

I know as history looks back at this—and there may be some rocky roads ahead, but I know the side that empowers their people and that believes in a Creator will come out on top of this because what I know is you can't suppress the innate qualities and genetics of a plant, of a breed of cattle, or of any animal, and you can't suppress human freedom, thoughts, and the innate quality to be free.

So I feel confident that over time the Chinese suppression, the Chinese Communist Party will collapse, and this picture where you see the people getting ready to be run over by the tank will be replaced by this picture and this statue being rebuilt, the statue of the Goddess of Democracy and Freedom in Tiananmen Square. The future will show this as what China is doing in the future of people protesting peacefully for the freedoms that they have.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to end with, on this day, being the 30th anniversary of a horrendous chapter of suppression and murder in human history, that if it is not for us speaking about this, it won't be talked about around the world. China will do everything they can to erase this kind of history from the history books, and it would be a shame for this to go away.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Florida bringing to the floor an extremely important issue: the way in which China is removing the civil liberties.

Tonight, I do want to talk about America and some of the things that are going on within our own country.

When I do these floor sessions, I always want to start with some sense of value and purpose, so I usually begin with this quote from Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and I think it pretty much describes—not pretty much. It definitely describes how I view my job and how I view what I would hope would be the work of the Congress of the United States.

So here is his quote: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

This statement of value really flows down through much of what we do here. We make a choice almost every day in ways that are very direct, for example, when we talk about Social Security, or indirect when we talk about war and peace. In the case of war, men and women who die are generally those who have little, not those who have much.

So I want to keep this in mind, and I want to talk about several pieces of legislation that we are working on right now. I want to talk about seniors.

Now, way back when Franklin Roosevelt established the Social Security system in the height of the Great Depression, Social Security was a pension system. Over the years, it has become the foundation for the support of retired men and women.

Over the years, because of the way Social Security is structured, the inflation set up in Social Security does not keep pace with the normal expenses that a senior has, which is really much different than the general inflation rate for the Nation.

I have introduced a piece of legislation, H.R. 1553, known as the Fair COLA for Seniors Act.

Now, COLA is the cost-of-living adjustment. What we want to do is to make it fair for seniors so that we can honor the value that Franklin Delano Roosevelt stated so clearly for those who have the least, and generally that is the senior population.

So what we want to do is to adjust the COLA to reflect the real expenses that a senior has. They are going to have far more medical expenses, some of it covered by Medicare, but a lot of it not, out-of-pocket costs—we want to do that—housing and other kinds of transportation issues and the like.

So this would be an adjustment to the COLA and provide a modest, very small, modest increase that, over time, would generate a substantial improvement for the benefits that seniors receive from their Social Security benefits.

□ 2000

Another group that we ought to be paying attention to, if we are looking at what Franklin Delano Roosevelt has said should be the test of our progress, is what we are doing for those who have little.

Focus for a moment on students in America. Maybe it is a grandchild, a child, or an adult. If we take a look at the students in America today, not those who went to school when I did decades ago but, rather, students in school today, they are expected to borrow money to pay for their education.

It used to be that higher education was a public benefit, not a private benefit, a public benefit supported by the taxpayers of America because the American public understood that if we had a well-educated workforce, not only high school but through the college years, we would have good, strong economic growth, and we would all be much better off.

Those days when education was a public benefit have long been forgotten. Now it is perceived to be a private benefit to be paid for by the individual who is fortunate enough to go on to college.

They do go, and right now, students who have gone to college in the past and students who are still in college

today have accumulated \$1.5 trillion of student loan debt.

Over \$875 billion is owed to the Federal Government through the various Federal loan programs. And guess what? The interest rate averages over 4½ percent, 4½ percent at the very same time that the Federal Government is borrowing that money to then loan to the students.

I looked at it this morning. The 10-year Treasury rate, which is the borrowing rate for the Federal Government, is right around 2 percent. The 30-year rate is just under 3 percent, if I recall correctly, 2.8 percent.

