

Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, and I represent many men and women who work at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The Navy, in fact, is the largest employer in my district.

I'm frequently copied on emails from civilian Navy workers who are resigning because of the disarray caused by Congress, the threat of furloughs, and the loss of cost-of-living adjustments. Workers often choose those jobs, despite lower salaries, because they love their country and they want to protect it. Also, government offers stability that the private industry often can't.

But these workers no longer feel valued; and thanks to Congress, working at the shipyard doesn't even offer stability anymore. It's affecting the morale of our workers and the ability of our shipyard to execute its mission.

Here's a direct quote from a manager who contacted me. He wrote:

We will have problems retaining professionals if this fiscal environment continues. We will have trouble accomplishing our current workload, let alone providing any level of increased engineering support.

Mr. Speaker, this will only cost us more in the long run. This dysfunction in Congress is directly responsible for good workers walking away and is threatening the mission of the United States Navy.

It also affects the local contractors and small businesses in my district that support these missions. They're already facing sweeping layoffs and tremendous uncertainty.

Here's another example: Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, in my district, while mostly spared from furloughs under sequestration, still is limited in its ability to fill jobs made vacant by attrition. The hiring freeze went into effect right as they were planning on adding 600 workers.

The shipyard has the work. Our region needs the jobs. They've only recently announced that they can slowly hire to cover for some attrition.

□ 1030

Because of these constraints, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard has resorted to asking anyone—upper level staff, anybody who has carried a tool bag or used a wrench—to help deliver three submarines and an aircraft carrier back to the fleet. That's a testament to the lengths people are going to to cover for such an insane policy like sequestration.

We have seen the same thing at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, where 10,000 civilian employees have received notice of furloughs. We have seen it affect military training where we've seen rotations to the National Training Center cancelled. General Brown at Joint Base Lewis-McChord told our paper:

It's a huge impact on training. Where is the fine line where you go from being the best in the world to second best?

It's not right that Congress doesn't have their backs on this. We have got to stop this policy. From my perspective and from the perspective of the

folks who have to deal with this damaging policy every day, it doesn't matter who's to blame for the idea of sequestration. All that matters is that both parties work together to stop it.

Every day that this Congress doesn't work on coming together on a balanced, long-term budget is another day that folks around the country have to cover for Congress' dysfunction. Democrats and Republicans need to work together on this. This doesn't make sense for the folks in my district who face losing up to 20 percent of their pay or for the folks in my district who can't apply for an open job because of our budget uncertainty.

It doesn't make sense for the kids in Head Start programs who are hurt by sequestration. We should stop these across-the-board cuts for them, too.

The right solution is for Congress to replace these cuts altogether with a balanced, long-term budget. I am ready to work with both parties to get this done for our national security, for our economy, and for the American people who deserve better.

150 REASONS TO LOVE WEST VIRGINIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, we began the "150 Reasons to Love West Virginia" project to honor our State's 150th birthday, which is tomorrow. We asked West Virginians to send us what they love about the Mountain State, and they delivered.

Many people cited West Virginia's strong heritage and rich history as reasons to love our State. We all know that West Virginia is rooted in the values of hard work and the respect of our neighbors. I love how West Virginia friends are for a lifetime. My family's history is deeply rooted in the State of West Virginia, and I love that. I love the State's nicknames, "Wild and Wonderful" and "Almost Heaven."

David J. Stoffel said:

We are a collection of communities joined by a common trust, respect, love, and willingness to help our neighbor. Once you are a Mountaineer, you will always be a Mountaineer.

Anita Keaton wrote that small, quaint towns throughout West Virginia like Thomas and Thurmond are the "heart and soul of our great State."

It all began in June in 1861, when a group of pro-Union Virginians met in Wheeling, West Virginia. Together, they created the Restored Government of Virginia, which sought to rebuild ties with the Union. On April 20, West Virginia became the only State in the Union to acquire its sovereignty by proclamation of the President of the United States, and that President was Abraham Lincoln. And on June 20, 1863, 150 years ago tomorrow, we formally joined the Union.

