

Opinion

China still designated ‘developing nation’ by U.N.

By Rep. Ashley Hinson

China is the world’s second-largest economy, yet the United Nations still formally designates China as a “developing nation,” allowing them to receive financial benefits and military advantages meant for developing countries. It is an absolute dis-



Rep. Ashley Hinson

grace the U.N. lets China dodge its dues under this false and misguided termination. That’s why I joined Congressman Neal Dunn in introducing the Ending China’s Unfair Advantage Act. This legislation would stop China from exploiting international trade loopholes — a common tactic by the CCP — and prohibit American taxpayer dollars from funding certain U.N. programs until China is no longer designated as a “develop-

ing nation.” The U.S. should not be funding programs that China takes advantage of using this ploy, and this critical bill will ensure China cannot play by a different set of rules on the global stage. It’s time to stop allowing our own resources to be used against us and end this America-last scam. This week (March 28), the House voted to overturn two more of Biden’s radical conservation standards that

set expensive and overreaching regulations on businesses’ refrigerators and freezers. Plain and simple: cutting regulations cuts costs for Americans. The House also took action this week to crack down on shady foreign cash flowing into our colleges across the U.S. I voted for the Defending Education Transparency and Ending Rogue Regimes Engaging in Nefarious Transactions Act to demand transparency for the sake of both students

and taxpayers. Accountability starts here. In case you hadn’t heard, March is Women’s History Month, and I got to celebrate all the hardworking women – past and present – who make a difference every day with President Trump and my friend and fellow Iowan, Sen. Joni Ernst. I am so thankful for the president’s leadership, and I appreciate his administration’s recognition of the tremendous

impact women have on our great nation. Not celebrating men pretending to be women, but elevating strong, conservative intelligent women. Joe Biden and the Left tried to erase women, demeaning the many accomplishments of trailblazing female leaders before us. As a working mom fighting for other moms, I know what women across this country care about, and I know they deserve to be celebrated for doing it all.

Opinion

Bill paves way for pediatric hospice

By Iowa Rep. Dean Fisher

On Tuesday of this week (March 27) we passed a bill that was special to our district. House File 933 was a bill that implemented a new license for pediatric palliative care, a type of hospice specifically for children. There are currently only three such facilities in the United States, none in Iowa. The connection to our district, and the catalyst for this bill, is a young boy from Grinnell, Mason Sieck. At the age of two, Mason was diagnosed with a rare dis-



Dean Fisher

ease called “Gardner’s Syndrome,” a form of cancer marked by Desmoid tumors and a tendency to develop other cancers. Most people with this disease have either one or two tumors with it, or no tumors at all. Mason had over 40 tumors throughout his body that caused extreme amounts of pain. During one of his many hospital stays, his parents, Shanna and Curtis Sieck, received the news no parent wants to hear. Mason needed to be in hospice care as all that could be done for him was pain management. The only facility the Sieck’s could find that could handle a situa-

tion like Mason’s was in Minneapolis, five hours away from home in Grinnell. Fortunately, Mason loved the environment there and the family felt very welcome and comfortable. Sadly, Mason went to be with the Lord in March of 2021 at age 7. From this tragic loss of Mason, and the experience of finding a wonderful hospice home so far away, the seeds were planted with Shanna, Mason’s mom, to turn their grief into action and form a non-profit organization aimed at creating a similar hospice facility here in Iowa. The non-profit, known as “Mason’s Lighthouse,” has come

a long way. They have been fundraising and developing plans to build a hospice facility on a plot of land that has been donated in Iowa City. Mason’s Lighthouse will be able to accommodate up to three families at a time in pediatric hospice with each hospice room connected to a family suite, and also have four suites for respite care for other children that do not need hospice, but need 24 hour medical care. The legislature became involved along the way because the project hit a snag with licensure. This form of hospice and respite care is new, especially to Iowa, and none of the exist-

ing licenses for nursing homes and hospices would work. Shanna came to us early this legislative session with a request to create a license that would be a better fit, and we were glad to be able to accommodate that request. I worked with House Health and Human Services chairman, Rep. Carter Nordman, and our House HHS staff to draft this bill and bring it to the floor for passage, with Rep. Eddie Andrews floor managing the bill Tuesday. The bill passed the House 97-0 and goes on to the Senate. I was honored to host Shanna beside me in the House chamber as the bill was

brought up and passed. I would like to commend Shanna on the excellent work she is doing in this effort. Mason’s memory will live on forever as this vision for Mason’s Lighthouse becomes reality. This facility will serve other Iowa families during their times of sorrow and tragedy here on Iowa soil, closer to those families’ homes. This newsletter only captures a tiny fraction of all that Shanna and her team have accomplished. If you want to learn more about this project, go to masonslighthouse.org. As always, I look forward to seeing you at the Capitol or in the district.