The Federal Government is doing an arbitrage here. It is borrowing at 2 percent and loaning at 6 percent. We are making money on the backs of the students.

What is the effect of that? The effect of that is that a student cannot engage in the normal economic activity of their parents where they are able to buy a car, go on vacation, buy a house, raise a family, begin a family. They are burdened by student loans.

Here is what we are proposing in H.R. 1899, the Student Loan Refinancing and Recalculation Act. This would simply say that the Federal Government will refinance student loans at a rate that is about 1 percent above the rate at which the Federal Government is able to borrow the money.

Right now, instead of 6 percent on a 10-year loan, it would be 3 percent. That is a lot of money. That is a lot of interest. It is not necessary for the Federal Government to do that. This is the Student Loan Refinancing and Recalculation Act.

Undoubtedly, the parents of the students are able to refinance their home, refinance their mortgage. Who amongst us who owns a home has not refinanced that home? Most have as the interest rates have fallen. As I say, the interest rates for the Federal Government 10-year loan or 10-year note is now about 2 percent.

Here we go. We think H.R. 1899 is a good thing. If we can reduce that interest rate to the students, they will be able to pay off their loans faster. By the way, the same policy would apply to new loans not at 6 percent but at the going rate for the Federal Government plus 1 percent.

That is H.R. 1899, which I think fits very directly with what Franklin Roosevelt said should be our purpose.

We have several other bills that I have introduced, and I am going to go through some of them rather quickly here.

I want to take up another one that really deals with a very special problem. I think I have put this board up before. That is Oroville Dam 3 years ago. The Oroville Dam is the highest dam in the United States, over 700 feet.

It rains in California. Sometimes, we have a drought. Sometimes, we have rain. Sometimes, when we have rain, we get too much rain.

This is the spillway at Oroville Dam that failed. If the rain had continued

for another hour or so, the emergency spillway on that side was about to be—in fact, it was overtopped. It was beginning to erode beneath the foundation for the emergency spillway.

That is a 17-foot high spillway. If that had gone, if the flood had continued, if the rain had continued for another hour or 2, that erosion would have undercut that emergency spillway, that wall, sending a 17-foot cascade down into the Feather River.

I represent the downstream of the Feather River, and I know that as a result of this, 200,000 people had to evacuate in communities downstream, the communities of Yuba City and Marysville and other communities in the area, Live Oak and Gridley—200,000 people.

Where did they go? They went onto a two-lane road, and the backup was hours and hours. Had this thing broken, there is no way that they could have escaped.

I am going to put up another picture. This one is more recent. This is last year, 2018. This is Paradise, California. At one point, the people there thought they did live in paradise. Then there was a fire, and they lived not in paradise but in hell. The largest death toll of any fire in California occurred a year ago in Paradise, California.

We can see some of the remnants here. People couldn't escape. A two-lane road out of town and traffic jams, so people had to get out of their cars and run for their lives. Many couldn't run fast enough. Lives were lost.

Here on the East Coast, there are vulnerable areas, for example, Cape Cod with one road in, one road out, a two-lane road.

What we have done here as a result of these issues, Marysville, Paradise fire, Yuba City, in my district, the supervisors in Yuba County and Sutter County downstream from the Oroville Dam came to me and said we have to do something. We have to do something about the escape routes. We have to have better escape routes. We have to have signage. We have to have other kinds of control. We have to make it so that people can pull off the road if they have a flat tire and the like.

At the very same time, my friends from Massachusetts, my colleagues here in Congress, Congressman BILL KEATING and Senator ED MARKEY, knew that they had the very same problem in Massachusetts, in Cape Cod.

Last year, we introduced legislation, and we reintroduced it this year. Here in the House, we call it H.R. 2838, the ESCAPE Act, the Enhancing the Strength and Capacity of America's Primary Evacuation Routes Act. This would give communities across the Nation an opportunity to go to the Federal Department of Transportation and put projects before it to receive grant money to improve escape routes in their communities.

