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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

PHMSA's. After all, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has power to impose civil penalties of a million dollars per day. Compare that to PHMSA's relatively paltry \$200,000 a day. But that doesn't explain PHMSA's failure to even start civil penalty cases.

Even as pipeline incidents increase, PHMSA started fewer civil penalty cases in 2014 than in the past 10 years and proposed 73 percent fewer fines. For the few fines that are proposed, PHMSA does that behind closed doors where the public is not welcome.

ExxonMobil dumped 63,000 gallons of oil into Yellowstone River in 2011 but managed to argue that the original \$1.7 million fine should be put down to \$1 million. Why did PHMSA allow this? Nobody knows.

Though I've talked about San Bruno, I want to emphasize that the lack of adequate pipeline safety measures is a nationwide problem, not a Bay Area or California problem. In 2011, a leak from an 83-year-old cast-iron main in Allentown, Pennsylvania, caused a blast that killed 5 people. In 2012, a gas pipeline explosion outside of Charleston, West Virginia, destroyed several properties. In 2014, a leak in a 127-year-old pipeline in Harlem, New York, killed 8 and injured 50 more. In each incident, we see the same, recurring problems—aging infrastructure and inadequate inspection. How many more of these tragedies do we need before we get serious about pipeline safety?

The saddest part about this whole situation is that we know how to prevent pipeline leaks and explosions. The National Transportation Safety Board has been saying the same thing for years, after so many deaths and the destruction of property and the environment. We need automatic or remote control shutoff valves. We need existing pipelines to accommodate internal inspection tools. We need PHMSA to be a strong voice for safety for the public and we need industry to cease being apologists for lethal incompetence.

Like so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I'm tired of PHMSA's excuses and prevarications. I'm frustrated that Congress seems powerless to induce PHMSA to take its job seriously. That's why I'm looking into legislation that will provide PHMSA with the proper encouragement to do its job. It's time for the toothless kitten to wake up, smell the leaking gas, and take decisive action.

SAVE OUR WATER

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, California is now in the fourth year of the worst drought on record. Hydrologists estimate it is the worst drought in 1,200 years. The Sierra snowpack today is just 5 percent of normal. One of our largest reservoirs, the New Melones Reservoir on the Stanislaus River, is at just 22 percent of its capacity, with the rainy season now officially over.

Water rationing is in effect in many communities. Many Californians face \$500 fines if they take too long in the

shower or spill a gallon of water on their sidewalks. And yet in the last several weeks, the Bureau of Reclamation has released about 10 billion gallons of what precious little water remains behind the New Melones Dam in order to nudge a handful of steelhead trout toward the ocean. That is enough water to meet the annual residential needs of a human population of about 300,000 for the whole year.

How many fish are affected? Well, biologists estimate that it will affect the offspring of about 29 steelhead trout on the Stanislaus River, a few hundred smolts, almost all of which will be eaten by predators long before they reach the ocean; and that assumes that they won't swim toward the ocean on their own, as they have been doing without our helpful assistance since time immemorial.

Put in financial terms, with water selling for \$700 per acre-foot, the cost of this ridiculous exercise is about \$21 million. But the real cost will be felt in the fall if the rains don't return. At that point, these releases guarantee there will be no water left for human beings or for fish.

All this occurs after a compromise without which Lake Tulloch, below New Melones, would have been drained below the water intake pipes that serve a population of nearly 10,000 human beings.

When are we going to wake up to the lunacy of these current environmental laws and the ideological zealots who are administering them? Who in his right mind would dump enough water to meet the annual residential needs of a population of 300,000 human beings in order to nudge toward the ocean the offspring of maybe 29 steelhead trout—it could be as few as 6—in the worst drought in 12 centuries? Yet that is precisely the policy of this administration.

President Obama has authority under the existing Endangered Species Act to convene a process to suspend these laws during the drought. Governor Brown also has the authority to request the President to act, yet despite repeated calls to do so, neither has responded. Ironically, before we built these dams, in a drought like this, there would be no rivers and there would be no fish.

Nor is this waste limited to just one reservoir and one river. The Bureau of Reclamation is ordering pulse flows throughout the State, completely uncaring of the impact on the rapidly endangered species called homo sapiens.

Mr. Speaker, 3 weeks ago I introduced H.R. 1668, the Save Our Water Act. It simply provides that during an extreme drought the requirements of massive environmental pulse flows are suspended. I want to urge speedy consideration and passage of this act, but I fear it will not come in time to prevent the exhaustion of our remaining water supply.

I warned of this practice last year, and I appealed to State and Federal

water managers to suspend these water releases during the drought. Sadly, I was unable to rally much public interest, I think in large part because few people actually believed that our water policy could possibly be so foolish.

Well, they believe now. We are now reaching a crisis that can no longer be ignored, and Californians are now starting to realize that our environmental laws long ago passed from the realm of reason to the realm of ideological extremism.

Droughts are nature's fault. Water shortages are our fault. We once built dams to store water from wet years so that we would have it in dry ones, but the same radical environmental laws that are squandering our existing water supply have also obstructed the construction of any major new storage since 1979, while the State's population has nearly doubled.

Dr. Johnson once said that when a man is to be hanged in the morning, it concentrates his attention remarkably. Well, if any good comes out of this drought, it may be that the American people finally have awakened to the damage these laws have done and are ready to change them and change the zealots in government who are responsible for them.

□ 1030

AN UPDATE ON THE PUERTO RICO STATEHOOD ADMISSION PROCESS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, for the sixth time this year, I rise to discuss Puerto Rico's political status.

I am an optimist about Puerto Rico's future. The island is blessed with natural beauty, a rich history, a vibrant culture, a sophisticated and diverse private sector, and talented and hard-working professionals who can compete with anyone, anywhere.

But my optimism is tempered by realism. Because to change the world for the better, you must first see the world as it is. And the reality is that Puerto Rico's potential is being squandered. Puerto Rico should be a blooming flower, but instead it is withering on the vine.

Puerto Rico is ensnared in the worst economic crisis in its history. The island's healthcare system is in a precarious state, the territory's homicide rate—despite recent improvements—still far exceeds that of any U.S. State, and residents of Puerto Rico are relocating to the States in record numbers.

I have heard it argued that leaders in Puerto Rico should concentrate solely on the immediate problems at hand and set aside the issue of political status until those problems are resolved or their severity is reduced. This argument has superficial appeal, but it is completely wrong. All of Puerto Rico's