

against Israel in the International Court of Justice: <https://d3i6fh83elv35t.cloudfront.net/static/2024/01/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf>

Mr. Speaker, there is simply time to save lives, to stop the Israeli Government from carrying out the genocide in Gaza. This body and the Biden administration are complicit in this genocide. Congress must stop funding the genocide of the Palestinian people with our American tax dollars.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

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BORDER CRISIS REACHED BOILING POINT

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, 3,400 students at James Madison High School in Brooklyn, New York, were unable to attend their classes in person. Instead of learning in their classrooms, being with their fellow students, and eating lunch in the cafeteria, these students were forced from their own school in order to make room for 2,000 illegal immigrants who recently came to New York City.

This crisis has reached a boiling point, and action must be taken to address the impact that it is having on our communities. We know the historic learning loss that occurred with school lockdowns during COVID. Now, instead of using the proven and effective remain in Mexico policy, President Biden has thrown open our doors to a record number of illegal immigrants in the past year.

It is time to secure our border. It is time to stop making American families pay the price for President Biden's weak leadership and failed policies. It is time for President Biden to join us and demand that the Senate pass the Secure the Border Act and finally address this catastrophe impacting American families because of the porous southern border.

ADDRESS MEDICARE PAY CUT

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in rural communities like those in south central and southwestern Pennsylvania, millions of patients rely on Medicare to see their doctors, fill their prescriptions, and live healthy lives.

Now, if Congress fails to act, those patients will be in jeopardy. Medicare pay cuts, when compiled with a 4.6 percent medical inflation, will ultimately result in higher costs for Medicare beneficiaries.

When I first came to Congress, I pledged to support Medicare and pledged to support the patients who rely on those Medicare benefits. These cuts will make it impossible for rural providers to keep their doors open. These cuts will mean longer travel and

wait times for patients to see family doctors, to see surgeons, and to see specialists.

Right now, thousands of Medicare patients are in need of a primary care physician. These Medicare cuts will drive further consolidation and force patients into higher cost settings of care that will both increase their wait times and increase their out-of-pocket expenses.

Congress must step in and address these cuts before they do irreversible damage to our healthcare system. America and our patients are relying on us to make the right choices.

HONORING JACKIE WALLIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jackie Wallin, a beloved figure in Laughlin, Nevada, and the architect of so much success across our community.

Jackie is retiring from her position as the president and CEO of the Laughlin Chamber of Commerce after dedicating 36 years of service to southern Nevada and the tristate area. She has been instrumental in promoting small businesses, tourism, and philanthropic work for families, veterans, and seniors across the community.

Just last week, I had the pleasure of meeting with Jackie during a roundtable conversation with the chamber. We discussed issues that face local businesses and how I can better help them here in Washington. We are working together to make sure that life is more affordable and to cut through red tape.

Notably, I got to see Jackie's work in action—not only her persistence in fighting for the interests of her community but also the genuine care and charisma she brings to every interaction.

Throughout the day, I had the pleasure of touring the beautiful riverfront in the downtown area in Laughlin, where I witnessed the incredible community development that would not have been possible without Jackie's decades of hard work. I wish Jackie the best of luck as she moves on from leading the chamber.

Laughlin is a tight-knit community that looks out for one another. Rest assured, Jackie will never stop looking out for her neighbors, no matter where she is. I expect to see her riding a motorcycle in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Jackie for all she has done for our community. Laughlin and all of southern Nevada are better off because of her.

RECOGNIZING MIKE HULL

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize a newly retired pub-

lic servant from central Washington, Mr. Mike Hull of Pateros.

Mike has been an educator for 42 years and has taught some of the most important subjects that engage our students to become better informed on the democratic process. It is more important than ever to instill this in our young people, and Mike has done so by fostering an environment of inclusion, curiosity, and learning. In fact, it was not uncommon for former students to return to his classroom to visit with him and to speak about the positive impact that he had on their lives.

