

of the budget—just as the President has—with a deep investment in our infrastructure needs because we know that that investment is one of the pillars of the strong economy.

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

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank my colleague, Mr. POCAN, for yielding back and giving me this opportunity to address the people of the United States of America.

I am new around here, and so I like to generally listen and evaluate before I speak, and I only try to speak when I might have something to add of value.

If you drive through my district, which is the 12th Congressional District of the State of New Jersey and includes a lot of highways, byways, and bridges, you will see this iconic sign in the capital of New Jersey that says, "Trenton Makes, The World Takes."

It is a sign that points out the legendary industrial past of our community. However, this industrial revolution, it has passed us by, and it is a reminder of the employment that the city used to have.

Yes, the city of Trenton was once the place that you found employment. The Trenton Iron Company produced the wrought iron beams for the dome on this U.S. Capitol Building where we stand today. Trenton's John Roebling's Sons Company produced wire rope that was used to build the Brooklyn Bridge, the now-famous George Washington Bridge, and the Golden Gate suspension bridge in California.

Trenton was also known for its potterymaking, and even today, Trenton pottery can be found on display in museums around the world because of its artistry and superior craftsmanship.

Trenton's booming industry is responsible for the invention of even the oyster crackers, pork roll, Bayer aspirin, and felt-tipped markers.

Yet, today, Trenton, New Jersey, has a 15 percent unemployment rate. The city of Trenton's legendary industrial past does little for the thousands of unemployed workers searching for work today. The city has had a turn for the worse since the manufacturing sector has left and took with it great-paying jobs.

We are not alone in that problem and this crisis. The same can be said for Cleveland, Ohio, or Detroit, Michigan, or Gary, Indiana, or Philadelphia—to name just a few—towns which were once thriving centers of commerce where jobs were plentiful and unem-

ployment was rare. Today, these same towns face an unemployment crisis where securing work that enables a mother or a father to support a family is an elusive proposition.

At the same time we experience this employment crisis, we also have a crisis in our infrastructure. New Jersey has 39,213 total miles of road. We are small, but we have a lot of concrete, but 35 percent of the major roads are in deprived condition.

New Jersey has 6,566 bridges, but 36 percent of which are underfunded, considered structurally deficient, or functionally obsolete. Over 200 million trips are taken daily across deficient bridges in the Nation, but in total, one in nine of the Nation's bridges are rated as structurally deficient.

You may recall, in 2007, the I-35W Mississippi River bridge in Minneapolis—which had been categorized as structurally deficient—collapsed, killing 13 and injuring 145 people.

Mr. Speaker, our bridges are crumbling, and we need to invest in building and fixing them. The Nation's estimated 100,000 miles of levees can be found in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. The reliability of these levees is unknown in many cases, and the country has yet to establish a national levee safety program.

In 2005, New Orleans' levees failed to hold back the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina, claiming the lives of more than 1,800 people and causing at least \$125 billion in economic damage. Public safety remains at risk from these aging structures, and the cost to repair or rehabilitate these levees is roughly estimated to be \$100 billion by the National Committee on Levee Safety.

Mr. Speaker, these numbers are reflective of what America has become. I take a look at our communities today, and I see the vestiges of our past.

I ask that we, as Congress, stop playing games, that we get to work for real this time, that we recognize that here we will have the opportunity to not only create safe infrastructure, not only to create safe bridges, not only to protect communities that are subject to flooding from levees, but we will also be able to create jobs.

There is no more meaningful social action program than a good job, and we know that government has a history for creating those jobs in times of need that help not only to build the strong infrastructure of this great Nation, but to put families back to work, to make sure that they are earning a wage for which they can take care of their children, help provide opportunities for their families, take care of their elderly, ensure that their children have access to quality education, and ensure that our future is strong and stable, based upon the fact that they have had good, predictable, dependable, decent-paying jobs with decent wages.

I look to our Congress, as many people do in this country, and I know who we really are, and I know that if we put our foot to the pedal, that if we decide

that we are going to put this country back on a strong footing—metaphorically, as well as literally—I know that if we are understanding that if we build out and support that middle-income layer, those people, the working people of this Nation, that we will create an economy that will grow and prosper everyone from the very, very top to the very, very bottom.

