

shoe drops. We have to answer the call to defend the country we all love, and we must be unified as Americans.

My fellow Americans, we must be ready to stand up again and again and answer the call when our Nation is under attack and threatened by a tyrant. Together, the American people can fight petty disregard for law and order, the data-driven divisiveness, and media manipulation to defend the country we love.

To do so, we must be ready and we must be together.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

RECOGNIZING THE PATRIOTISM AND GENEROSITY OF AL KATZENBERGER, JR.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the patriotism and generosity of Al Katzenberger, Jr., a true friend to southern Illinois and its veterans.

After Memorial Day last year, a thunderstorm blew through Mound City National Cemetery in Pulaski County.

The 50 cotton flags that make up the Avenue of Flags of the cemetery were no match for the 70-mile-per-hour winds. Every flagpole was destroyed at this center of pride for our local community.

Upon hearing the news, Alfred, who served in the U.S. Navy for over 40 years, decided to take action. He donated 50 new flagpoles worth over \$12,000.

It is selfless acts like this that help make our community stronger.

To Alfred, we say: Thank you for your decades of service to our Nation and your continued dedication to honoring our Nation's veterans.

REJECT SNAP CUTS IN THE FARM BILL

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the farm bill should be about helping our farmers and strengthening our food and nutrition programs. It shouldn't be about beating up on poor people.

As the House Agriculture Committee prepares to mark up the 2018 farm bill, I rise to express my deep concern and my outrage with reports that Republicans on the committee are considering drastic cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program known as SNAP.

Press reports indicate that the majority intends to dismantle the core function of SNAP to pay for a huge, new, untested bureaucracy, while cutting and even eliminating benefits for

millions of the most vulnerable Americans, including seniors, older workers, individuals with disabilities, working families with children, and other struggling adults.

We are still awaiting the full details on the plan, which was crafted behind closed doors without any input from Democrats on the committee—I am not even sure any input from Republicans on the committee. But this is what we have learned: that the Republicans intend to focus their cuts in three areas.

First, we are hearing Chairman CONAWAY's bill will eliminate broad-based categorical eligibility, an important State option that helps working families with kids and seniors qualify for benefits when times are tough.

More than 40 States currently implement this option, which allows them to raise income cutoffs and ease asset limits.

Broad-based categorical eligibility also mitigates any cliff effect, albeit small, that exists in SNAP, and eliminating it would penalize families from accruing modest savings to help lift themselves out of poverty.

Estimates suggest that at least 400,000 eligible households will lose their SNAP benefits if broad-based categorical eligibility is eliminated, and 265,000 students will lose access to free lunches at school.

I mean, really?

Mr. Speaker, this is shameful.

We are also reading that the Republicans are looking to cut benefits for households with out-of-pocket utility expenses by disconnecting the link between SNAP and the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program known as LIHEAP. Doing so will require those with utility expenses to produce the actual bills for each expense rather than receiving a standard allowance. It will force the elderly, it will force people who are disabled and working families to make another trip to the SNAP office and cut benefits for those who are unable to produce the receipts.

Mr. Speaker, we expect that this proposal will cut benefits by at least \$6.6 billion.

Lastly, we have heard the Republicans intend to focus much of their damaging proposal on harsher work requirements that target vulnerable groups of adults who do not have children or other dependents, known as ABAWDs.

We are reading that the Republican majority is proposing to develop a massive new bureaucracy and subject 3 to 5 million vulnerable Americans to new mandatory work requirements.

I want to remind my colleagues that the ABAWD population is diverse. Many have limited access to education, with more than 80 percent having no more than a high school education or a GED. Some have mental health issues, difficult histories of substance abuse, or are ex-offenders with nowhere else to turn. And as many as 60,000 of them are veterans who have served our country.

These childless adults on SNAP are often extremely poor and sometimes experience chronic homelessness. They turn to SNAP as a safety net when they lose their jobs, their hours at work are cut, or their wages are so low that they are unable to make ends meet.

Under current law, ABAWDs are already subjected to severe time limits on the program. They are only provided access to benefits for 3 months out of a 3-year period and are completely cut off from assistance after that time if they have not been able to find work.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress should be committed to helping people who are living in poverty and working to help make their lives easier, not cutting them off from assistance when they most need it.

Estimates suggest that as many as 1 million people will lose assistance if these incredibly damaging work proposals advance.

The House Agriculture Committee held 23 hearings on SNAP over the past several years. I attended every single one. We heard testimony from dozens of witnesses, Republicans and Democrats alike; and not one witness, not one, Mr. Speaker, suggested that we make the drastic changes to the program that will cut off those most in need of assistance, let alone the ones whom the Republican majority are advancing.

Quite frankly, I don't know where these ideas are coming from, maybe some rightwing think tank, but they are certainly not coming from the Agriculture Committee.

Let's be clear about what is happening. Speaker RYAN made clear a few weeks ago that he views the farm bill as a key piece of his misguided welfare reform agenda. And just yesterday, President Trump issued a new executive order aimed at forcing SNAP recipients off of assistance.

The Republican farm bill isn't about trying to help people. It is about politics and it is about appeasing the rightwing of the Republican party. It relies on negative stereotypes to advance the goal of undermining our safety net programs and cutting people off of help who need it most. It is disgusting.

Mr. Speaker, I plead with you, I plead with Chairman CONAWAY and Republicans in this Congress to stop this attack on those who are living in poverty. SNAP is an important program. It is about providing people food, and I urge my colleagues on both sides to reject any and all proposals that will undermine this important program.

Mr. Speaker, the war against the poor must stop.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of National Library Week, which began on Sunday and runs through Saturday, April 14.