His work in education extended well beyond the classroom. As those of us living on the West Coast know, wildfires significantly impact our daily lives and our safety. During the 2014 Carlton Complex recovery, Mike was the principal of the Pateros school, the central location for food distribution and temporary shelter, and was instrumental in coordinating recovery efforts and volunteer work. Mike led his community even when his own home was at risk from the flames.

He is truly deserving of an honorable public service recognition. I wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement.

TIME TO END THE FAILED WAR ON DRUGS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I will enter in the RECORD my comments that I would have made today.

Mr. Speaker, I am sad and I am angry.

I have been working for 50 years leading the effort to end the failed, unfair, cynical, dangerous war on drugs that targeted Black people, that discouraged the legal use of a therapeutic good, something that could have enriched our economy, but instead criminalized behavior, had unintended consequences, and continues to fail us today.

You have been reading comments lately about the problems we have in terms of the use of cannabis for some pregnant women who are unaware of the impact that that can have on a developing fetus. We are looking at impacts on our children from a cannabis that is much more potent than it used to be.

We don't have a system that regulates it, that taxes it, that keeps it out of the hands of children. No neighborhood drug dealer looks for identification, and they are perfectly happy to sell kids other, more dangerous and potent drugs. We don't have to do this.

The House of Representatives has passed a number of items that would remedy this situation. We passed the comprehensive MORE Act that would put it on equal footing. Frankly, we have legislation that would stop the unfair practice of taxing State-legal

cannabis businesses two or three times higher than regular businesses. No wonder they can't compete with the black market.

We have a situation now where the State-legal cannabis companies have to pay their taxes with shopping bags full of \$20 bills, because we still deny them access to banking services. That is not just unfair; it is insane. It promotes money laundering, and it inhibits the opportunity of enterprises that are legal now for most Americans for either medical or adult use.

It is time that the Federal Government get its act together and stop making these problems worse. The Biden administration has taken some halting, positive steps, pardoning people who didn't need to be caught up in this in the first place, and they are looking at rescheduling cannabis to make it easier to do the research, and it would overnight end the unfair taxing situation. They would be able to deduct their business expenses. How novel. It is time for Congress to stop making this problem worse.

The Federal Government created the situation with the failed war on drugs, unfair to millions of Americans, and denied an opportunity for something that the American public has demonstrated time after time they want to happen by their State votes legalizing it.

It is not too late for this Congress to take the legislation that we have in the process to solve this problem, to be fair in the failed war on drugs, be able to allow State-legal businesses to not be at a disadvantage to the cartels and the cheaters, and get this right.

After 50 years, it is time to finally end the failed war on drugs and be fair to the American people.

Let's reflect for a moment on the cost of our failure to act on the critical cannabis reform proposals before this Congress.

Tens of millions of Americans have been trapped by the deplorable failed war on drugs and archaic prohibition of marijuana.

While this prohibition has harmed Americans across the board, it has not been enforced equally.

In every single state, Black people are more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than their white neighbors.

Black people are more than three times as likely than whites to be arrested for marijuana possession, despite comparable usage rates.

The public finally recognizes this injustice. Ending to this failed policy is more popular than ever before.

Seventy percent of Americans support legalizing marijuana, including majorities of Republicans and Independents as well as Democrats.

It is states, led by my home state of Oregon, that have led the way to end this prohibition.

Twenty-four states and multiple territories having legalized adult-use marijuana.

Many of these states have worked valiantly to make these markets accessible to those directly impacted, especially communities harmed in the weaponization of marijuana prohibition.

They have invested in equity licensing structures, tax relief, and more.

However, it is clear, that without a comprehensive federal framework for legalization, these programs will continue to fall woefully short.

A state-by-state patchwork of legalization doesn't work.

To meaningfully address the harms facing our communities—particularly Black and Brown Americans targeted in federal cannabis prohibition—we must act on the critical proposals before this Congress.