As a community flourishes, it gives birth to local myths and legends. We

tell stories to our children so they can someday tell those stories to their children. West Virginia has its fair share of true stories and legends. We have Mothman, and we also have a tale of the Hatfield and McCoy feud, which is a story of family honor, justice, and vengeance. We have very well respected West Virginians who are here today with us: Chuck Yeager, Jerry West, Mary Lou Retton, Jessica Lynch, Jennifer Garner, and a gentleman who shares my hometown, a very small town of West Virginia, Glen Dale, Mr. Brad Paisley.

"Pioneer stories" like the Hatfields and McCoy's have been passed down from generation to generation, as noted by Deb Walizer. These legends bring the people of West Virginia together. They allow us to put aside our differences and share a common bond in our heritage.

That strong-knit community is also built through events like the one I've attended many times—and one time with President Bush—the Fourth of July celebration parade in Ripley, West Virginia. As Tracy Wolford Kelley mentioned, she loves the parade in Ripley, Symphony Sundays or the Forest Festival or attending a Mountaineer football game on a crisp fall evening. All victory is welcome.

West Virginia is not only rich in history, but it is rich in natural beauty. From "trout fishing the Cranberry and Williams River," as Jo Belcher noted, or West Virginia's "beautiful vistas of tree-covered mountain," as mentioned by Emmett Pepper of Charleston, there are many reasons to love and enjoy our State's scenic beauty. West Virginia is a peaceful place.

These images and places make the changes in season particularly beautiful, which Robin Barnette says looks like "God's coloring book." They also bring families and friends together, as Connie Sherman of Moorefield, West Virginia, mentioned talking about the Trough River.

Whether it's simple things like West Virginia pepperoni rolls or the coal fields and natural gas that power our economy, there is so much to love about the State we call home. For 150 years, its country roads have provided the men and women who have traveled them with a sense of comfort and pride.

And no matter where we are in the country or around the world, we all do like to sing the John Denver song "Almost Heaven, West Virginia," which, by the way, my granddaughter can sing from front to back.

While these anecdotes about why we love West Virginia only touch on what makes our State so great, I want to thank you and the folks of West Virginia for celebrating with me. There will be celebrations all throughout the State over the next several days.

I love West Virginia, and I'm honored to serve the citizens of an outstanding State. So from me to you, happy 150th birthday, West Virginia.

THE SAN GABRIEL WATERSHED
RESTORATION ACT

□ 1040

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

Ms. CHU. I rise today to introduce the San Gabriel Watershed Restoration Act of 2013. This bill could revitalize a California urban river by directing the Army Corps of Engineers to prepare a study analyzing the current state of the San Gabriel River Watershed and how it can be transformed into a destination for Los Angeles County.

We have such incredible resources right in our backyard in the San Gabriel Valley, and at the heart is the San Gabriel River. That is why we must do all that we can to revitalize and protect this space.

My communities are desperate for more open space to run, play, and explore. The L.A. area is one of the most park poor in the country. The San Gabriel River, only steps from our homes, used to be a green, lush paradise. The local Gabriolino tribespeople used to canoe down its waters out to the sea, but today, in its current state, it feels more like an abandoned waterway than the majestic river it once was. There are so few places for families to sit and enjoy or to swim in its cool waters on unbearably hot summer days in the urban valley cities.

The San Gabriel River also performs essential flood protection, drinking water recharge, and storm water conservation functions. But it is inaccessible to local residents for recreation and lacks many natural and riparian ecosystems. Additional provisions for flood control and water quality control are also sorely needed.

Increasingly, residents have expressed the desire to rediscover the river and offer more of its benefits to all the communities along its route. That's why I introduced this bill in the 111th Congress to study how we can improve the river and expand its use, and that is why I'm introducing this bill again.

The study created in this bill would look at the best ways to revitalize the watershed, focusing on ecosystem restoration, outdoor recreation enhancements, and ways to conserve rainwater and keep our water clean. This vital project is a first step—that is long overdue—toward creating more outdoor space within the highly urbanized watershed communities so that people can enjoy this beautiful resource in a safe and sustainable way.

