

legacy, and today, I recognize and thank George Walton Weller for his extraordinary contributions and selfless acts of service.

Mr. Speaker, he embodies the very best of America, and we are forever indebted to him.

CELEBRATING SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 150th anniversary of Shenandoah University, a proud institution in historic Winchester, Virginia, that has shaped minds and transformed lives for a century and a half.

Founded on February 12, 1875, in Dayton, Virginia, Shenandoah took a bold step back in 1960, relocating 75 miles north to Winchester and paving the way for its continued growth and success.

For 150 years, Shenandoah University has remained steadfast in its mission to provide innovative, high-quality, and student-focused education, always keeping the community at its heart.

The university's legacy has been shaped by visionary leaders, from A.P. Funkhouser, its founder, to Dr. Forrest Racey, who led its relocation, and Dr. James Davis, under whose leadership it became a university. Today, that tradition of excellence continues under Dr. Tracy Fitzsimmons, Shenandoah's first female president, who has guided its remarkable growth.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Shenandoah University on this historic milestone and wishing it continued success for generations to come.

#### RECOGNIZING CONCERN HOTLINE

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Concern Hotline, a vital organization that has provided compassionate, lifesaving support to the residents of the northern Shenandoah Valley for the past 57 years.

Founded in 1970 in response to a tragic rise in suicides, Concern Hotline has been a constant source of hope, offering 24/7 crisis intervention and emotional support. This organization is led by Executive Director Rusty Holland, who has dedicated himself to ensuring that anyone in crisis has a trained, nonjudgmental listener ready to take the call.

The organization thrives because of its dedicated volunteers and community partnerships with first responders, mental health providers, and local universities. Their work has saved countless lives, and their mission is simple but powerful: to keep people safe for now.

I commend Concern Hotline for its unwavering commitment to suicide prevention and crisis intervention. The northern Shenandoah Valley is stronger because of their work, and I wish them continued success in their mission.

#### DEFENDING CONSUMER CHOICE

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stand against yet another blatant government overreach—this time an

attack by the Biden administration on the ability of hardworking Americans to choose the appliances that best fit their needs.

In his final days, President Biden's Department of Energy finalized a rule that effectively bans certain natural gas water heaters from the market. This unnecessary regulation is yet another example of the left pushing a radical Green New Deal agenda at the expense of American families.

This rule would drive up costs, limit consumer choice, and hurt American families and small businesses. It is the same heavyhanded approach we saw time and again from the previous administration, forcing Americans to buy expensive, inefficient alternatives instead of letting them decide what works best for their homes and businesses.

The DOE has no business dictating what kind of water heater Americans can use, and that is why I strongly support H.J. Res. 20, introduced by my colleague Congressman GARY PALMER. This resolution sends a clear message: Washington bureaucrats do not get to make these choices for the American people.

House Republicans will continue fighting to protect consumer freedom and keep government overreach out of our homes. I urge my colleagues to stand with the American people and pass this important resolution.

#### MARKING THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF UNPROVOKED RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. VINDMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. VINDMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the House as we have just marked the third anniversary of the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine.

February 24, 2022, the date of the largest land grab in Europe since World War II, joins an ignominious list of others as a day of infamy, but this month, it is also notorious for something else.

In this month and this year, the Pax Americana, the rules-based international order established in the aftermath of World War II, an order that has delivered peace and prosperity to the United States, has been brought to a dishonorable end.

In this month, Trump ordered the U.S. Representative to the U.N. to vote with autocrats and against democracy.

Pete Hegseth, the FOX weekend television host improbably elevated into an American Secretary of Defense, announced that NATO membership for Ukraine was off the table. Going further, he suggested that Ukraine's return to its 2014 borders was no longer in the cards. Hegseth thereby deprived Ukraine and the West of two of their most valuable bargaining chips in determining the shape of any peace agreement that is to come.

In this same month, Donald Trump, the President of the United States, standing facts on their head, called Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the leader of Ukrainian democracy, an unelected "dictator," and incredibly, spewing another blatant falsehood, blamed Ukraine for starting the war.

