

and choose your own path. The country is so diverse with so many cultures, ideas, and traditions, it is amazing.

To me, America is also about standing up for what is right, working hard to make things happen, and better the world around us.

It is far from perfect, but with the freedom to speak our mind and fight for justice, great communities are created. I am proud to live in a country that supports freedom and opinion.

In conclusion, America brings hope, opportunity, and a place where I can imagine and create a bright future for myself as well as others.

Thank you, Rylee.

Kambree and Rylee are young, and their words reflect well on them, their families, and Utah, where they were raised. Like them, I am grateful for our country and excited about the next 250 years of American goodness and freedom. I thank each of the high school students who rose to the challenge and wrote a speech. I sincerely hope that each of them learned something new and that their love for this country grew even just a little bit.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much, and yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING CASSY DORNBUSCH ON HER RETIREMENT

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Ms. KAPTUR of Ohio was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this evening, I have real pleasure to send positive messages forward on so many of the phenomenal citizens that I represent here and their life stories.

I rise today to celebrate an extraordinary Ohio educator, Cassy Dornbusch, from Ottawa County, Ohio, Congressional District 9. She was honored by the Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools as the Outstanding Elementary Teacher for the 2025–2026 School Year, this year.

For 33 years, Cassy has been a reading specialist at Benton-Carroll-Salem and a builder of futures. With patience, compassion, and unwavering belief in every child who walks through her door, she has helped students discover how to read, yes, but more importantly, how to believe in themselves.

In every word of encouragement, Cassy shapes the confidence, curiosity, and resilience of young minds. Her impact lives on in the voices, dreams, and successes of her students.

As she starts her well-earned retirement, we thank Cassy for her dedication, her heart, and the lasting difference she has made in each and every life. Our rocket future is brighter because of her.

HONORING LIFE OF PAUL HOLLENBECK

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Paul Hollenbeck, an architect, mentor, and rare lifelong community builder. His precious insights to build progress forward in every corner of our city of Toledo is unparalleled.

Paul was an astounding, creative, humble citizen, and he embodied the community's hopes in every nook and cranny, and he rarely got attention. He was very, very humble. He didn't look for notoriety. He believed deeply that places matter because people matter. He spent his life proving that belief brick by brick, neighborhood by neighborhood, project by project. He was unrelenting.

I knew Paul as a friend and as a doer. He didn't just talk about civic responsibility. He lived it, and he set an example for others to follow.

Through his leadership in creating the Toledo Design Collective, his vision for downtown Toledo, or his quiet mentorship of young architects and community leaders, he reimagined the redevelopment of urban spaces and neighborhoods, literally rebuilding America in this new century. He breathed new life into every corner of our community.

Paul always demonstrated a focus on the future, and that good design for people is about dignity, access, opportunity, and respect for our built environment. He understood that cities are living places, shaped by generosity and care, and he gave Toledo both.

□ 2020

Paul brought people together, listened closely, and always asked how we could do better for the next generation.

He leaves behind the Design Collective, The Collaborative building, and revitalized neighborhoods. More importantly, he leaves behind a grateful family, grateful friends, a grateful community, and a civic spirit we all can carry forward by innovating and caring for the precious legacy of our built environment in the largest fresh watershed in the entire Great Lakes. Paul Hollenbeck's legacy will live on in the voices, the dreams, and the successes that have happened across our region.

I say to his family, to his friends, and to the architects with whom he spent so much of his life: Congratulations. Job well-done, Paul Hollenbeck.

THANKING TEACHER ANDRE COWELL

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, our northwest Ohio region is lucky to have countless educators who guide our young people and help them grow into strong leaders of tomorrow. One of these educators is Andre Cowell.

A retired Toledo detective now teaching criminal justice at Washington Local School District's Whitmer High School, he brings 25 years of field experience to the classroom.

Mr. Cowell's deep compassion extends to every student he encounters. A former student at Whitmer, Alivia Garcia, who wasn't even a student of Mr. Cowell's, spoke so highly of the impact he made on her life, I thought it was worth sharing here in the Halls of Congress. There are such good people everywhere, and he showed her true kindness in the wake of a difficult time in her life following the passing of her boyfriend.