There are many communities around America that have one road in, one road out, two lanes or even fewer than

that. We hope that this ESCAPE Act becomes part of the transportation infrastructure program that is now being discussed here in the Congress of the United States—H.R. 2838, the ESCAPE Act, Enhancing the Strength and Capacity of America's Primary Evacuation Routes Act.

We don't ever want to see this again. We don't want people to be trapped. We want to use the programs that the Federal Government can make available to assist communities in improving their escape routes, their emergency evacuation routes.

There are three different pieces of legislation that I want to bring to the attention of the Congress.

I have another one. I am on the Armed Services Committee. On the Armed Services Committee, we spend a lot of time looking at war, the materials that are needed for war, how the men and women are going to have the proper equipment.

One of the things we have noticed over the years, and one might expect this—certainly, we should expect it—is that the men and women of our armed services are often in harm's way. Usually, we think of this about the kinds of things that occur with IEDs, improvised explosive devices, where some 4,200 Americans were killed in Iraq and similarly in Afghanistan.

But there is another risk. It is deadly, and it is mostly not known at the time. What we want to do here, as we have studied the effects of war on the veterans who have returned, on the men and women who are out there, we have learned that whether they are in Afghanistan or Iraq or at the various bases here in the United States, they are often exposed to chemicals, mold, and other kinds of things that over time present themselves in serious health risks and serious health events.

We know this. Think back to the Vietnam war and Agent Orange. It took more than 25 years for the veterans of the Vietnam war to be able to receive benefits for the injuries that they sustained because of Agent Orange being used in the Vietnam war. We don't want that to happen again, but we know it did.

We know that in the first Iraq war in the 1990s, thousands of our soldiers were exposed to toxic fumes and smoke as the fires raged in the oil fields. During the period of time of occupation in Iraq in Iraq I and Iraq II, the military routinely disposed of chemicals of other kinds of materials in burn pits. Soldiers were exposed to those toxic chemicals.

We call this the OATH Act, and this is H.R. 2617. It is known as the Service Member's Occupational and Environmental Transparency Health Act.

What we want to do is when the men and women are in the field or on the bases here in the United States, when they are exposed to some sort of chemical contaminant, they would have in their medical records at that time that they had been exposed. That sometime

in their work, in the tasks they were carrying out, they were exposed to these toxic materials in their normal work, that would go into their medical records.

As they proceed through their careers in the military or leave the military and move on into the Veterans Administration, that information follows along with them so that there is always that data.

Then someday in the future, when some occurrence happens, for example, cancer or some other illness happens that can be traced back to this exposure that took place years before, they will be able to receive the benefits and appropriate treatments without having to guess what happened. It is there in their records. It is part of their files. That will be available for them to be able to get appropriate medical care at some point in the future.

That is H.R. 2617. It is called the OATH Act.

I must say that this particular bill came from one of the members of the military who served as my military fellow, Stephanie Harley. She is a lieutenant colonel now, and she was an environmental engineer.

As she worked with me last year, she said that there is an ongoing problem, that they do not have in their records the exposure that they have had to some toxic chemical or toxic environment during their days of service.

She said there ought to be a law, and I agree. There ought to be a law. This is what she recommended, and I think it is going to pass. In fact, I think we are going to try to put it in this year's National Defense Authorization Act. We have strong support.

We also know that TULSI GABBARD, one of my colleagues here, has introduced a bill that fits very nicely with this. It deals specifically with the burn pits. This particular bill is much broader, and it fits very well with the work that she is doing on a very similar subject.

These are just a couple of examples, and I want to deal with two more, if I might. It won't take too long, but I do want to put this up on the board here.

Back to FDR, what are we doing for the least of our society? This is a pretty good example of where American policy has gone wrong.

Last year, I served as the ranking member of the Coast Guard and Maritime Subcommittee. I have done that for the previous 7 years. We spent a lot of time worrying and thinking about the American merchant marine.

These are the ships. The United States is a maritime state. No other country in the world has more ocean frontage than the United States. We have inland rivers that are extraordinarily important, the Ohio, the Mississippi, the Missouri, all of those, and out in California, the Sacramento River.

