

would deal with forest health and reduce the danger and the cost of future wildfires.

The trend is that two-thirds of the budget in the next 10 years will be firefighting. Absolutely, totally unacceptable.

These fires ought to be treated like any other natural disaster, not decimate our ability to manage our national forests.

The people dealing with these megafires know that part of the problem is climate change making itself felt. Less than 2 percent of these megafires consume almost one-third of the total fire suppression costs because our forests are drier.

There is less snow and rainfall, one more graphic reminder of the devastating impact of climate change, with higher temperatures and less water.

It is past time that Congress steps up to reduce carbon emissions. Perhaps the Pope in 2 weeks will inspire us to do something about climate change.

But, in the meantime, we should at least pass H.R. 167, the Wildfire Disaster Act—bipartisan legislation introduced on the very first day of this Congress, but languishing in committee—that would treat megafires like other natural disasters, not discriminate against the Forest Service.

One final point is that we should stop making the problem worse by allowing more and more people to move into the fire zone in the wildland-urban interface and give these people the illusion that somehow they are going to be provided with urban-level fire protection. Sixty percent of the new homes since 1990 have been built in the flame zone.

We should stop this madness because we are putting more people at risk not just to their properties and their families, but also the men and women who fight forest fires to protect structures.

Remember the 19 hotshots who were killed in Arizona a couple years ago who lost their lives trying to save homes that probably shouldn't have been there in the first place?

Commonsense budgeting, fighting climate change, and reasonable land use will reduce costs, protect lives, and allow us to begin spending money on prevention, which will, in turn, reduce further costs. It more than pays for itself.

Sensible budgeting, prevention, sound land use planning, will protect people and our forests, along with our budgets, while we start our long overdue actions to reduce carbon pollution.

It is time that Congress steps up to start addressing these problems now. This is not rocket science.

MINNESOTA'S BEST BAGGER GOES TO THE SIXTH DISTRICT

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

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate

Lauren Gillson of St. Cloud for her first place win in the Minnesota Grocers Association 2015 Best Bagger Contest, which took place at the Mall of America last month.

I would also like to commend the Minnesota Grocers Association for hosting this competition. It demonstrates how much value they place on providing excellent customer service.

Anyone who visits a grocery store will understand just how crucial a bagger's role is to the industry. They are, by far, one of the most memorable employees in the store, as they are the last person to be in contact with the customer. A bagger can often make or break the customer's overall experience.

Lauren competed against nine others before winning first place. Her win is truly impressive, as she has only worked at Lunds & Byerlys in St. Cloud for less than a month.

I wish Lauren good luck as she competes in the 2016 National Grocers Association Best Bagger Championship this February.

LIVE UNTIL THE DAY YOU DIE

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jim Davis for all that he has done to help those affected by cancer.

Over the past 4 months, Jim has flown throughout the continental United States and given free plane rides to cancer survivors and patients. By sharing his passion for flying, Jim has brought comfort and everlasting memories to these individuals in their time of need.

What truly is amazing about Jim's story is that he is going through a similar situation as the people he is helping.

After being diagnosed with liver cancer and given just 9 months to live, Jim decided that he wasn't going to give up. Instead, he made it his mission to help others affected by this terrible disease.

Jim has said, "Some people get a cancer diagnosis and just sit and wait to die. Not me. I want to live. Cancer patients, live until the day you die."

Jim, I want to thank you for your amazing acts of kindness. I am in awe of your positive attitude and capacity for helping others.

MINNESOTA IS PROUD OF HER VETERANS

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the individuals from my district who were recently recognized for Veterans' Voices Awards.

I am proud to recognize State Representative Bob Dettmer of Forest Lake, Minnesota; Ralph Donais of Elk River; Jim Tuorila of St. Cloud; Megan Allen of Ramsey; Scott Glew of Elk River; and Shelby Marie Hadley of Rice.