Mr. Cowell welcomed her into his classroom when she needed an ear to listen. He let her know if you ever need anything, I am always here, and you know where to find me.

He kept his word and stays in touch with Alivia to this day.

Mr. Cowell is a shining example of someone worthy of congressional recognition.

The Whitmer community in northwestern Ohio is blessed to have an educator like Andre Cowell. He is a model of a man for others, sharing empathy and integrity for the generations to come.

ST. URSULA ACADEMY VISIT

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to return to my alma mater, St. Ursula Academy in Toledo, Ohio, earlier this year to join the students at a sports rally that featured student-athletes—a lot of them. The event recognized the senior young women for their achievements.

Special recognition was lauded on the 22 members of the dance team who, once again, prevailed as State of Ohio champions this year. These Arrows well represented our State and the academy at the UDA National Dance Team Competition earning a silver placement in jazz and a bronze placement in pom.

I was able to present a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol to Coach Morgan Losby and her team of extraordinary dancers—boy, are they precision dancers—as our community honored their stellar performances this season.

Mr. Speaker, please allow me to applaud all these disciplined student-athletes at St. Ursula Academy including those in—get ready—basketball, gymnastics, swimming and diving, crew, lacrosse, tennis, track and field, soccer, softball, volleyball, and golf, in addition to the dance team.

Congratulations to them all for their hard work and perseverance as they enjoy their hard-won plaudits and pursue their passions into the future. We know they will do well.

CANADIAN WILDFIRES

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, a serious issue is facing our continent. Right now, wildfires are ravaging our neighbors in the Canadian Province of Ontario which Ohio adjoins through Lake Erie. Many First Nation communities have been forced to evacuate. Hundreds of thousands of hectares of forests have burned.

However, our northern neighbors were not the only ones who suffered. Just last week, in my hometown of Toledo, Ohio, hazardous air quality ranked among the highest levels in our Nation. As winds blew the smoke into northwestern Ohio, our community was at risk for the grave health concerns that accompany wildfire smoke: asthma attacks, heart attacks, and weakened immune systems.

Burning forests remind us that environmental challenges like air pollution and wildfires, which will continue to be exacerbated by climate change, do not

stop at national borders. We in the Great Lakes nation must continue to work with our continental neighbor and strongest trading partner to share expertise on forest management and wildfire response.

Joint efforts and collaboration are necessary to make both of our countries safer, healthier and more resilient. America belongs to all of us, no matter what side of the border one lives on. As allies working together, we can heal our freshwater and forest systems in our precious, bountiful, and life-sustaining freshwater region.

EXTREMISM IN POLITICS

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time I have urged Americans: Please lower the temperature. Political extremism and dangerous divisions among Americans are still cause for serious reflection.

We have seen it time and again throughout our history, and we have seen, sadly, assassination attempts on the President, on former Presidents, on lawmakers at the State and Federal level, Supreme Court Justices, Governors, and many more.

Last month, as the LGBTQ community celebrated Pride Month, families nationwide marked Father's Day. We saw another escalation that compels me to raise the issue of political extremism once again.

A cruel and heartless person anonymously sent a false tip to State police in Michigan in an attempt to falsely claim that former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and his husband, Chasten, had abused their twin 4-year-old children. Child Protective Services investigated competently and professionally and quickly realized that no abuse had taken place. That false flag proved to be a traumatic experience for the parents and their precious children alike.

Dear Citizens of our Nation: Hatred is unacceptable. It is still alive and well in some corners and in some places in America. Call it out. Cruelty must not be our standard, and it should not be allowed without rebuke.

I am sorry the Buttigieg family had to endure it. Loving families should live free of bigotry. We all need to lower the political temperature. Be kind. Be kind and be soulful.

REGULAR ORDER AND ENERGY AND WATER APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say that the leaders of this Chamber need to allow a return to regular order. We are far from that.

We see the constant churn of failed rule votes, budget bills hopelessly behind schedule, Congress sent home, dozens and dozens and dozens of days wasted going away from this Chamber rather than passing the bills that are critical, such as appropriation bills not receiving consideration in the timetable allowed, and with a hail Mary pass pivoting to congressional continuing resolutions instead of passing bills to effectively govern.

