

botched smuggling operations or perished as stowaways, and those are the ones we know about.

Now we hear about “La Bestia,” or “The Beast,” which is the train carrying migrants from southern Mexico to the border of our country. Think about hundreds of people, most of them children and teenagers, clinging to the outside of a moving train while they are preyed upon by smugglers, sexual predators, and every kind of deviant.

The migrants who are fleeing violence and poverty and gang- and drug lord-infested communities in Central America, like those fleeing African and Asian countries, are willing to literally risk life and limb for the slim chance of a better life on this side.

Europe is responding to the migrant crisis by committing to more rescue operations. The rightwing, anti-immigration parties across Europe see the crisis as validation for their call to build a big wall around “fortress Europe.” There are a few people here in this Congress, in this building, who want to build a wall just like theirs.

Most people in Europe understand that building civil society and stable economies in the Southern Hemisphere is the best way to entice people to stay home. Foreign aid and international economic development are not dirty words in Europe the way they are here.

In the U.S., the policies set in Washington directly relate to the instability of neighboring countries in Central America, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Trade policies initiated here in this country have had devastating consequences in rural areas across our hemisphere, driving people from the land and driving people into drug cultivation. It is our insatiable appetite here in the United States for illegal drugs, funded with our dollar bills and enforced with U.S. guns, that creates and maintains a lot of the instability and chaos that drives people from their homes to America. Yet almost every budget that is considered in this Congress cuts mental health and drug counseling, addiction treatment and prevention, and does little to address our role in fueling instability.

With specific regard to immigration and asylum, in this Congress, we are debating laws to make it harder for children to apply for asylum and laws to make it easier to deport children or to put families into lengthy and expensive detention.

To add insult to injury, the Judiciary Committee just approved a measure to allow those who want to homeschool their children but who are prevented from doing so by their own government to be considered as a special class of oppressed victims to be considered eligible to apply for political asylum in the U.S. For the people from Germany and Sweden who want to homeschool their children, that is the kind of oppression that Congress responds to—people from Central America whose governments are unwilling or unable to protect children from murder and sexual assault, not so much.

The reality is that we need to do more to engage and strengthen our neighbors; we need to do much more to make sure that the actions, trade, and consumption of our people are helping, not hurting; and we need to do much more to make sure that we have secure borders by also remembering to put doors on those borders so that people can come with visas in a controlled way and not risking their lives with smugglers.

First and foremost, we must remember the message that Pope Francis reminded us of when he said of those who drowned in the ocean: “They are men and women like us, our brothers seeking a better life, starving, persecuted, wounded, exploited, victims of war. They were looking for a better life.”

Let us not forget that migrants are human beings.

HONORING FORMER BRAZOS COUNTY JUDGE RANDY SIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FLORES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor former Brazos County Judge Randy Sims, who passed away on April 2 of this year.

Judge Sims served the Brazos Valley community for decades. He served as the Brazos County commissioner of precinct 3 from 1972 to 1976 and again from 1989 to 2001. He also served on the Bryan City Council from 1987 to 1988. Lastly, he served as the Brazos County judge from 2003 to 2010.

Arthur Randolph Sims was born in Houston on July 31, 1939. He graduated from Stephen F. Austin High School. During his high school days, he was quite an athlete, playing both baseball and football. He passed up a chance to play professional baseball to get a college education. Legendary coach Bear Bryant recruited Randy to play football for Texas A&M University. Not only was Randy a top running back for Texas A&M, but he also held a long-standing record in the Southwest Conference for kicking a 52-yard field goal.

Following graduation from A&M, Randy remained in Brazos Valley. In May of 1960, he married Brenda Bryan. They were married for nearly 55 years. Randy and Brenda have one son and one daughter, and they are blessed with nine grandchildren.

In the mid-1960s, Randy opened a restaurant called Randy Sims Barbecue, which operated for 27 years. Randy was a great cook, and his restaurant carried recipes from Brenda’s dad and from Brenda’s brother, Red Bryan and Sonny Bryan.