That is what we need to do right now in this country, from a bipartisan perspective, is to introduce, to advocate for, to debate, discuss, design, and develop an infrastructure bill with bipartisan support that signals to the working families and all families in this country that, A, we want to make sure that you are safe as you travel our highways and cross our bridges, that you are safe when you live near waterways and need to be protected with levees, and that you are given the opportunity to give back to your country, to build it, make it the strong country that it should be and, at the same time, create the kind of jobs that we need in order to grow our economy for everybody.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to speak to the American people today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF THE HONORABLE SAM JOHNSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, 42 years ago today, a POW came home from Vietnam.

This Special Order was put on by Mr. DOLD from Illinois. He will be here shortly.

A man I love came home that day 42 years ago. He is our colleague, SAM JOHNSON. SAM first saw combat in Korea, 62 hair-raising combat missions in an F-86 Sabre. He told me he used to race Buzz Aldrin to get to where the bad guys were to get the first kill of the day. That same Buzz Aldrin walked on the moon with Neil Armstrong.

SAM shot down one MIG in Korea. He came home and quickly became one of our best pilots in the Air Force. He joined the Thunderbirds, the Air Force's flight demonstration team. He flew solo and slot in the F-100C Super Sabre. He became an instructor pilot at the Air Force's Fighter Weapons School, their Top Gun.

SAM saw combat again in Vietnam. He flew the F-4 Phantom into combat. Coming back after dropping his bombs on North Korea, he was shot down. It was his 25th combat mission over Vietnam, April 15, 1966. SAM bailed out and fell into hell on earth. He was taken prisoner, confined for 6 years, 9 months, and 12 days.

This was a new war for POWs. It was a war of propaganda, so every minute

those men were alive, they were valuable. Their captors used starvation, disease, isolation, physical, and mental torture to push these men to confess to war crimes, to bombing hospitals and schools with napalm. They were beaten every single day they were held in captivity.

The Viet Cong saw a fighter in SAM JOHNSON. They saw a man who might start a riot, a rebellion. They called him a “diehard,” and so—with 10 other men—they moved him from the Hanoi Hilton to a place they called Alcatraz, hell within hell.

SAM was alone for over 2 years. He stayed in a windowless concrete room, 9 feet wide, 4 feet, 9 by 4 feet. Every summer, it got up to 110 degrees Fahrenheit in his cell.

His legs were shackled with irons—both legs—every minute he was in his cell. Ten other men went with him: Jeremiah Denton, Jim Stockdale, Bob Shumaker, Ronald Storz, Harry Jenkins, Howard Rutledge, Neils Tanner, Jim Mulligan, George McKnight, and George Coker.

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Ten came home. Ronald Storz died in Alcatraz in captivity. SAM and his 10 brothers all learned to lean on each other to survive. In Alcatraz, one day SAM was put in a cell and beaten and beaten and beaten to make him write a document and sign his confession of committing a war crime.

Jeremiah Denton heard the clamor when SAM was thrown back into his cell hours after he was taken off from his cell with the Viet Cong. Admiral Denton said: SAM, SAM, it is okay, buddy. There was silence for a couple moments, and then SAM said: I made them write it, but I had to sign it. Admiral Denton said: It is okay, SAM. You are, okay. Hang on. You did a good job.

Because of what SAM and others went through, every naval aviator, marine aviator, Air Force pilot, Army pilot, Navy SEAL, Marine Force Recon, Army Green Berets attend what is known as SERE school—S-E-R-E, survive, evade, resist, escape—POW school.

I went to SERE for 1 week in the fall of 1991. I was fed little amounts of food. No sleep. The last 2 days were in the POW camp in a small concrete room like SAM, alone, stuffed into a small box in the dark, loud music and a waterboard. That training gave me a taste of torture—my strengths and weaknesses. SAM never had that training. He learned it with his blood and broken bones.

I want to close by using the tap code, the way SAM and his fellow prisoners used to communicate without talking. It is a 5 by 5 matrix, 25 letters. It omits the K.