A similar study and demonstration project were critical steps in the effort to revitalize the Los Angeles River, and it was so successful that now there are regular kayaking trips on the L.A. River, a place many thought of as only a concrete wasteland. People can actually enjoy this little bit of nature again. This is a powerful testament to the potential and growing success of river revitalization efforts.

My communities have a vision: to create an Emerald Necklace, a 17-mile loop of multi-benefit parks connecting 10 cities along the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers. This bill is a critical part of realizing this dream, and I call on my colleagues in Congress to support this bill and help make their vision a reality for generations to come.

CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, as we come to the House floor this morning, many communities across the West suffer from severe wildfires, and they're having a more devastating impact due to extreme drought conditions this year. In my home State of New Mexico, firefighters have bravely worked to battle a number of blazes, and I extend my sincerest thanks for their tireless efforts.

With global climate change contributing to drier and hotter summers and more intense fire seasons, it is critical that we take steps to address the root causes of climate change before it gets too late. And while we should focus on the steps we must take to reduce greenhouse gases and encourage energy conservation, we must also ensure that we're preparing for the drought conditions that will continue to impact our communities in the years to come. The National Integrated Drought Information System is an important tool in this effort. This program collects and consolidates drought-related data and information. It operates regional drought early warning system pilot projects across the country.

Authorization for this program is currently scheduled to end this year. That is why I'm working in a bipartisan effort to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System for another 4 years. This will enable the Federal Government to further develop regional drought early warning systems and identify research, monitoring, and forecasting needs that can help farmers and firefighters alike. Because whether it's growing crops or raising livestock or battling wildfires in the West, drought conditions in the coming years will continue to pose challenges for our communities, and we will need to do all we can to assist those whose lives and livelihoods are impacted by climate change.

Mr. Speaker, today I'm also offering an amendment to be able to provide grant authorization to many small, predominantly Hispanic communities across northern New Mexico that are in these areas where these waterways have been carved through our mountains, through our watersheds to provide opportunity to small farmers, rural communities all across New Mexico called acequias.

For many years, local farmers in New Mexico have been asking for an amendment that would allow acequia and community ditch associations to access EQIP funds. An acequia is a centuries-old irrigation structure that is still in use today, providing opportunities for many private land owners all across New Mexico and southern Colorado.

The board of private land owners, also called an acequia and community ditch association, is in charge of administering maintenance of the irrigation infrastructure which often requires work on sections of the ditch of the acequia on private land. These small community ditch associations do not have the authority to levy taxes. That's why I'm asking for Members to please consider and offer your support on this amendment today.

Members who are watching and tuning in to C-SPAN this morning, as well as offices, please take a look at this amendment. We need your help in New Mexico, and our farmers would certainly appreciate the kind support of Members of Congress.

So thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot of work to do. Let's make sure we can get this done on behalf of people who are struggling and working all across America today.

WEST VIRGINIA'S 150TH BIRTHDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues from the State of West Virginia in celebrating our State's 150th birthday tomorrow. We invite the rest of the Nation to join in our revelry and reflection.

Ours is a proud history of doing our part, and then some, in service to this great Nation of ours. West Virginia was born of war, and West Virginians understand full well the price of service and sacrifice to defend our shores. In times of war, the Mountain State's sons and daughters have answered their country's call faithfully, honorably, and nobly. And in times of peace, we have continued to serve our Nation from our mountains and our hollows.

Geologists tell us our ancient mountains' sharp peaks, in ages long past, were rounded and smoothed through the forces of nature over the eons of time. The result satisfies the soul.

Thanks to the U.S. Postal Service, the world can get a glimpse of our majestic mountains on a new stamp commemorating our 150 years. Based on a photograph taken in Pocahontas County, West Virginia, that stamp stands as a testament that our bragging about being "Almost Heaven" is every inch legitimate.

Those same mountains, Mr. Speaker, have honed and hewn a people for whom the phrase "Mountaineers are always free" is more than a State motto; it is a way of life.