The Appropriations Committee worked on each of our 12 bills. We did

our job and tried to move them forward.

For weeks, the Energy and Water Development bill impacting every Congressional District in our Nation has been purposefully delayed after a rule to consider it failed for no good reason.

Now we head home. We are being sent home again for the August recess and district work period without Speaker JOHNSON allowing our work to be completed to fund our country for the coming fiscal year.

The fiscal year ends the last day of September. The new fiscal year begins October 1. This Congress has failed in its duty. The clock is ticking even louder.

I wish the leadership of this Chamber cared about returning to regular order. We are living through great disorder here, but they seem to be fine kicking the can down the road.

This hurts every American family. As they prepare income tax forms, people can't get answers. It hurts the Department of Veterans Affairs. They can't hire the staff they need. It hurts every single American calling in to the Federal Government and trying to get answers to questions they have because of understaffing and uncertainty.

This isn't the way to run a country of 340 million people. Someone has to restore regular order to this Congress and this House.

□ 2030

My fellow appropriators and I stand ready to do this work. We have done our work. The question is: Will this speaker and his team choose to meet our constitutional responsibilities in Article I? It is not at the end of the Constitution. It is not an amendment. It is Article I of the Constitution to meet our constitutional responsibilities to pass these critical bills to run the government of the United States, or are they going to cede the field again to more uncertainty and chaos?

TRUMP'S SOCIAL SECURITY AND CITIZENSHIP DATABASE

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the President's reckless and power-hungry administration has made yet another attempt to stifle the rights of millions of hardworking Americans.

He implemented a lawless database that violated privacy rights. He compiled citizens' private Social Security information to illegally distribute that to States eager to purge voter rolls.

This is on top of the administration's secret plan, alongside Speaker MIKE JOHNSON here in this House, to cut hard-earned Social Security and Medicare benefits.

Not only was this data collection started under Elon Musk and his DOGE illegal team, a myriad of so-called data was fabricated and inaccurate.

Americans were mislabeled as non-citizens or deceased by the database. They had their voter registrations canceled without any notification whatsoever.

Thank goodness for the work of prosecutors and an ethical district court

judge for blocking their illegal action. The damage has already been done.

I urge every citizen listening, especially those who are senior citizens, go to a website called vote.org to check your registration status to ensure your rightful access to the ballot box. That is Vote.org to check your voter registration status to ensure your rightful access to the ballot box itself.

Sadly, you and I both know that this will not be the last time this administration and their billionaire buddies try to limit your sacred right to vote.

This year, please make your voices heard, check whether or not your name is registered as a voter that can vote this November or an early vote in your State if that is allowed. Check your voter registration at Vote.org.

COMPENSATING VETERANS WITH DISABILITY PAY AND RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in strong support of the bipartisan Major Richard Star Act.

Servicemembers injured in the line of duty have already given so much to our Nation of their substance. They should not be forced to sacrifice again when they return home to their families.

Many of these disabled veterans are unable to work full-time. They often face insurmountable challenges for the rest of their lives. Many are denied the full compensation they deserve for all their service.

The Major Richard Star Act will correct this injustice by rightfully compensating these veterans with disability pay and retirement benefits.

That is why I am a cosponsor of the bill and have signed the discharge petition to bring this essential piece of bipartisan legislation to the House floor for a fair up-or-down vote.

I urge my colleagues who have not signed on to this petition to support our veterans and stand with me on their behalf. We are just three signatures away from being able to vote on and pass this bill which already has 337 bipartisan cosponsors. Let's bring it forward, and do the job.

Mr. Speaker, I implore you to bring this monumental legislation for a clean vote, so we can give something back to those who have given so much for all of us and the generations to come. I ask my colleagues to sponsor the Major Richard Star Act, just sign the discharge petition. We only need three signatures more, and we can move this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

TRUTH ABOUT MATH

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. SCHWEIKERT of Arizona was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, let's try something I have never done before, but I also need to sort of lock something down. Mr. Speaker, if there is anyone from your staff watching—and we said we would make it public—