This year's theme is Library's Lead, and ballerina Misty Copeland is this year's honorary chair.

First sponsored in 1958, National Library Week is an observance sponsored by the American Library Association and libraries across the country each April.

It is time to celebrate the contributions of our Nation's libraries and librarians and to promote library use and support. All types of libraries—school, public, academic, and special—participate.

Celebrations during National Library Week include: National Library Workers Day, celebrated yesterday, which is a day for library staff, users, administrators, and friends groups to recognize the valuable contributions made by all library workers.

National Bookmobile Day, which is celebrated today, recognizes contributions of our Nation's bookmobiles and the dedicated professionals who make quality bookmobile outreach possible in their communities.

Tomorrow is Take Action for Libraries Day, which is a national library advocacy effort.

Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 60th anniversary of National Library Week.

In the mid-1950s, research showed that Americans were spending less on books and more on radios and television and musical instruments. Concerned that Americans were reading less, the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers formed a nonprofit citizens organization called the National Book Committee in 1954.

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The committee's goals range from encouraging people to read in their increasing leisure time to improving income and health and developing a strong and happy family life.

In 1957, the committee developed a plan for National Library Week based on the idea that, once people were motivated to read, they would support and use libraries. With the cooperation of the American Library Association and with the help of the Advertising Council, the first National Library Week was observed in 1958 with a theme "Wake Up and Read."

National Library Week was observed again in 1959, and the American Library Association Council voted to continue the annual celebration. When the National Book Committee disbanded in 1974, the American Library Association assumed full sponsorship. Today, it is an annual celebration, marking six decades this year.

The 2018 honorary chair, Misty Copeland, is not only a best-selling author, but she is also the principal dancer at the American Ballet Theatre,

making her the first African-American woman to ever be promoted to that position in the company's 75-year history.

Misty's passion is giving back, and she has worked with many charitable organizations and is dedicated to giving of her time to work with and mentor young boys and girls. It is clear that she is an excellent role model for our youth and a strong supporter of libraries.

Mr. Speaker, libraries have always been great equalizers in our society. Our libraries promote knowledge as a power and ensure that it is within reach of every American, regardless of their personal life circumstances.

From the magnificent Library of Congress to small-town community libraries, I wish everyone a happy National Library Week.

RECOGNIZING DR. WILLIE J. HAGAN

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

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Dr. Willie J. Hagan, who is retiring after a storied career as an educator and, most recently, served as president of the California State University Dominguez Hills, which is in California's 44th Congressional District. I am also proud that he is able to join us today in this Chamber.

Dr. Hagan began his career at the University of Connecticut, where he earned a Ph.D. in psychology before moving to southern California to become the vice president of administration at Cal State Fullerton. During his time there, he somehow found time to earn a master of fine arts in screenwriting from UCLA and also to write a screenplay.

During his tenure at Cal State Dominguez Hills, Dr. Hagan worked tirelessly to advance the goals of the university by providing quality education, scholarship opportunities, and services that have been truly transformative.

Under Dr. Hagan's leadership, Cal State Dominguez Hills experienced continuous growth in graduation rates, enrollment, tenure-track faculty appointments, and enhanced student services, while bringing distinction to the university. Dr. Hagan led an unwavering commitment to students' success, which promoted highly impactful student-focused initiatives.

Dr. Hagan is a well-respected and admired educator who has demonstrated his commitment to the advancement of higher education and community growth.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Dr. Hagan the best of luck in his future endeavors, which I am sure will include spending time with his wife, Betty, who is also an educator.

PATROL THE RIO GRANDE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, national security is border security. Recently, I visited my friend Congressman CUELLAR's hometown of Laredo, Texas, on the Texas-Mexico border.

Being from Texas, I have been to the border about 20 times since I have been elected to Congress. The border is actually the middle of the Rio Grande River, not the shoreline.

I toured the river with our Border Patrol, Texas State law enforcement officers, and the National Guard. It is a long border. From El Paso to Brownsville, Texas, it is about 900 miles—a river border. Laredo is right in the southern border of Texas.

Standing on the United States side of the border near Laredo, I looked across straight into Mexico. A seemingly innocent stark-white water plant peeked out over the thick brush. Looking closer, a figure appeared, having a radio and binoculars in his hand. Why? He was waiting for the Border Patrol to pass; ready to send a "go" signal to another group of illegals waiting to rush across the Rio Grande River.

The drug cartels, Mr. Speaker, control border crossings, whether they are smuggling drugs, people, or criminals. The cartels have an advanced system in place, a sophisticated criminal network. They have scouts on both sides of the border with cell phones and surveillance equipment. They have stash houses on both sides of the border where they hide drugs and people so they can move them closer inland to America.

Everyone pays to cross. In the Laredo sector, the violent Los Zetas cartel is in control. No one crosses into the United States without their permission. The cartels, the Zetas, for example, hide in the bushes, ready to stop anyone who tries to cross without their permission and without paying the money. How much it costs depends on where the person is from. But everyone pays, whether a person is from Central America, China, or Mexico.

Make no mistake about it: the cartels are the ones that make money off of illegals crossing into the United States.

President Trump has authorized State Governors to use the National Guard to help secure and protect the borders. Our Border Patrol agents do the best they can to apprehend illegal crossers, but they are outmanned, outgunned, and outfinanced. Technology helps, but there is far too little of it.

The cameras operating in the Laredo sector are from the 1990s. A cell phone camera is better than the cameras that they have. We need to have high-tech cameras along the entire border. Cameras help spot illegals as they slip over the river and through the tangled brush on both sides of the river.

The National Guard will take over monitoring these cameras, monitoring