Randy was a loving father, and he cherished his family time. He quickly learned how to balance his career in order to spend quality time with his family. Last year, the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce named Randy and Brenda as its Citizens of the Year. This award was bestowed on them for their long and dedicated service to our community.

As an active community leader, Randy Sims served tirelessly on various boards and organizations, including on the State of Texas Regional Review Committee, the Presidential Library Committee, the Bryan-College Station Economic Development Corporation, the Bear Bryant Scholarship Foundation, the Brazos Valley Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the Solid Waste Advisory Board, the Brazos Beautiful Initiative, the Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History, the Grace Bible Church Deacon Board, and the Brazos County 911 Board.

His service to the Brazos Valley also included serving as a Bryan ISD host volunteer, as vice president of the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce, as chair of the Brazos County Health Board District, and as the chair of the Brazos County Juvenile Board.

Mr. Speaker, Randy Sims was a great leader, a dedicated public servant, and an outstanding family man. His selfless devotion to our community will be greatly missed. He will long be remembered as a great public servant to our community and as a loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend to his family and friends.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest sympathy and our heartfelt condolences to Brenda Sims and to her family. We also lift up Randy Sims’ family and friends in our prayers.

As I close, Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Americans continue to pray for our country during these difficult times, for the men and women in uniform, who protect it from external threats, and for our first responders, who protect us from threats here at home.

NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK

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

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

After working 18 years as a 911 dispatcher, I know firsthand the challenges our public safety dispatchers face, the stress that they are put under, and the critical importance of their work. This is why, last week, I was proud to introduce a resolution commemorating National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

I remember working the graveyard shift four floors below ground and taking calls from people from all walks of life, often during their most vulnerable moments. 911 dispatchers hear it all. They are the first point of contact for public safety, and no matter the crisis, losing control is simply not an option.

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week also provides us with the opportunity to remind our constituents of the importance of keeping emergency lines open for just that—emergencies. 911 isn’t an information line, and local governments have limited resources.

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They can't afford to have 911 lines tied up with non-life-threatening emergencies. Simply put, there is no excuse for 911 abuse.

I encourage people to familiarize themselves with their local police and fire departments' nonemergency phone numbers, have them readily available or refer to 311 or their local info line where available. Keeping 911 lines clear is crucial to ensuring dispatchers are readily available during an emergency.

Every day public safety dispatchers help save lives. They provide comfort and reassurance, and they are an integral part of our law enforcement teams. Yet, too often, their work goes unrecognized.

When you need a calming voice to guide you through a crisis, when law enforcement, fire safety, and rescue personnel are in need of seamless coordination at a moment's notice, when every second counts, 911 dispatchers are on the other end of the line. They are the unsung heroes of the first responder community.

This National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, let's recognize and honor the hundreds of thousands of public safety telecommunicators working round the clock to keep our communities safe.

NATIONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize April as National Financial Literacy Month and highlight the key role that the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, or the AICPA, and State CPA societies and CPAs across the country play in educating all Americans about their personal finances.

National Financial Literacy Month is a yearly reminder of the importance of working to improve Americans' understanding of their personal finances. For over 10 years, the AICPA, its members, and State CPA societies have been the leaders in the financial literacy campaign by providing free programs, tools, and resources for all consumers. Thousands of CPAs across 55 States and jurisdictions are volunteering their time to educate consumers to understand their personal finances and their financial goals.

The AICPA, along with the State CPA societies and like-minded financial educational institutions, plays an essential role in educating all Americans so that they will have the knowledge to make decisions for a lifetime of financial well-being. By focusing on financial education as a lifelong endeavor, CPAs are encouraging children to learn about the value of money and teaching adults the importance of saving for a secure retirement.

Mr. Speaker, we have thousands of college students who are unfamiliar

with the impact their student loan debt will have on their early career. A financially literate college student will understand those implications and ramifications and would be better served and be better suited or be better able to make better decisions with respect to whether or not to take on that debt as they pursue their college education.