In this month, in perhaps the most shameful statement from an American President in the history of our Republic, Trump explained that because Russia had lost so many soldiers, it was entitled to keep some or all of the territory that it had seized in its unprovoked war of aggression.

It is bad enough that these are lies and betrayals of America's great traditions.

It is bad enough that these statements legitimize violations of the fundamental principles of Pax Americana and the U.N. Charter. Namely, the rules of the jungle no longer apply to international relations—that might does not make right and that powerful nations cannot employ force to redraw international borders at will.

It is bad enough that the Trump administration is failing to offer a strong bargaining position for Ukraine from which to negotiate a just peace.

It is bad enough that his statements have sent an unmistakable message to the world, in particular, Communist China, that aggression pays.

Things are even worse than all of that.

Under the tutelage of Donald Trump, we are witnessing a fundamental transformation of American foreign policy from a force for good in the world to a force for evil. Trump is aligning American foreign policy with that of the Kremlin.

As analyst Phillips O'Brien has put it: "The USA is now run by gangsters who both want to ally with other gangsters and are using threats of destruction and violence to get their way."

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In the first term, there were guardrails because there were adults in the room. This time there are no such adults in the room. Trump has surrounded himself with sycophants, yes-men, third-rate fanatics, and clowns from the MAGA world. The guardrails are gone. Trump is free to follow his peculiar whims and unhinged instincts. Indeed, he is free to act as would a mad king.

The results are plain to see. The results are visible in Trump's repeated attacks on Denmark for refusing to sell Greenland to the United States, another dangerous fantasy which is roiling relations with a NATO ally that has been an exceptionally loyal friend in times of need.

They are visible in the trade war that Trump is promising to unleash on Mexico, Canada, Europe, and the entire world with untold consequences for prosperity everywhere, including here at home.

They are most visible in the collapse of our friendship with Ukraine, our

abandonment of a fledgling democracy that has been valiantly fighting for its very existence. Instead of standing by Ukraine, the Trump administration is insisting that it yield its natural resource wealth to the United States in exchange for previous American support without any guarantee of territorial integrity.

This is not the behavior of a great democratic power, the leader of the free world. It is the behavior of a Mafia state engaged in coercion and blackmail. It is impossible not to be ashamed by what is being done in the name of America.

Putin would like nothing more than to cause internal chaos in Ukraine and rid Kyiv of Zelenskyy. Trump is following suit. Zelenskyy is absolutely right when he stated that Trump is living inside a disinformation bubble.

At the root, Trump's policies betray a fundamental misunderstanding of the American idea: the fact that we are a free and self-governing people, a democracy that has always been a beacon of liberty.

The President and his billionaire, shadow co-president have embraced a dystopian ideology based on falsehoods. The effect of their disinformation is rapidly bringing us to a crisis point where their falsehoods will crash into the reality of a great power competition.

If America abandons Ukraine and embraces the Kremlin, the consequences for the United States and for the world will prove ruinous. Already, everywhere Russia has advanced into Ukrainian territory, its forces have raped and pillaged and murdered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

#### DIRE CONSEQUENCES OF FUNDING FREEZE AND MASS FIRINGS

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

Mr. VASQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the dire consequences of the Federal funding freezes and mass firings that are devastating communities across the country, including in my home State of New Mexico.

Over the past few weeks, I have spoken with New Mexicans who have been impacted by these reckless decisions. Their stories are heartbreaking. Their families are suffering. Rural communities are reeling, and they deserve to be heard.

The funding freeze is crippling essential programs in our State, programs that provide wildfire prevention, conserve rangelands, grasslands, and forests, provide services to veterans, and fund public safety services. Rural communities and food producers are left vulnerable. Our national parks and forests are in disarray, and our local economies are suffering.

At the same time, mass firings are stripping thousands of dedicated Federal workers of their livelihoods. They are Americans—parents, veterans, and public servants—who have spent years serving their communities.

More than 2,400 employees have been dismissed from the Department of Veterans Affairs, undermining care for those who have served our country.

