

their liquor distillery during the COVID-19 pandemic to make hand sanitizer, to be distributed at no cost to the community. These Hometown Heroes are being recognized for utilizing their business to contribute to those in need during these trying times.

Blaum Bros. Distillery was founded in 2013 by Matt and Mike with the hope of distilling beverages they could enjoy together. Since March 2020, they have pivoted their purpose to make hand sanitizer and even have a button on their website for hand sanitizer requests. I commend them for taking action during a pandemic, when supplies are in short supply. I thank them for their kindness and generosity to the Moline community.

It is because of leaders such as Matt and Mike Blaum that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally recognize the Blaum Brothers and their Distillery for their kindness and generosity.

ONGOING PARLIAMENTARY
DIPLOMACY IN EUROPE

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. HUDSON. Madam Speaker, I wish to provide an update to my colleagues on the continuing activities of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe—the OSCE PA—during these challenging times.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic challenges the OSCE PA to find new ways to conduct its work. International relations require engagement on both a bilateral level and on multilateral levels as well. It is likely that all gatherings of the OSCE PA this year will be online, through video conferences.

For example, last week the OSCE PA held a webinar on economic security and the COVID-19 pandemic. I participated in the event and spoke specifically on energy security needs, pointing to the continuation of Russia's predatory natural gas supply practices which seek to exert geopolitical influence. Europe needs a diversified supply for its energy sources. Too much reliance on Russia for energy can lead to market distortions and encourage corrupt practices, while alternative sources increase security and benefit the average consumer.

Last week a video session was held of those parliamentarians who comprise the leadership of the OSCE PA, which includes Senator ROGER WICKER of Mississippi and myself. Guest speakers included the Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama, as well as the EU Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarcic of Slovenia. As Chairman of the First Committee, I made clear that the committee will not waver from its crucial role in defending Helsinki Principles where they are most threatened. In this regard, I noted the public statement I made last week, jointly with my fellow committee officers from the parliaments of Romania and Lithuania, on the third anniversary of the tragic death of Joseph Stone, an American working on the OSCE Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

Senator BEN CARDIN of Maryland spoke at this leadership session as the Assembly's

Special Representative on anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance. He noted that disadvantaged immigrant and minority communities are made even more vulnerable by the pandemic, and that parliamentarians have an important role in responding to this problem during states of emergency. Our colleague from New Jersey, Mr. CHRIS SMITH, also spoke in his capacity as the Special Representative of the OSCE PA on Human Trafficking Issues. He stressed how current circumstances make those vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, including children, even more vulnerable. Coronavirus and its butterfly effect have also rendered non-government organizations less effective in their mission to help trafficking victims by operating shelters, care and counseling.

To conclude Madam Speaker, I want to stress that, while we may need to focus our efforts on fighting this pandemic at home, we need to work with our partners abroad to eliminate a virus that knows no borders and from which we ultimately can never fully isolate ourselves. Working with our partners and allies across the globe is the interest of our constituents here at home. I also want to stress that the pandemic has not resolved earlier challenges but in many cases made them worse. We need the capacity to address a wide range of ongoing issues, and the OSCE PA is a valued venue for doing that on a multilateral level.

Madam Speaker, please join me today in recognizing the importance of these continued discussions with our European allies and friends.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL
TEACHER APPRECIATION MONTH

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor every teacher, administrator, employee and contractor in all San Mateo County school districts who together prepare our children to grow into educated and contributing members of our society. May is National Teacher Appreciation Month, but they deserve our gratitude and admiration every day. They rise to the occasion even under the most challenging and unprecedented conditions they are facing in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

Working in education is more than a job, it's a passion. The dedication to guide and nurture our future generations is based on selflessness and wanting to create a better world. The impact an educator has on children is profound. The philosopher Plato once said: "The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life"—wise and true words.

Who doesn't have memories of a teacher whose words and actions will stay with them for the rest of their lives? My middle school teacher at South San Francisco's Parkway, Mr. Jex, called me "chief" when he appointed me editor in chief of the school newspaper. Mr. Jex gave me confidence and a purpose. He helped determine the direction of my life . . . like all teachers do.

Educators spend countless hours and their own money to prepare students for the future.

They buy pencils, crayons, paper, snacks, toothbrushes, whatever it is the child is lacking. In the United States, we don't pay them anywhere near their value. They deserve more compensation and more recognition for the tireless and essential work they do, but it's not in the nature of teachers to give up and walk away, not even in the face of COVID-19.