Opinion

Slashing property taxes at the community's expense

By Jake Tornholm, Williamsburg City Councilman

The latest proposal under Senate Study Bill 1208 is a textbook example of political shortsightedness masquerading as fiscal responsibility. At first glance, reducing property tax rates might sound like a gift to taxpayers, but for cities like Williamsburg, this "gift" is more like a Trojan horse — promising relief while delivering devastation to essential community services. The new formula under consideration, besides being wildly complicated and difficult for taxpayers to understand, would drive the General Fund

Tax Levy Rate down in Williamsburg to approximately \$5.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value. For Williamsburg, with a prior year's tax revenue of \$1,539,765 and a total assessed value of \$307,744,539, this reduction could have catastrophic consequences. Simply put, the math doesn't lie: there will be less money to pay for the fundamental services that keep our communities safe and functional. The most immediate casualties? Public safety and infrastructure. With the cost of insurance and utilities steadily climbing, Williamsburg is already walking a fiscal tightrope

to balance its budget. This drastic cut would make it virtually impossible to maintain current staffing levels in the police department or continue with swimming pool operations during the summer months. Residents clamoring for lower taxes must ask themselves. is saving a few dollars worth risking slower emergency response times or fewer officers patrolling our streets? If the city can no longer sustain the police force, who will step in to keep our neighborhoods safe? Moreover, this bill does not account for the growing financial burden that small and mid-sized

municipalities face. Unlike large metropolitan areas with diverse revenue streams, towns like Williamsburg rely heavily on property taxes to fund essential services. SSB1208's shortsighted approach disregards these realities, leaving local governments with the impossible choice of cutting vital services or plunging into financial instability. Proponents of the bill argue that taxpayers are being crushed under rising property valuations and that relief is long overdue. But let's be honest: this proposal is not about helping working families. It is a political maneuver to score points

by slashing taxes without acknowledging the real-world fallout. Politicians pushing this bill are gambling with the safety and well-being of our communities while sidestepping the consequences of their actions. The real problem with property taxes is that income is not keeping up with home valuations. As property values soar, household earnings remain stagnant, and the increasing costs of utilities and insurance compound the strain on working families. True relief will only come from addressing these underlying economic disparities rather than implementing superficial

tax cuts that jeopardize essential services. It's time for residents to demand better. Fiscal responsibility should not mean sabotaging public safety and community welfare. Our leaders must reject SSB1208 in its current form and find a balanced approach that protects both taxpayers and the essential services that define the quality of life in Williamsburg. The stakes are too high to gamble with the future of our community. We need solutions that prioritize both affordability and the public good — not reckless cuts that leave us vulnerable and unprepared.

Letters policy

Letters to the editor must be signed with the author’s name and town of residence and should include a phone number for verification purposes. The phone number will not be published. Form letters and letters from outside our

subscription area will generally not be published. We will not publish letters that we deem libelous or letters that contain claims or assumptions that cannot be verified using reasonable effort, letters

we consider in poor taste or letters we consider offensive to the general readership. Letters must be less than 500 words and will be edited for grammar, style and spelling. Only one letter from a single author on the

same subject will be published in a 30-day period. Letters that endorse candidates will be considered ad content and will not be printed. Endorsements of ballot issues will be accepted as letters to the editor.

Letters will run at the discretion of the managing editor based on relevance, timeliness and available space. We do not guarantee that submitted letters will appear in print. Send letters for The Hometown Current, the

Marengo Pioneer Republican, the Poweshiek County Chronicle Republican and the Williamsburg Journal Tribune to Hometown Media Managing Editor Winona Whitaker at winona@hometowncurrent.com.