faith-based adoption agencies play a pivotal role in finding homes for these children.