What has happened? We used to have thousands of American flagships on which Americans would work as the

mariners, the sailors, the captains, the engineers, and the like.

□ 2015

But just take a snapshot. In the 1980s, we had 249 flagged American ships, built in America, manned and “womanned” by Americans. The mariners were Americans. And here we are now, this is actually 2016. We are down to 78 ships.

This is a fundamental national security issue. We spend all of our time thinking about the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and we should. However, if you are going to go to war, you are going to need ships. And I don’t think we can call up the Chinese and say: Hey, can you send us a couple of ships so that we can send our men and women off to the Pacific?

It is a national security issue that we be able to transport our military on the ocean. More than 90 percent of it has to go by sea, not in the airplanes. We have got wonderful, large airplanes, and they are great, but if you are going to move a lot of equipment, you are going to need ships.

So that is the state of it. We think we can do something about that.

I am going to put up a couple of other charts here. Let’s do this one.

Next year, 2020, the U.S. is expected to be the world’s third largest producer of liquefied natural gas for export. 225 LNG—liquefied natural gas—vessels, ships are expected to be added to the world fleet by 2020. But due to the eroded capacity of the American shipyards, none of these will be built in the United States.

So it is not just the ability to move equipment around the world. The same thing happens with the oil that we will soon be exporting. The statistics are almost exactly the same.

It is also about the jobs, the jobs in the American shipyard, good, well-paying, middle-class jobs that simply don’t exist today because we are not building ships in the American shipyards.

But if you happen to be in the Chinese shipyards, you have got a lot of work to do. Fifty of the vessels are going to be built in China. In Korea, 70 percent of these new ships are going to be built in Korea.

How many in America right now? Zip, zero, none, nada.

We can change that. We have a piece of legislation to do that, not yet introduced. It will be introduced in the days ahead. We call that the Energizing American Shipbuilding Act.

If we are going to ship energy, export oil and gas, why don’t we do it on American-built ships?

Not all of it. We, frankly, don’t have the capacity to build 200 ships or 250, 300 ships. We just don’t have the capacity.

But what if we started with 5 percent? What if we said that 5 percent of the export of oil and gas—and America soon will be the third largest exporter of natural gas, and we are certainly exporting oil. What if we did that on American ships?

This legislation, the Energizing American Shipbuilding Act, which we are going to introduce in the days ahead, probably next week or the week after—we will be introducing it with a bipartisan group.

Senator WICKER in the Senate carried this bill last year, as I did here in the House. We didn’t get it passed. We are making some progress. We hope to get it this year.

What does it mean? Well, we can kind of see what it means up here. It means that we will be building about 50 ships over the next 15 years or so, LNG tankers and oil tankers.

What does it mean? It means the shipyards will be busy. It means the steel yards or the steel factories in America will be busy. The manufacturers of pumps and engines and hydraulic systems and electronic systems will be busy.

And, by the way, we will rebuild the American mariner base. Right now, TRANSCOM, responsible for moving all of the equipment for the Army, Navy, Air Force across and around the world, says that one of the key deficiencies in American security is we don’t have the mariners to man the ships that we don’t have. And the ships are aging out almost as fast as the mariners are retiring. So we can solve this problem with the Energizing American Shipbuilding Act.

So I draw the attention of my colleagues to this legislation. We will have a number in a couple of weeks. Senator WICKER will have the bill on the other side, and we will carry forward and, hopefully, we will have our shipyards busy. We will have Americans working in the shipyards, Americans building big engines for these ships and the other kinds of equipment that are needed.

At the same time, we will begin to rebuild the force of men and women who will be on those ships as they travel around the world carrying a very strategic national asset.

Speaking of veterans, this is another piece of legislation that we are working on, and this one really, really touches me.

This is a picture that we took 2 years ago. These three gentlemen were mariners. They were merchant mariners in World War II. These were the men who were on the ships that took the supplies to Europe, took the supplies to the Pacific so that America could fight in World War II. All three of these gentlemen were over 90 years of age.

