

public's top health priority for Congress.

Most Americans say that prescription drugs have made their lives better, but for so many the cost is unreasonable and unaffordable.

Insulin, which keeps more than 7 million Americans alive, is an extreme example. We have had insulin for nearly 100 years, yet my constituents, Utah mothers whose kids have type I diabetes, tell me that skyrocketing costs have put this lifesaving medicine nearly out of reach.

My hometown newspaper recently carried a story about volunteers crisscrossing Utah to pick up leftover insulin—because a family had extra or a diabetic family member died—and delivering that medicine where it is needed. They call it “Diabetic Christmas,” a sad commentary on just how badly our system is failing our patients.

We need actions to offer relief that bring down costs so that people don't have to celebrate Diabetic Christmas in order to stay alive and stay healthy.

This week, we passed a bill with unanimous bipartisan support that makes drug pricing more transparent and makes it easier for seniors on Medicare drug plans to understand their benefits and their costs. It is a good step forward, but we have more work to do.

VETERANS DAY

(Mr. SCHNEIDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Madam Speaker, in a few days, our Nation will celebrate Veterans Day, a time to pause, give thanks, and honor the brave men and women who have served our country.

Those men and women who have worn the uniform of our Nation, who have sacrificed so much for us, deserve more than just words in return. We owe them action. That means keeping the promises we have made to our veterans to provide skills and offer opportunities as these men and women transition to civilian life; to provide a lifetime of healthcare that they have earned and were guaranteed; to support access to mental health services, including to those with other than honorable discharges who may have been improperly dismissed from the service due to undiagnosed brain injuries or PTSD; and to end the scourge of veteran homelessness, as we have done in Lake County, in my district in Illinois.

To that end, I am proud of the bipartisan legislation I introduced to reauthorize the Boots to Business entrepreneurship training program for veterans, previously passed in the House, and I urge my colleagues in the Senate to similarly support this and other important programs.

This Veterans Day, and every day, I hope we will all do more to remember the privileges we enjoy as Americans and honor those who served us as a small token of our thanks.

SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

(Mr. RUIZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RUIZ. Madam Speaker, earlier this month, James Madison Elementary School in Indio, California, closed after rust, mold, and corrosion were found in the columns and the walls supporting the building, compromising the school's infrastructure and putting students, teachers, and staff at risk.

This is symptomatic of outdated and weak infrastructure in schools throughout our Nation. Thankfully, the Desert Sands Unified School District board closed the school and transferred students to another facility.

The cost of our schools' outdated infrastructure is adding up. We need big and bold investments in school infrastructure to keep our students safe, prevent school closures, and help our students compete.

That is why I cosponsored and urge a vote on the Rebuilding America's Schools Act of 2019, to invest \$100 billion in schools' much-needed physical and digital infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 865, the Rebuilding America's Schools Act of 2019, and prioritize students' well-being, safety, and education.

LOWER THE COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

(Mr. WELCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, very soon in this House, we will have a chance to do something that America needs done, America wants done, and we can do it together, and that is to lower the cost of prescription drugs in honor of our wonderful Elijah Cummings.

The United States is the only major country where the government of the people does not protect the people against price gouging by the pharmaceutical industry. We have got to change that.

Our drug bill will bring down prices over a half a trillion dollars. That will start to alleviate the pressure on premiums that is coming at the expense of raises for workers.

The benefit of this approach will not just be for our Medicare and Medicaid programs—really important programs—but the lower prices will benefit employer-sponsored healthcare as well.

So, if you are taking medication that is insulin, or if you are taking medication in an EpiPen, you are going to get a lower price. But, even if you are fortunate that you don't need the medication, your premiums are going to go down.

Madam Speaker, let's come together and pass this reduction in horrible medical expenses.

SPOTLIGHTING THE NEEDS OF RURAL AMERICA

(Mr. DELGADO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DELGADO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to put a spotlight on rural America and urge Congress to pass my bill, the Rebuild Rural America Act.

Rural America is being left behind. In my district, the eighth most rural in the country, we are still fighting for broadband access and consistent cell service.

With so much of the private market focusing on population density in order to achieve high returns on capital investment, many of our less populated communities are left to their own devices.

Here, at the Federal level, where the public good is contemplated, we must ensure that no community is boxed out of the future. That is why I introduced the Rebuild Rural America Act, which creates the rural future partnership fund and provides \$50 billion for non-competitive, 5-year, renewable block grants to certified rural regions to implement locally developed revitalization plans.

