PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2020

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, after consulting with physicians about traveling during the COVID–19 pandemic, I was not able to make it to Washington for this vote, but I would have voted YES on the Senate Amendment to H.R. 266. Our local small businesses are facing unprecedented circumstances due to the COVID–19 crisis, with many struggling to keep all of their employees on payroll. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) was a solution passed unanimously by the House just a few weeks ago, providing loans that keep Americans employed across the country. It was no surprise that demand for these loans was high, but it was a surprise to see members of Congress hold up more funding for the PPP over partisan political demands. I am glad to see my colleagues on the other side of the aisle finally bring up this vital bill for a vote today to provide the relief that so many businesses and workers need. Estimates already predict that this additional funding will keep over 103,000 workers on payroll.

Unfortunately, the Speaker's push for the creation of a new select committee to conduct oversight of the response to COVID–19 is another attempt to use taxpayer dollars to fulfill partisan goals. There are already eight different mechanisms in place for the House to exercise oversight over the response to this virus, making this new one completely redundant. It is clear that this committee is intended to score political points against the President rather than improve our pandemic response. If that is the goal, it should be funded by their campaigns, not by American taxpayers. That is why I would have voted NO on the Resolution Establishing a Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis.

DOUBLE DOWN ON HEALTH TIES WITH ISRAEL

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2020

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, we are fortunate our alliance with Israel has never been stronger with the leadership of President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Amid international lockdowns and cancellations due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. and Israel quietly marked a major milestone in our militaries' bilateral defense relationship. For the first time ever, on March 29 U.S. and Israeli F–35s trained together in Israel in a combined air-power exercise dubbed ''Enduring Lightning.'' Despite coronavirus-related cancellations across the globe, this exercise over Israeli skies illustrated the strength and endurance of the military cooperation between our two nations. Our militaries have worked together for years to fight the threat of terrorism and defend our way of life from those that seek to threaten it. Today, as we all face the universal threat of COVID–19, it's time we ensure that our cooperation with our friends in Israel relating to public health is as prioritized as our strong defense ties.

It's no surprise that defense has long been at the forefront of our bilateral cooperation with Israel. But our collaboration with Jerusalem spans all sectors of our society and our government-to-government collaboration on public health goes back decades. In 1985 when the Department of Health and Human Services signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Israeli Ministry of Health. The MOU provided for the exchange of information between the two countries, joint training and education, conferences, and collaborative projects.

But our bilateral work on public health is certainly not limited to government-to-government cooperation. The nature of cooperation between the United States and Israel, in every field, is based on the deep respect, friendship, and affection between Americans and Israelis. Just last month, the Israeli pharmaceutical company Teva announced it will donate more than six million doses of the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine sulfate to hospitals across the United States. More than ever, we can appreciate person-to-person friendships as evidenced by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) so ably led by President Betsy Berns Korn and Chief Executive Officer Howard Kohr.

It is no secret that for years Israel has been at the forefront of breakthrough scientific research and technology. Just last week, the Galilee Research Institute in Israel announced it was on the cusp of developing a vaccine for the coronavirus, with estimates that it could be ready within a few weeks and available within 90 days. The Israel-based company Pluristem developed a placenta-based cell therapy treatment that has shown a 100 percent survival rate among severely ill COVID–19 patients and has just begun treating American patients days ago. During this crisis, Israel has also developed new, more affordable methods of producing ventilators and personal protective equipment that could change the way we respond to epidemics in the future. As we move forward in the fight against COVID–19, we would be wise to double down our health cooperation with Israel. There is no doubt that our two countries will benefit from information sharing related to the virus' spread, treatment, and containment.

I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to support deepening our health ties with the Jewish State. As Ranking Member of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I work closely with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to prioritize the U.S.-Israel relationship. I'm grateful to be the lead Republican with Chairman TED DEUTCH (D–FL) on H.R. 1837, the United States-Israel Cooperation Enhancement and Regional Security Act which among other things seeks to deepen our collaboration with Israel on health issues.

The bill calls for close collaboration with Israeli institutions on research and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, with which Israelis have, unfortunately, had a lot of experience given their current security situation. It also authorizes and funds a bilateral cooperative program with Israel for the development of health technologies, including artificial intelligence, biofeedback, and kidney care. Importantly, the bill, which passed the House of Representatives in July of last year, also includes language support for setting up a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regional office in Israel to facilitate joint work on critical issues relating to health. Last November, I was grateful to co-lead a letter with the Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, ALCEE HASTINGS, to HHS Secretary Alex Azar underscoring that the establishment of an FDA office in Israel, ''would facilitate collaboration in life-saving research and is a natural step for strengthening the special relationship between our countries.''

There has never been a better time to invest in robust bilateral health cooperation between the United States and Israel. Victory against the Invisible Enemy will require close collaboration with partners across the globe, especially with true friends like Israel. It's time we deepen the ties between Washington and Jerusalem for the sake of global public health.

SHANE COLLIN BRASHERS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2020

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Shane Collin Brashers for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Shane Collin Brashers is a 10th grader at Mapleton Early College High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Shane Collin Brashers is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Shane Collin Brashers for winning the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

THANKING THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO MEDICAL CENTER MOLECULAR SPECIALISTS

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2020

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the tireless efforts our caregivers and healthcare professionals are exciting patriotically to combat coronavirus. Those on the frontlines are bravely caring for sick patients. Those behind the scenes are working to find a vaccine or expand testing of the virus. Today in particular, on a day when Congress has recommended to pass additional legislation to heal our nation and unlock the mystery of COVID–19, I want to recognize the seven female molecular specialists at the University of Toledo Medical Center who have been instrumental in bringing in-house testing capabilities to our city and Northwest Ohio: Heather