The outbreak of the contagious novel coronavirus forced school and health officers to close schools on March 16th to prevent the spread of the disease. It did not shutter education, though. San Mateo County teachers, administrators, kitchen workers and custodians rose to the occasion. They created distance learning, providing students with Chromebooks and hotspots to connect in virtual classrooms. They designed innovative curricula to ensure engaging learning opportunities. Understanding the dependence of many students on breakfast and lunch, they continued to prepare and distribute meals. Striving to prevent the achievement gap from deepening, they provided additional support, tutoring and counseling for students and their families.

Facing unprecedented challenges, everyone from superintendents to principals to teachers to administrators to custodians came together and contributed. Now, everyone continues to adjust to the new reality. Schools will remain closed for the remainder of the academic year.

Madam Speaker, let us rise to acknowledge the remarkable resilience of our educators and to redouble our efforts as Members of Congress and as members of society to support them. They have our children's backs, so we must have theirs. To invoke Plato again, he said: "No man should bring children into the world who is unwilling to persevere to the end of their nature and education."

THANKING THE PEORIA MEDICAL
SOCIETY ALLIANCE FOR 80
YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PEORIA
COMMUNITY

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Peoria Medical Society Alliance (PMSA) for its 80 years of service to the Peoria community. The PMSA is a not-for-profit organization that works with the Peoria Medical Society to promote the health, the education, and the quality of life for the people of the Peoria community.

Partnered with the Peoria Medical Society, the PMSA has several committees dedicated to important causes in the community. For example, in their Adopt-A-School program they adopted Whittier Grade School to tutor kindergartners and first graders. They also host game nights and parties for senior homes, such as Heddington Oaks. PMSA even provides scholarships for students attending college in health-related fields. I commend the PMSA for its contributions to the local Peoria community and I thank them for their kindness and generosity.

It is because of leaders such as the PMSA that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally recognize the Peoria Medical Society Alliance for its great work in the Peoria community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ECO-TOURISM VESSEL EQUITY AND RELIEF ACT OF 2020

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. YOUNG. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the "Eco-tourism Vessel Equity and Relief Act of 2020." This is a bill to address and correct a regulatory mismatch of the manner in which a small passenger vessel that operates in Southeast Alaska is measured. Specifically, the M/V *Liseron* (United States official number 971339), a converted minesweeper that conducts overnight passenger cruises in the eco-tourism trade in Southeast Alaska, should be classified as the same regulatory tonnage for licensing its crew as is used for its safety inspection category, and the other vessels in the same trade.

By way of background, the motor vessel *Liseron* was built in a U.S. shipyard in Tacoma, WA, in the early 1950's as one of a class of seven minesweepers under the auspices of the U.S. Navy for the French but was subsequently reacquired by the Navy in 1955. It was constructed to navigate shallow waters of bays, coastlines, and inlets having a shallow draft, which is why it makes for the perfect vessel to operate in Southeast Alaska. Specifically, the M/V *Liseron* is 145 feet long and 28 feet wide with a draft of 8.5 feet. Later delisted by the Navy, The Boat Company in Port Orchard, WA, acquired and restored the vessel in the late 1980's. After an extensive 16-month restoration in a U.S. shipyard facility in Tarpon Springs, FL, where the vessel was gutted and refitted, this vessel was placed into service in the early 1990's as an eco-tourism vessel in Southeast Alaska. The vessel's operations have a significant economic impact in both Washington State and Alaska. The vessel is homeported in Kitsap County, Washington State, where it undergoes needed maintenance and repair locally in Pacific Northwest shipyards, and where the vessel re-provisions for the next season's sailing in Alaska. Its operations during the cruising season in Southeast Alaska bring significant job opportunities and needed economic activity in local businesses by the company and its customers. The vessel enables tourists from around the world to come and enjoy the unparalleled scenic and natural beauty that Alaska has to offer.

Operationally, the M/V *Liseron* has ten staterooms and is limited to 20 passengers. More critically, the vessel is currently inspected by the Coast Guard as a small passenger vessel in the 100 gross regulatory tonnage category. Notwithstanding that, the vessel has a larger tonnage entered on its certificate of inspection. This larger tonnage is due to the arcane nature of the U.S. vessel ad-measurement laws, rules that govern the volumetric size of vessels. Larger competitor vessels can be 238 feet in length and carry 100 passengers, i.e., nearly 100 feet longer and 5 times the number of passengers, yet they are considered to be in the smaller 100 GT small passenger vessel category for both licensing and inspection purposes.

