

but also severely damages and distracts from the ability of a duly elected President to fulfill his duties to the American people.

As you know, America is racking up deficits and debt at a frightening and dangerous pace. Washington public officials must be more prudent with tax dollars forcibly taken from American citizens. Mueller appears to be burning through tax dollars at a roughly \$1.5 million-per-month clip. Given the rather paltry results to date, a strong argument can be made that Mueller's investigation is an extravagant waste of tax dollars.

We urge you, on the second anniversary of the start of the alleged Russian interference and Trump collusion investigations, to end it. Between now and then, Mueller has plenty of time to get the job done.

Mr. Speaker, so far, this letter has been respectfully signed and submitted to Attorney General Jeff Sessions by no less than 16 Members of the United States Congress.

MARCH FOR OUR LIVES STUDENT SPEECHES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, on March 24, I was in Morristown, New Jersey, with former Assistant U.S. Attorney Mikie Sherrill, where we attended the March for Our Lives.

The March for Our Lives was organized by students around the country to speak out against gun violence and call for action in Congress to strengthen our gun laws. This march came just days after a deadly shooting at Great Mills High School in St. Mary's County in my district, and it came in the wake of horrific incidents of mass gun violence at a school in Parkland, Florida, and at places of worship, entertainment, and even public streets across the country.

Congress can and should act. Nine in ten Americans, 90 percent of our fellow citizens, believe we ought to do so. We have the ability right now to strengthen background checks and ban the kinds of assault weapons that make our communities unsafe.

Law enforcement wants us to get this done. So do parents and so do teachers. In Morristown, we heard directly from students, nine of whom spoke at the march that Ms. Sherrill and I attended. I was moved by their words.

Because they are too long to insert here together, Mr. Speaker, I will be submitting these students' speeches individually into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in the coming days. But today, let me just share with you some excerpts from each of them that capture the spirit of the march and the fears and hopes of these young Americans.

One student, Bella Bhimani, summed it up very well, and she said this: "All we want is to make the world safer, which is something, I think, everyone can agree on." Would that that were true, Mr. Speaker.

Another, Caitlyn Dempsey, said this: "We have been learning that actions speak louder than words since kindergarten. So we walked out. So we've

written our Congressmen. So we planned this march." They took action.

Senior Isabella Bosrock from West Morris Mendham High School lamented: "It is horrible that as adolescents we have become used to the idea that gun violence is a method of dealing with our problems."

Another student, Mia Paone, a sophomore at Chatham High School, declared: "I am not old enough to vote yet, but I am old enough to speak out against gun violence." She concluded: "I will not be silent."

Nile Burch, a student at Morristown High School, shared his hope that: "Piece by piece, we will inspire other students to gain the courage to stand up for what they believe in." What a lesson for all of us.

Luna Aguilar declared: "... we, the youth, the future of our country, are deciding—right here, right now—that our lives are worth more than the right to own an assault weapon."

One of the students, Benjamin Douglas, spoke about how he rides with Team 26, a group of cyclists who ride in memory of the victims of Sandy Hook Elementary School where so many children and teachers lost their lives. They stop along the way to raise awareness of gun violence.

He said this: "We must continue to organize these events and never stop making noise until"—until—"until our Representatives get it."

Raniya Madhi, a junior at Ridge High School, spoke about how many students now live in fear. How tragic. She told us this: "Most of us are just teenagers. We should be worrying about doing well on our AP tests and finals at the end of the year, not about being shot by someone who can enter our school." What parent is not terrified at that possibility?

Finally, Danilo Lopez, a junior at Dover High School, chose, instead of delivering remarks, simply to read aloud the names of the victims of the recent Parkland, Florida, shooting. When he concluded, he expressed what we are all feeling, by saying: "Let us hope and pray that they are in a better place—and we will always remember."

Let me suggest, Mr. Speaker, remembering is not enough. Action is required. We stand on this floor and have a moment of silence for those we lost. We are sad for them, for their families, and, yes, for our country.