The U.S. Forest Service is losing the very employees that provide Americans access to our national treasures and public lands. These cuts also threaten wildfire prevention as our State enters another critical fire season.

The administration has fired 2,300 Department of the Interior employees, including 800 from the Bureau of Land Management and another 1,000 from the National Park Service, crippling decades of conservation efforts and degrading public land management.

These numbers alone are shocking, but they don't fully capture the impact. I want to share what my constituents have told me about these firings because behind every statistic is a real American.

Jason, a former National Park Service employee from Grants, New Mexico, told me: I received outstanding reviews on my last evaluation just a week before I was laid off. The local economy here in Grants will be devastated. I moved here to serve my community. I joined the local library board, and I am serving my people, but now I am afraid I will have to leave. There are no options left.

Devrie, who works with the Friends of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, shared: We already lost two employees at the refuge. We were understaffed before, and now if we lose visitors, my job is next. The Bosque brings in thousands of tourism dollars to Socorro, New Mexico. This isn't just about jobs. It is about the future of our communities, and what is happening is reckless.

Madison, a former probationary Federal employee in Carlsbad, New Mexico, told me: I lost my dream job on February 14. Many of us had moved hours away from our families to serve. In Carlsbad alone, the government wasted nearly half a million taxpayer dollars training us, only to fire us months later. These mass firings cannot go unnoticed.

Claudia, who worked at Carlsbad Caverns National Park, shared this: In 4½ months, I dedicated myself to my work, training others, providing emergency medical services, ensuring visitor safety. Then, without warning, I was fired. I was told I failed to prove my skills, despite my experience, my positive evaluations, and my commitment. How does firing somebody making less than \$40,000 a year solve the debt crisis?

These are the voices of our rural communities. They are not nameless, faceless numbers to be scratched off by somebody who wasn't even elected by the American people. From their coun-

try and from this administration, they deserve better.

As Elon Musk is busy firing thousands of New Mexicans, the Republican majority is preparing today a budget that offers American taxpayer dollars to give massive tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires. I hope that my colleagues can justify eliminating a \$40,000 Federal job at a national park for wildfire prevention so that a millionaire can take another summer vacation to Aruba.

I urge my colleagues to recognize the human cost of these reckless firings and funding freezes. I am sure the constituents of my colleagues will make it clear to them even if they don't listen to us today.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish by Mr. VASQUEZ is as follows:)

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize a group of individuals who are the life force of our nation: our farmworkers. Their commitment and tireless efforts in the field ensure that every family in this country can access fresh, nutritious food. I see and hear you, and I am proud to represent you.

Every day, these tireless workers face challenges that require strength and perseverance. Whether enduring extreme weather conditions or working long hours, their work sustains our economy and feeds our communities. Behind every meal we enjoy is the constant dedication of farm workers, who often go unnoticed.

Mr. Speaker, hoy quiero reconocer a un grupo de personas que son la fuerza vital de nuestra nación: nuestros trabajadores agrícolas.

Su compromiso y esfuerzos incansables en el campo aseguran que todas las familias de este país puedan tener alimentos frescos y nutritivos. Los veo y los escucho y estoy orgulloso de representarlos.

Cada día, estos trabajadores incansables enfrentan desafíos que requieren fortaleza y dedicación. Trabajan muchas horas en condiciones climáticas extremas para sostener nuestra economía y alimentar a nuestras comunidades. Detrás de la comida que disfrutamos está la dedicación constante de los trabajadores del campo que muchas veces son invisibles en este país.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New Mexico will provide a translation of his remarks to the desk.

#### ILL-CONCEIVED BUDGET RESOLUTION

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

Ms. STRICKLAND. Madam Speaker, this week House Republicans are bringing forth their ill-conceived, cruel budget resolution. This resolution will set the stage across the board for cuts on the basic services our constituents depend on the most. These constituents, by the way, live in both red States and blue States.

As the majority brings up their budget resolution, they have already said what they plan to do because they told us. They want to take away Head Start