Needless to say, the M/V *Liseron* has an equity disparity as the vessel must compete with similar or larger vessels in the eco-tour-

ism trade. While the vessel is inspected and regulated for all safety purposes in a lower tonnage category, due to the higher tonnage rating entered on its certificate of inspection, the M/V *Liseron* must source crew from seafarers with deep water credentials (i.e., 500 GT) rather than for the shallower and protected waters of Southeast Alaska. The inequity is underscored by the fact that the M/V *Liseron* physically can fit within the volumetric profile of its competitors. That is, it is smaller, but the rules say it should be assigned a measurement of being larger. Further, the vessel carries far fewer passengers than its competitors. This seems to be a regulatory mismatch and creates the inequitable situation where a physically larger vessel that carries five times the number of passengers is determined to be smaller for crew licensing.

And this mismatch results in the M/V *Liseron* to have its master and chief mate with a license in a much higher tonnage category. The legislation I introduce today corrects this inequity and regulatory anomaly. This legislation prohibits the M/V *Liseron* from undergoing any alteration of its size. Consequently, there is no reason why the smaller M/V *Liseron* that carries far fewer passengers must have a crew licensed in a larger tonnage category.

To add to the inequity, a higher turnover for the master and first mate occurs because these mariners with the larger 500 GT licenses, which are more appropriate for deep water oceangoing vessels, leave whenever a deep-water position is available. This is understandable from their point of view. These 500 GT qualified crew get a larger tonnage license to work on larger seagoing vessels, not a smaller vessel operating in the shallow waters of bays, coastlines, and inlets in Southeast Alaska. This makes attracting 500 GT qualified crew that much more difficult. While the rest of the crew is stable, these two positions require that new hires undergo qualifying each time these positions turn over for these inland waters. If the master and first mate can hold 100 GT licenses it will result in less turnover and more appropriately experienced personnel that will contribute to even safer and consistent operation of the vessel. No alteration of the vessel itself is proposed nor will the crew size be reduced. Only two positions are affected by this legislation.

Another aspect of the vessel's operations is the economic impact of the cancellations due to the COVID-19. The operation of the eco-tourism trade in Southeast Alaska is seasonal. As a result, the M/V *Liseron* has lost an entire season of revenue due to cancellations. Continuing an artificial barrier such as having to hire crew in a mismatched licensing category will only add to the vessel's difficulties to recover from this economic loss when they are able to resume operations.

The tragic fire that occurred on board the dive vessel *Conception* on September 2, 2019, has brought additional scrutiny to small passenger vessels with overnight accommodations. Almost immediately after that fire an official marine investigation was commenced. I understand that in addition a criminal investigation is being conducted and will take a long time to complete. All of this is appropriate and should be done to get at the root of what went wrong on that vessel. As part of the safety concerns, the Coast Guard initiated a special Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) to review the safety of all small pas-

senger vessels with overnight accommodations. On October 8, 2019, the M/V *Liseron* was fully inspected by the Coast Guard as a vessel with overnight accommodations as part of this special inspection campaign. I understand that the CIC program included a job aid worksheet used by the Coast Guard inspectors to evaluate crew operations and procedures when inspecting the M/V *Liseron* and other overnight accommodation small passenger vessels. As a result of this special inspection, I understand that the Coast Guard confirmed that the vessel passed for every aspect of its certificate of inspection without exception and for crew performance. For passenger safety, the vessel has early warning and fire detection alarm systems, ready evacuation routes from each passenger cabin onto the main deck, and approved life rafts and vests. Having passed this rigorous and special inspection, the M/V *Liseron* is free of any of the issues on the *Conception*. The change brought about by this legislation will not create a vessel construction or safety issue.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me to enact this statutory provision permitting the Coast Guard to treat this vessel as less than 100 gross tons for the purpose of applying the operational regulatory measurement under section 14305 of title 46, United States Code, provided that nothing is done to change the size of the vessel. By adjusting the tonnage rating for licensing the M/V *Liseron's* crew to be consistent with its safety inspection category, the M/V *Liseron* would be able to hire and retain more appropriate experienced crew familiar with Southeast Alaskan waterways and small passenger vessel operations, and be regulated the same as other similar or larger vessels with which the M/V *Liseron* must compete.

NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS
FOR MISSING AND MURDERED
INDIGENOUS WOMEN

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize May 5, 2020 as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Today, we recognize our nation's devastating history of colonization and the disproportionate effects for Native women. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed health care inequalities in our country, especially the health care available to Native communities. But we must be equally concerned about the number of Native women and girls that face incredible violence in this country every day. In the United States, Native women face tragically high rates of violence, sexual assault, and murder. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, homicide is the third leading cause of death among Native women. These rates are ten times higher than the national average and far too often, families are left without answers.

I am a cosponsor of Savanna's Act, which will recognize Native women and make sure that their invisibility to law enforcement ends. The bill would create and improve procedures, communication, and cooperation among federal, state, tribal, and local agencies that may