All Americans, from high school students to older adults, need the tools and resources to make educated decisions about their personal finances. Through the AICPA's flagship 360 Degrees of Financial Literacy program, CPAs across the country are volunteering to help all Americans understand their personal finances through every stage of life. The program combines grassroots advocacy with free public resources and tools for CPAs to educate Americans of all ages.

There is an urgent need to improve the financial literacy of all Americans. A recent survey showed that 47 percent of American households are not saving any of their current income for retirement. This means almost half of all Americans are living paycheck to paycheck and without any savings plan for financial hardships or retirement. Providing all Americans with the information necessary to make educated decisions will help households understand the value of savings for retirement and lead to a lifetime of financial well-being.

Again, I would like to congratulate the AICPA and State societies for this effort in helping Americans become more financially literate.

PHMSA IS ACTUALLY A TOOTHLESS KITTEN

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, last week before the Transportation and Infrastructure's committee on pipeline safety, I called the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, known as PHMSA, "a toothless tiger that has overdosed on quaaludes and is passed out on the job."

Today I stand before you to say I was wrong. I was wrong to call PHMSA a toothless tiger. PHMSA is actually a toothless kitten, a fluffy industry pet that frightens absolutely no one. This has been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt by yesterday's excellent Politico investigation of PHMSA's ineffectual "can't do" attitude, written by Elana Schor and Andrew Restuccia. Allow me to highlight some of the shocking incompetence brought to light by this article.

All rules made by PHMSA undergo peer review by two advisory committees: one on oil and one on gas. In theory, the committee is made up of five members each from industry, government, and public. Sounds good, right? Well, that might be true except the committee's current rosters are miss-

ing seven members on the government and public sides. This means the industry is calling the shots and voting for their own initiatives. On these committees there is almost no formal resistance to doing the industry's bidding.

That is what Deborah Hersman, former head of the National Transportation Safety Board, meant when she said: "For the regulator to delegate too much authority to the regulated to assess their own system risks and correct them is tantamount to the fox guarding the henhouse."

As we have seen in my district and in so many others, the fox has very little incentive to prevent oil or gas from spoiling the henhouse or to prevent the hens from blowing up. Of course, everyone is very sorry about the fact, but the will to prevent these accidents in the first place is simply not there. That is what happened in Mayflower, Arkansas, in 2013 when PHMSA let ExxonMobil operate an oil pipeline that was known to be faulty for 7 years, and then it blew up.

Nowhere is this more obvious than PHMSA's pitiful fines. Fines are supposed to be a deterrent, and yet the fines that PHMSA levies are so pathetic compared to the cost of pipeline leaks and explosions that they can't even be seen on this graph. Here you see that over the last 12 years PHMSA has issued just \$44.2 million in fines for incidents that cost over \$5 billion. Look at these tiny red lines. You can't even see them. You can see these other graph points that show how much damage was actually done, but the fines are next to nothing.

Take the Mayflower, Arkansas, example where dumping 200,000 gallons of heavy crude into a neighborhood cost ExxonMobil \$2.7 million, or 0.008 percent of that year's profits. To industry, this measly fine is just the cost of doing business. No need to fix a pipeline. Fines are so small, it is cheaper to just pay them.

But, of course, damage from pipeline leaks and explosions can't be reduced to just gray bars. In my district, the city of San Bruno, where eight people were killed by a pipeline explosion in 2010, the public remains traumatized by the idea that their entire neighborhood could be wiped out by one carelessly inspected or uninspected pipeline. Life has risks, but one of them shouldn't be coming home to find your husband and son and mother-in-law dead and your house obliterated, as happened to one of the families in my district.

That is why I find PHMSA's utter failure to implement more rigorous safety regulations so disgusting. PHMSA's reasoning that such regulations are "too costly for the pipeline industry compared with the expected benefits" is the reasoning of movie villains, not well-intentioned safety professionals who are supposed to be taking care of the public interest. Whose side is PHMSA on?

Now, one could argue that the low penalties are Congress' fault, not