A moment of silence is not enough. Action is required to ensure that future moments of silence will not be necessary. The nine student speakers in Morristown, Mr. Speaker, like those across the country that day, gave voice to the millions who are scared but determined to see things change.

These speeches represent but a snapshot of what Americans heard on March 24 at the nationwide March for Our Lives. I hope my colleagues will read what these extraordinarily poised and thoughtful students had to say, and I hope we can listen to their fears

and their hopes and come together to take action.

That is what they want us to do. That is our responsibility. That is what we ought to do.

GREAT IMPACT OF TAX REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, many Members have gathered in recent months to remind the American people about the great impact the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is having on individuals, families, and our economy. I join with them today to reiterate that reminder and reflect on the accomplishments of tax reform.

We kept our promise to deliver on tax reform, and with new legislation in place, we are finally creating an environment that fosters growth in our job market, brings jobs back to the U.S., and supports companies that want to compete globally.

Under the new tax law, the typical family of four in the First District of Kentucky will see an average tax cut of over \$1,700. Some people look at these cuts as nothing more than crumbs, which is unfortunate. A resident of Scottsville, Kentucky, shared with me that she plans to use her crumbs, as some in Congress like to call it, to put toward remodeling her house, updating appliances, and even helping her daughter and son-in-law remodel their home. The new tax law lowers tax rates on American businesses to help grow jobs, increases wages, and promotes economic growth here at home.

Until this legislation was passed, the United States had nearly the highest corporate tax rate in the world, making U.S. businesses uncompetitive, stunting economic growth, and sending jobs and profits overseas. Now many businesses across the U.S. are demonstrating how a lower tax rate helps boost business and the workforce.

One story of success from my district comes from Casey Jones Distillery in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Miss Peg Jones, who works at the distillery, stated that they have already made plans to reinvest in the distillery for new space, employees, production, and barreling. This is all made possible by craft beverage modernization provisions in the tax bill which reduce taxes across the board, especially for small distilleries like Casey Jones.

Computer Services, Inc., or CSI, out of Paducah, Kentucky, which provides financial technology solutions, has acknowledged the positive effects of a reduced corporate tax rate, which has allowed them to reinvest in their employees in the form of bonuses and contributions to retirement plans.

The changes we have made to the Tax Code incentivize businesses to invest in new equipment and facilities. This is good news for businesses and communities throughout my district

and across the Nation. An employer in my district shared with me how the new 100 percent expensing provision has helped their customers afford more of the products they sell, which has, in turn, boosted their business.

Each time I return to my district, I hear about the different ways families and businesses are utilizing savings from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Delivering on these reforms was long overdue, but the tax reform is truly working for the American people. After more than 30 years, Americans are finally able to reap the benefits of a simplified Tax Code that cuts middle class taxes and supports expanding businesses. I am thrilled to see the continued success of tax reform and am eager to see more lasting changes that will strengthen our workforce and economy.

HONORING FOREIGN NATIONAL EMPLOYEES

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

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank the thousands of foreign national employees who work for United States Embassies overseas supporting our Foreign Service and promoting democratic ideals throughout the world.

Many Americans may not know exactly what the Foreign Service does both at home and abroad, but I can assure you that our diplomats are out every day promoting the interests of the United States, our constituents, our businesses, and our values.

Last August, I invited Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, president of the American Foreign Service Association, to Minnesota Farm Fest, a trade and policy forum that brings together about 40,000 people out on the rich soils near Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Her message was simple yet important: the work our Foreign Service officers do throughout the globe has a direct and substantial impact on the citizens of this great Nation—in that case, promoting export markets and food safety throughout the world so that the world's greatest producers of food and fuel and fiber are able to find those markets and able to grow our economies.

But what often goes unnoticed are the thousands of foreign national employees who work at U.S. Embassies in support of our diplomats as they build and strengthen democratic institutions, create and sustain markets for American products, and promote democracy in some of the most hostile, austere environments in the world.

