

The GAO found that, on average, just 1 out of every 10 children who are eligible for Federal childcare subsidies actually received them. Moreover, 1 in 10 parents have reported being demoted, transferred, or fired due to childcare problems.

Overall, inadequate childcare costs our economy nearly \$60 billion, annually. Meanwhile, we are leaving money on the table. For every dollar invested in quality early childhood programs, we get a \$7 return on our investment.

As challenging as it has been over the years for parents to find affordable childcare, COVID has massively compounded the problem. It has demanded even more of our childcare workforce, while stretching budgets to the absolute limit.

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, some childcare centers have had to turn parents away in order to make the necessary public health accommodations, such as reducing class size. A childcare center in the city of Lawrence went from serving 715 children pre-COVID to 360, a nearly 50 percent reduction. What is more, 97 percent of the households with children in that program were eligible for subsidies.

What is a parent to do when they can't afford to miss work but also has no childcare support?

It is long past time for America to assist them by investing in reliable, affordable, high-quality childcare.

Each day we hear praise for our essential workers, and they deserve every word of it. They have been keeping us safe for months while risking their own lives. It is obvious that thank-yous will no longer cut it. The least we can do is guarantee that they aren't left penniless due to the cost of childcare.

If we are going to show our commitment to workers and to families, the Child Care Is Essential Act should advance through the upper Chamber without delay.

HONORING ANITA MONOIAN

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the career of Anita Monoian, the president and CEO of Yakima Neighborhood Health Services, who announced her retirement after 41 years of tireless service and advocacy.

At a time when community health is of the utmost importance, it is a privilege to honor an individual who has spent her life's work advocating for the care and well-being of the people of Yakima Valley.

Anita describes her career's work as a labor of love. With that labor, Anita expanded the scope of Yakima Neighborhood Health Services from a single clinic to 10 clinics across the Yakima Valley, reaching 92,000 patients, annually.

Anita's voice has influenced State and Federal healthcare policy through

her work on the board of the National Association of Community Health Centers and the Washington Association of Community and Migrant Health Centers.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Anita's legacy of improving healthcare in central Washington, and I urge my colleagues to join in me in congratulating her on an impactful career of service.

RECOGNIZING DR. JAMES IRWIN

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life of one of central Washington's American heroes, James Irwin.

Dr. James Irwin served as chief of surgery at the U.S. Navy Hospital in Oak Harbor, Washington. Following his service, Dr. Irwin treated patients in north central Washington for 13 years before opening a medical practice in Moses Lake. He was named chief medical officer of Samaritan Healthcare and was an original member of the Moses Lake Medical Team.

He and his wife, Frances, were active members in their church and spent many years on medical missions across Africa, where he provided surgical services and shared his knowledge with local doctors.

At age 62, Dr. Irwin, once again, answered his country's call. He deployed to Iraq as a naval surgeon before retiring as a captain in 2004 with over 40 years of military service.

In central Washington, Dr. Irwin was known for his kind attitude toward the patients he cared for. To his fellow brothers in arms, he was known as a hero. He passed away on June 30, but he has left a lasting legacy of providing care wherever it was needed.

Mr. Speaker, my prayers go out to his family and loved ones, and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring Dr. Irwin's life and service to our country.

REMEMBERING BRAD FISHER OF KENNEWICK, WASHINGTON

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, Brad Fisher of Kennewick was a friend, a businessman, and a passionate advocate for the Tri-Cities community.

A devoted husband, father, grandfather, and dedicated community leader, Brad found endless ways to serve others. Over the years, he served as a Rotarian, a city council member, the mayor of Kennewick, and a member of numerous community service boards.

One of Brad's many contributions to his community was his role as a fierce champion of local governance. He helped spearhead the reconveyance effort in the Tri-Cities to return thousands of acres of river shore land from the Federal Government and placed it back into the hands of the local community. His work is not yet complete, but I look forward to continuing his advocacy in accomplishing this effort to improve our community.

Mr. Speaker, Brad Fisher is an example of the engaged and selfless citizenship that we should all strive to emulate. May his family and our commu-

nity continue to be blessed by his memory, and may he rest in peace.

□ 0930

INTRODUCING THE BLUE PACIFIC ACT

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

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7797, the Boosting Long-Term U.S. Engagement in the Pacific Act, also known as the BLUE Pacific Act.

I am proud to have introduced this bill, together with my colleagues, Congressmen AMI BERA, TED YOHO, BRAD SHERMAN, and DON YOUNG, as well as other members of our Congressional Pacific Islands Caucus.

Scattered across the vast waters of the Pacific, from Hawaii to Rapa Nui to Palau, and New Caledonia, are countless isles and atolls that constitute what we know as the Pacific Islands and their subregions of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. The collective land and maritime exclusive economic zones of the Pacific Islands cover more of the Earth's surface than the land areas of China and Russia combined. These islands are home to diverse and dynamic cultures and people on the front lines of climate change and facing significant challenges to long-term sustainable development.

The United States is not some remote power in this integral part of our world. For two centuries plus, we have been, and today we are, a Pacific nation. We have jurisdictions of our own among the family of Pacific Islands, including my home State of Hawaii. We have longstanding ties with all of the Pacific Islands, be they independent nations, countries in free association, or territories of our friends and allies.

Countless Americans died to liberate our Pacific neighbors in storied battles, including Tarawa, Peleliu, Guadalcanal, and more, during the Second World War.

In my own district is the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the final resting place of so many of these warriors. Our foreign policy in the Pacific Islands is driven by this deep historical relationship and the shared interests and values built by decades of consistent but quiet engagement.

Over the past 20 years alone, the United States has provided over \$5 billion in assistance for the region. In just the past decade, multiple administrations and Congresses have heightened our engagement in the Pacific Islands as we have focused our attention increasingly in the Indo-Pacific region.

Reflecting this renewed attention to the Pacific Islands, last year I joined several of my colleagues in cofounding our first-ever, bipartisan Congressional Pacific Islands Caucus. We are dedicated to promoting greater understanding of this region and advocating for a sound United States foreign policy in the Pacific Islands that advances our shared interests and values.