These awards are given to individuals who have nobly served their country in the Armed Forces and gone on to volunteer in their communities after returning home.

Each one of these incredible men and women, chosen by the Minnesota Humanities Center, has positively impacted the United States and Minnesota's Sixth District in a major way.

There is so much to thank these individuals for. Thank you for defending our country and for realizing that there was still so much to be accomplished once you returned home. Your work has not gone unnoticed, and we are forever grateful.

THREE AMERICAN HEROES

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

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the three young men from Sacramento County who have deep roots in my district and whose quick thinking onboard a train to Paris saved lives and inspired our country.

Alek Skarlatos, Anthony Sadler, and Spencer Stone sprang into action to stop a man wielding a gun and a box cutter onboard their train. The childhood friends were on vacation when the gunman burst into their cabin.

As an Oregon Army National Guardsman, Army Specialist Alek Skarlatos had recently returned from a tour in Afghanistan. He was the first to sound the alarm, telling his friends, "Let's go," as they moved to subdue the gunman.

Anthony Sadler, a senior at Sacramento State University, and Airman First Class Spencer Stone of the United States Air Force acted without hesitation.

Stone was slashed while trying to disarm the man, but the injury did not stop him. After subduing the gunman, the trained EMT went on to help treat other injured passengers.

These men showed bravery as they put themselves in harm's way to save those around them. Today I commend them and recognize their great service.

A parade in their honor will be held tomorrow in Sacramento. The date September 11 is fitting. They will be welcomed home and honored for their heroism. The story of these three men is a reminder that everyone can be a hero.

Thank you, Alek, Anthony, and Spencer. You have made your hometown proud, and you have made the United States proud.

REFUGEES

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

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to the tragic humanitarian crisis currently underway with the migration of refugees from Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey making their way into Western Europe.

With the unfolding of the horrific conflict in Syria and the continuing grotesque violence of ISIS, we can only

expect that hundreds of thousands more will attempt to flee hostile regions for the safety of Europe and beyond.

Since 2011, at least 4 million Syrians have fled their country, uprooting their families to escape brutal violence and miserable living conditions.

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However, the refugees' plight for a safe environment since leaving Syria and escaping to Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey has been bleak.

In just the last few days, we have seen heartbreaking images of refugees making the difficult journey to enter European countries, sometimes paying with their lives. These migrants and refugees will do anything for a better future.

I was proud to see the leadership of Angela Merkel in Germany accepting so many of these people in need. I strongly encourage all European Union countries to follow Chancellor Merkel's lead in welcoming these migrants and refugees and also supporting Germany's efforts in ensuring this undertaking is spread across the continent.

Most importantly, the United States must also offer any humanitarian assistance we can to ensure these vulnerable refugees have all available resources to return to a sense of normalcy. The world must step up, and I hope this Congress will play a role in the process of assisting these refugees.

Mr. Speaker, the conflict in Syria is one of the great blemishes on human history. Approximately 250,000 people have been killed. This administration said early on that Bashar al-Assad had to go. Nothing happened. The administration then said that, if Mr. Al-Assad used chemical weapons, then he really had to go. The dictator did, gassing innocent people, including children, and the world did nothing.

This is a heavy burden we carry now, and that is why it is essential that we do everything we can to assist these refugees. My parents were refugees; my grandparents were refugees, and the United States took us in and gave us an opportunity. The world must also now account for our failure in Syria and do everything we can to help these innocent people.

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize today, September 10, as World Suicide Prevention Day. Anyone who has been impacted by the horrible tragedy of a suicide, whether it be a family member, friend, or colleague, is well aware of the devastating impact when one person they love takes their own life.

It is critical that we continue the conversation about not only suicide, but mental health issues as well. People of all ages, races, and socioeconomic status can be plagued with mental health problems, and we must ensure those who are suffering receive the proper diagnosis and treatment.