It took nearly 40 years before the Congress of the United States recognized that the mariners, the merchant mariners, were part of our military program. More than 40 years, they were on the outside. They were never, ever recognized as veterans, even though the merchant mariners in World War II had the highest death rate of any other service.

We know about the bombers that bombed in Europe. We know that the casualties were extraordinary. We

know that men and women lost their lives on ships of the Navy and, of course, in the battlefield, men in the Army.

However, those men, just as these in this picture, had a higher death rate than any of those in the Army, Air Force, any of those in the Army serving wherever it may be, or the Marines or the Navy.

It took a long, long time for us to recognize them as veterans and make veteran services available to them, but that was done about, I think, 40, 45 years after the war ended.

And here we are. Here we are today, with just one more way to remember the extraordinary sacrifice that these men, most of whom are dead—in fact, earlier today I put a resolution across the floor on one of these gentlemen that died this last week.

So we think they ought to be honored. We think we ought to honor them with a Congressional Gold Medal, and so we are now pursuing that. I think we are going to get it done. We tried last year. We came up short. The Senate adjourned before they would take it up last year.

But we are going to give it a shot this year, and I think we are going to do it; and I think we need to do it, just as we needed, some years back, to make certain that they had veteran services available to them.

Now we need to honor them one more time. For those few who are still alive, for those who have died, their family should know that the Congress of the United States recognizes the extraordinary sacrifice that was made by their colleagues.

So this will be the Congressional Gold Medal Act, and we will have that out on the floor this next week, and we will be pushing it along. We need 290 signatures. Don’t ask me why we need more than a majority just to present this. But anyway, those are the rules of the House, and we will follow the rules. We are at about 220 people.

So now if you have some friends out there who you think are here in Congress and not paying attention to the gold medal for the merchant mariners of World War II, give them a holler and tell them to sign on. We will get it done this year and, hopefully, the Senate will work with us on it.

A final point, and I will end with this in just a few moments, but I need a couple more pictures.

In case you didn’t notice, I love these pictures. I love to put them up here so that you are not just listening to me; you can see some of the things we talk about.

So here is what I want to talk about: the U.S. military in the age of climate change.

I became the chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, an incredible honor and, actually, a lot of work, very, very important work. That subcommittee is responsible for over 1,000 military installations all around the

world, responsible for the feeding and care of the military personnel—Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines—their equipment.

The purchases of new equipment is in another subcommittee, but once that equipment is purchased, is it ready to be used? Are the troops ready? Are they properly trained?

And, as I said, we are responsible for the installations.

We asked a question when I became chairman, and the question was this: Is the Department of Defense ready for the era of climate change? It turns out the answer is: Not really.

Out there across America, there are thousands, tens of thousands of men and some women who served at Camp Lejeune, the Marine Corps camp here on the East Coast, famous. It was hit by a hurricane last fall. The deluge went on for hours.

The damage done at Camp Lejeune, trees falling, flooding occurring, roofs being blown off, leaking, water damage, hundreds of buildings seriously damaged and uninhabitable, could not be used, including the headquarters—Camp Lejeune.

Next to it, Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station, similar damage.

It is estimated that here at Camp Lejeune and Cherry Point, more than \$3 billion of damage has occurred that will have to be made up for in the days and weeks ahead.

Now, you may think that was a wake-up call. Indeed, it should have been. However, the wake-up call was occurring just a few days earlier.

That is a picture of Tyndall Air Force Base, a key Air Force base on the west coast of Florida in which our fighter bombers and fighter jets do their training, the new F-35, the F-22, all of them.

This base, it was literally blown off the map. It is right on the edge of the Gulf. Hurricane came through—I think it was a 5 hurricane—and literally blew this base off the map, obliterated major parts of the base.

This is just one of perhaps 100 pictures I could put up.

Is the military ready for climate change? Well, certainly not the Marines at Camp Lejeune and Cherry Point or the Air Force at Tyndall. This is probably a \$4 billion fix-up to rebuild it. And I will tell you what we are going to do about it here after I put this up.