Obviously the MORE Act is the gold standard for comprehensive reform. This critical legislation:

- Deschedules marijuana;
- Expunges prior convictions;
- Implements a real federal tax structure for these products;

- Makes SBA funds available to these small businesses; and

- Invests in programs that minimize barriers to marijuana licensing and employment for the individuals most adversely impacted by the failed war on drugs.

The House has twice passed this legislation with bipartisan support. It is devastating that the Senate has failed to act.

The SAFE Banking Act makes banking services available to regulated marijuana businesses—denying the benefits that keep employees safe and lower costs for vulnerable small businesses by getting cash off the streets.

The Veterans Equal Access Act allows veterans to work with their preferred providers to decide if medical marijuana is the right treatment option for them instead of denying them their preferred provider for care.

And, finally, perhaps most important for struggling cannabis businesses is tax reform.

Under Section 280E of the federal tax code, marijuana businesses are not able to deduct any business expenses from their federal taxes.

This exponentially increases their tax burden compared to other regulated businesses.

My Small Business Tax Equity Act would end this inequity, making it far more accessible for small businesses to enter the legal marijuana markets and fairly compete with the illicit market.

While Congress considers these critical pieces of legislation, President Biden has taken some action to address the ongoing harms of criminalization.

In 2022, he issued thousands of pardons for simple federal marijuana possession convictions and challenged governors across the country to do the same for state convictions.

This past December, he expanded this relief to convictions in D.C. and to those with federal convictions for attempted possession of marijuana.

For the people eligible, these pardons are tremendously impactful—restoring their rights to education and housing and so much more.

The Drug Enforcement Administration has also confirmed their authority to deschedule marijuana.

Descheduling marijuana will allow full deduction of costs of marijuana business.

Allowing these businesses to deduct their expenses as the tax code was intended will help level the playing field for those who do not have the benefit of existing dominance in the industry.

Descheduling is a vital, common-sense leap forward that will make the federal government the partner our states and communities need to address the ongoing harms of our failed cannabis policies.

Congress must act on the common-sense reforms to meaningfully end the failed war on drugs and repair the harms caused by a state-by-state patchwork of marijuana legalization.

It is past time for simple bipartisan reform.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO PAULA TROUTMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to a remarkable individual whose impact on western New York, the southern tier, and our educational system is immeasurable. Paula J. Troutman, the beloved principal of Fredonia Middle School, left us unexpectedly on New Year's Day at the age of 60.

I have had the honor to know Paula Troutman and her beautiful family since the late 1990s when I was a student at Pine Valley High School. Her passing has left a void that is deeply felt by her family, her friends, her colleagues, and the thousands of students whose lives she touched.

Paula Troutman was a lifelong educator, a coach, a school administrator, and a proud alumnus of Pine Valley Central School who went on to teach young people in her hometown. She ultimately went on to be the principal of Fredonia Middle School.

In our small towns in the southern tier, our schools are the epicenter of our communities, and Paula Troutman was a community leader who touched many, many lives.

Her ultimate legacy is her beautiful family. Married for 40 years to her husband, Dan, they operated a family farm. They have four amazing children, Danielle, Kourtney, Justina, and Cody, all of which have followed in their mother's footsteps in education or coaching. Paula was a loving grandmother to six beautiful grandchildren.

A shocked community is mourning her sudden passing, expressing their love and support for her family, and also reflecting on the leadership role she played for many in the community.

Fredonia Central School District Superintendent Brad Zilliox aptly captured Paula's essence, stating: "It is Paula's impact on fostering relationships, a work family, that our staff is leaning on as strength to be there for our students and each other."

Colleagues and friends have shared heartwarming stories of Paula's unwavering support and genuine care. From reassuring a worried mother about a school transition to coaching with passion and dedication, Paula left an enduring mark on the lives of those around her.

As we mourn the loss of Paula Troutman, we remember her not only for her