(Tapping on podium.)

In the Hanoi Hilton and Alcatraz, that says: I salute you. SAM, if I was there that day, 42 years ago when you came home, I would say: SAM, I salute you.

God bless them all.
I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING THE 42ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE RELEASE OF AMERICAN POWS FROM VIETNAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend from Texas for his remarks talking about SAM JOHNSON, one of the great American heroes that we have the honor here of serving with. That tap code that you just heard was really the lifeline, the lifeline for so many of the almost 600 POWs, the vast majority in the Hoa Lo Prison. So while you heard those taps, those taps were actually the communication system that allowed those POWs to have some sort of contact with another human, and, I would argue, probably saved many lives.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield to my good friend from Kentucky.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD), my friend, for his leadership on this issue and for leading this special hour. I also want to thank my friend from Texas for honoring our colleague SAM JOHNSON, a true American hero who, through his service and sacrifice, his time in the Hanoi Hilton, his time as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, really showcased what it means to be a great patriot and an American hero willing to sacrifice for his fellow countrymen and for the freedom that we all enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of central and eastern Kentucky, I, too, rise today to recognize the 42nd anniversary of the release of American prisoners of war from Vietnam. I would like to honor the brave men and women who courageously wore our Nation’s cloth and made great sacrifices in the name of freedom.

As I walk into my congressional office, I am reminded every day of all the American servicemembers that never returned home from past wars by the POW flag that I proudly display outside of my office.

Since the beginning of the Revolutionary War, Kentuckians have continued to answer our Nation’s call to service. In fact, over 125,000 Kentuckians courageously and unselfishly served during the Vietnam era, and the people of Kentucky honor those who fought and died in Vietnam by commissioning the Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which overlooks Kentucky’s beautiful State capitol building in Frankfort. I would also like to recognize the organizations that keep the memories of those who have sacrificed much for our country alive, organizations such as Task Force Omega of Kentucky, Rolling Thunder, and the

Kentucky Patriot Guard, who constantly remind us to never forget the servicemembers who have perished and have not yet returned home from Vietnam and other wars fought on foreign soil.

While being held captive, American POWs found strength in each other, and as Congressman DOLD and Congressman OLSON pointed out, those taps were the way that those men in that prison kept each other’s spirits alive. Through their struggle, they found resilience; through their faith, they found comfort; and through their patriotism, they found hope. We are so grateful to have these servicemembers home. As we know all too well from recent events in the Middle East, not all prisoners of war make it back to their family members alive, but we owe all of them a debt of gratitude.

Unlike the veterans of World War II, Iraq, the Persian Gulf war or Afghanistan, those who served in Vietnam had a very different and unfortunate experience, many of them, when they returned home. Some were advised to change into civilian clothes and avoid contact with protestors, and it really hurt. They didn’t deserve it. They deserve better. So for all of those veterans of the Vietnam war, including those who were POWs, we welcome them home because they deserve our respect, and they deserve to be welcomed home to a grateful nation.

American servicemembers found hope in the fact that a grateful nation would not leave them behind and would do everything possible to bring them home. We, as Americans, still stand behind that promise today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for the opportunity to honor the 42nd anniversary of the release of American POWs from Vietnam.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Kentucky for coming and joining us in honoring these really incredible servicemen, each with an incredible story, and really as we talk about it, actually, Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor yesterday. Yesterday I came to this very spot to talk about my uncle. My uncle is one of the Alcatraz 11, lives not far from the Capitol here in Washington. He was flying off the USS *Coral Sea* in an F-8 Crusader and was shot down on a low-level mission, flying about a thousand feet above the ground.

Now, for those, Mr. Speaker, that don’t know what an F-8 Crusader is, it is a jet that can fly at Mach 1.72, nearly twice the speed of sound. When it filled up with smoke after he was hit, he had very little time to eject. He ejected. His parachute opened about 35 feet above the ground, and he broke his back on impact.

Now, this is an incredible story. Yesterday marked the 50th anniversary of being shot down. That was one of the darkest days, I would argue, certainly in our family; but for American servicemen, and certainly aviators, that is certainly a very dark day.