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These dedicated professionals are called LESEs among the Foreign Service, Locally Engaged Staff. And that is exactly what they are. They are engaged locally in a way that is simply not possible, even for the most expert

of American diplomats. They are that engaged because they are from the country they work in. And it is this understanding that only people native to a country can have, which makes them critical to the success of our diplomats and America's mission overseas.

I would like to tell you about one such unsung hero of the State Department's mission in Havana, Cuba. Olexis Lugo was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1966, and worked for the U.S. Interests Section, and later, the U.S. Embassy in Havana for more than a decade. Lugo, as he was known to diplomat colleagues, was a driver in the embassy's motor pool and supported countless missions with U.S. diplomats.

More than a driver, Lugo aided diplomats in understanding the nuances of Cuban culture, and provided critical insight that helped our diplomats do their jobs effectively. And more than that, Lugo was a friend and confidant to all of the U.S. diplomats posted in Havana, and a friend to America.

This past year, Lugo suddenly passed away in Havana, but his legacy will live on in the American lives he touched and the ideals of democracy and freedom that he helped support. I hope when it comes time to talk about our Foreign Affairs budget, we will remember our diplomats and the folks from foreign countries, like Lugo, who are working hard for the American people to keep this world safe for democracy.

WORKFARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMER). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, we must reform our Nation's welfare programs.

President Ronald Reagan once remarked: "The Federal Government declared war on poverty, and poverty won." Unfortunately, his assessment remains all too accurate to this day. Over the past five decades, the United States Government has spent more than \$22 trillion on welfare, only to see the poverty rate remain unchanged.

Mr. Speaker, to solve this problem, we must first properly diagnose the cause. Too often, Washington's prescribed cure is yet another government program or increased spending on existing programs. However, we already have 13 Federal agencies running more than 80 Federal programs that provide food, housing, healthcare, job training, education, energy assistance, and cash to low-income Americans. And we should not gauge the success of our war on poverty by how much is spent, but on how many people are actually able to get out of poverty. That is the point.

The root cause of the failed "war on poverty" is that the structure of our current welfare system entrenches a culture of dependency rather than promoting a path to self-sufficiency.

Overwhelming evidence supports what should be a commonsense conclu-

sion: that there is a direct correlation between work and poverty. For example, before Congress reformed the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program to incorporate a strict work requirement, there were 4.9 million families on the rolls of this program. Two decades later, thanks to these workfare reforms, we have seen 3.3 million families come off of the welfare rolls. Now, that is a success.

In my home State of North Carolina, reforms to unemployment insurance benefits led an increase in both employment and labor force participation. Later research has found that Congress' decision in 2013 to not extend Federal unemployment benefits resulted in 1.8 million new jobs nationwide the following year.

Furthermore, in 2014, when Maine began enforcing strict work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents receiving food stamps, their caseload decreased by 80 percent within months. This requirement was paired with substantial job search assistance and job training opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, we should apply the lessons of these success stories to all government welfare programs, particularly food stamps and housing. It is imperative that welfare recipients understand that the government is not offering a one-way handout, but rather, a two-way deal. We are willing to help you, but only if you are willing to help yourself. And with the American economy growing, thanks to tax reform, opportunities are available.

Mr. Speaker, job openings recently hit a record-high of 6.6 million across the country, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. By incorporating education and training, benefit time limits, and strong work requirements, we can move millions of Americans from welfare to work.

In addition to fiscal benefits, engaging in workfare increases self-sufficiency, encourages community engagement, and offers recipients a sense of purpose and dignity.

We have a unique opportunity with this year's farm bill, Mr. Speaker, to enact such reforms, and I encourage my colleagues to not be afraid to seize on this chance and promote work over welfare.

CONGRATULATING ANDY MERFELD

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

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Andy Merfeld, an outstanding educator from my district, for being named Principal of the Year by the Central Minnesota Association of Secondary Principals. The Central Minnesota Association of Secondary Principals consists of over 200 administrators from more than 18 counties. The Principal of the Year is selected for excellence as a collaborative leader, unique curriculum, and personalization. With this