In addition, communities must work together to foster understanding rather

than judgment. If you or a loved one is experiencing difficulties, I encourage you: Please, take the time to seek counseling from a professional.

Every life is worth living, and every life is precious. Let's come together to support our friends and neighbors and work to address mental illness and prevent suicide.

MADURO BORDER CLOSING

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it was recently announced by Venezuela's de facto dictator, Nicolas Maduro, that the single remaining border crossing with Colombia will be completely bolted.

This action is only the latest example of Maduro's weak attempts to search for phantom scapegoats of his regime's failed economic policies. The figment of Maduro's imagination is Colombians are the cause of food shortages, the collapse of the Venezuelan currency, and his country's rampant crime. As a result, the Venezuelan dictator has ordered the border between Colombia and Venezuela closed.

Colombians living in Venezuela have been unlawfully arrested and have had their homes bulldozed, leaving them with no other option but to flee; but with the latest and final border closure, Colombians are forced to return to their home country using very dangerous routes. This has been dubbed a humanitarian crisis by the United Nations.

Make no mistake, this crackdown by Maduro is a sick and twisted attempt to distract the Venezuelan electorate from Caracas' failed socialist and anti-democratic policies ahead of the December elections.

Unfortunately, the horrible suffering these policies have caused for both Colombian refugees and the Venezuelan people are all too real.

WATER AND DROUGHT IN CALIFORNIA

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, as we come back from the August recess, I would like to speak on an issue that hits very close to home and to the Southwestern States—yes, the Southwestern States—and this is the drought.

The drought in particular that is facing California is the worst one recorded in history in our State, and I believe it will define this era.

My home State is entering its fourth year of consecutive drought, with nearly 93 percent of residents experiencing severe droughts, and there is no foreseeable end in the future.

The lack of water in California is so serious that our Governor Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency and asked that all residents cut back on water 25 percent. Even with us hitting that, a recent study estimates that it will take at least 11 million gallons of water to replenish our drought losses.

Water conservation and infrastructure is a life or death issue, not just for the residents of my district, but for all of California. Without water infrastructure, farmers in the Central Valley cannot adequately grow and sell their crops; the price of foodstuff skyrockets; wildfires rage and destroy acres of property; State energy production is crippled; the economy slows; and the list goes on and on.

While other areas of California are just now setting the initial framework for water conservation and recycling projects, my home district recycles almost 70 percent of the water that we use both in business and at home.

How are we able to do that? Well, when I came here 19 years ago, I championed a project called the Groundwater Replenishment System, and it is located in Orange County. It is the water table underneath our homes.

This system recycles treated waste water into clean drinking water, which exceeds Federal and State standards; and it has produced over 160 trillion gallons of new water and serviced millions of Orange County residents since its creation.

This system has become the largest reclamation project in the world. In fact, people from around the world and from across our great States come to take a look at how we replenish our water supply.

Legislation to fund projects like our groundwater replenishment system—well, it should be commonsense to fund those. However, the drought has continued in the past 4 years, and there has been no meaningful action on infrastructure improvements to move water, to reclaim water, to save water.

While residents of California are feeling the effects of our historic drought, this Chamber continues to stall on meaningful drought relief and water infrastructure legislation. Back in my home district, I have held numerous briefings about the drought and recognized community members who are cutting back and being more efficient with their water.

I recently spent part of this August recess meeting with community members of the Central Valley to discuss water storage and recycling projects.

In this Congress, I have cosponsored the Drought Recovery and Resilience Act of 2015. It is commonsense legislation which addresses innovative water financing, it improves water infrastructure and water management, and it assists in planning for future droughts.

The residents of my State have been doing their part to conserve the water; so now, it is time for Washington, D.C., to help us to do what is right for California and to do what is right for the other Southwestern States.

While the House Republicans are bickering amongst themselves to avoid another embarrassing government shutdown, I will continue to fight for meaningful water infrastructure to secure the water independence of future