This is actually 2019. You have heard of the Strategic Air Command. That is the bombers that carry our nuclear weapons. This is Offutt Air Force Base in the Midwest, underwater, the Missouri River, probably a billion dollars damage here.

You say: Oh, that is just flooding. No, it is extreme flooding. Extreme weather events. Three bases critical, absolutely critical to the training and the readiness of our troops.

I think the water has subsided, but the damage to the buildings has yet to be repaired—a billion here, \$4 billion

there, \$3 billion there, and that is not all.

We know that out in California we have had our fires. I just showed the Camp fire, but you may not know that Port Hueneme, the Naval base in Ventura County just north of Malibu, fire raged down the hill. They had to evacuate the homes for the servicemembers, and there we have it.

□ 2030

So we are looking at the new National Defense Authorization Act, and in that act writing in the following changes to the law, and that is that the U.S. military, in all of its future construction, will build to the maximum threat in that area, maybe a tornado, as it could have been in the Midwest, or a flood or a hurricane or a deluge or sea level rise or a fire out in the West. All future construction will be built to the maximum threat at that specific base. That is it.

We are not going to build for yesterday and just go back and have another flood or build for yesterday at Tyndall and see the next hurricane come through and wipe it out one more time. We are not going to do that.

At the same time, we are going to make sure that in that construction and in the improvements, that they maximize energy conservation.

The single largest consumer of petroleum in this Nation is the U.S. military. It is expensive. We are spending a pile of money, billions of dollars on energy consumption in the military. We will emphasize energy conservation, things such as windows and insulation. And when we build new, we will build to the maximum standard for energy conservation, as well as for resiliency; that is going to be in the new National Defense Authorization Act. It is in the work of the Readiness Subcommittee. We are going to drive this, and I think we are going to drive it to success.

And I will say, this is not all new. The military is aware that climate change is a threat, but they haven't been focused sufficiently, in part because we, the Congress of the United States, have not focused it and we have not said: In your construction, in your reconstruction, and in the upgrading of your facilities, you will build to the maximum threat that you face in that area. Tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, floods, whatever it is, you must build to the maximum threat, so that you are resilient, so that you can come back to provide the necessary support that may be desperately needed.

This is not just in the United States. There are major construction programs going on in Guam, out in the Pacific where we know there is going to be another typhoon, probably within the next 9 months. So those facilities also will be built for resiliency.

So these are just a few of the things that we are working on. We have many, many others. We know that we can do better.

We know that as we said with the words of FDR: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

That may be a senior on Social Security; it may be a young man or woman that wants to get an education and is paying a very high interest rate; it may be a military family that is living in a house somewhere across the United States or around the world, in a house that is owned by a contractor that is providing housing for the military that is not up-to-date, that is filled with mold or some other contaminant; it may be a military person that is exposed to some sort of toxic chemical or toxic smoke, we are going to make sure that we follow this advice. It is not for those who have much, it is for those who have too little, wherever they may be.

That is our value, that is our goal.

I appreciate the opportunity to share with everyone several pieces of legislation that I will be working on together with my colleagues here in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE FIVE PILLARS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I would say of the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI), it is always fun listening to him, because, look, we are friends. We are ideologically separated by about, let's call it a small ocean, but I think there is this passion of we can do things in our society that are good.

Mr. Speaker, I have really appreciated Mr. GARAMENDI sort of embracing in some of our personal conversations my sort of techno-utopianism that the problems the gentleman sees, the problems I see, that there may be technology that is about to disrupt society in an incredibly positive way.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. I am happy to yield.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman does realize how many people are creeping out at this moment that we are friendly to each other.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, a Republican and Democrat talking to each other across the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the gentleman. I have followed him, and he has followed me, and we have had the opportunity to talk. I am just not prepared tonight to go into the kind of detail the gentleman is about to, but he is absolutely correct. There are solutions. There are solutions to the problems that confront this Nation, confront individuals in the Nation.