This bill helps communities that don't have the resources to navigate the complex Federal grants process to secure Federal funding for important projects, and it would move the Federal Government away from being complicated, siloed, and top-down into a more responsive and effective partner for our rural communities.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass the Rebuild Rural America Act.

RECOGNIZING U.S. RECOGNITION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

(Mr. GOTTHEIMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Madam Speaker, as a proud member of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, I rise in recognition of yesterday's historic passage of H. Res. 296 to affirm the United States' recognition of the Armenian genocide.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to represent many people of Armenian descent who live in northern New Jersey. In Bergen County, we hold an annual ceremony on April 24 to remember the day in 1915 when hundreds of Armenian intellectuals were rounded up and ultimately murdered at the beginning of the Armenian genocide.

The massacre of 1.5 million Armenians, as well as Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syrians, Arameans, Maronites, and other Christians, by the Ottoman Empire constituted the 20th century's first genocide.

As a Jewish American, the need to recognize genocide is deeply personal for me. My relatives lost their entire family during the Nazi attempt to exterminate European Jewry.

I know that it is never the wrong time to bear witness and tell the truth. The United States should never be complicit in denying genocide.

As a proud member of the bipartisan Armenian Caucus, co-chaired by my friend, Chairman FRANK PALLONE, I will continue working hard in Congress for justice on behalf of New Jersey and the Fifth Congressional District's great Armenian American community.

GRAND CANYON CENTENNIAL PROTECTION ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 1373.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELCH). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 656 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1373.

The Chair appoints the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SÁNCHEZ) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1227

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1373) to protect, for current and future generations, the watershed, ecosystem, and cultural heritage of the Grand Canyon region in the State of Arizona, and for other purposes, with Ms. SÁNCHEZ in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, I want to start today with a story.

Near the south rim of the Grand Canyon sits Canyon Mine, a breccia pipe uranium mine in the middle of the Kaibab National Forest, only a few miles from the boundary of the Grand Canyon National Park.

This mine opened in 1986 after assurances that its operations would have minimal impact and that they wouldn't impact groundwater.

Mind you, since it opened three decades ago, uranium production has

never occurred at the site. Uranium ore has never come out of the mine.

What has come out of the mine is over 20 million gallons of groundwater, polluted with uranium and arsenic from the ore body. The water has flowed into the mine ever since the mine operator pierced a groundwater aquifer in 2016.

Again, the mine operator had assured regulators its mine shaft would be dry.

The situation is so dire that the mine operator regularly resorts to spraying this uranium-contaminated water into the air to speed evaporation. On windy days, this spray has been known to travel off the site and into the surrounding areas and environment.

Meanwhile, the mine shaft continues to fill with contaminated water.

There are really only a few places that water might go if it escapes the mine shaft: down toward other aquifers, including those that feed the water to the Supai Village and Havasu Falls, or to the seeps and springs that flow into the Grand Canyon and, eventually, to the Colorado River itself.

□ 1230

Supai village has been the home of the Havasupai people for more than 1,000 years. They have made this canyon their home. Their history is there. Their homes are there. Their lives are there. Yet this mine puts all that at risk.

Again, no ore production has occurred at this site, but it has already degraded millions of gallons of clean water and put lives and culture at risk. And that contamination risk will only get worse once mining commences and the water is exposed to more and more uranium ore.

This isn't a unique example. The Pine Nut mine on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon was thought closed and capped for two decades, but in 2009 the mine was discovered to have unexpectedly filled with over two million gallons of radioactively contaminated water.

Uranium mines across the southwest pollute our water, endanger our communities and our health, and despite assurances, hundreds of these sites are still waiting to be cleaned up, particularly those mines that impact Tribal communities.

Madam Chair, for Arizonans, for the Havasupai, and for countless others across the southwest, the mineral withdrawal made permanent by H.R. 1373 is not theoretical and it is not trivial. I rise today to ask for this House's support for protecting clean water, protecting the health of our communities, and protecting the public lands and environment on which we all rely.

The bill before us today permanently extends an existing temporary moratorium on new mining claims on public lands surrounding the Grand Canyon National Park, to prevent another canyon or Pine Nut mine from threatening our communities and our livelihoods.

This House needs to act on this proposal because these critical protections are under threat from the Trump administration.

Under the guise of energy dominance and fabricated arguments about national security, they have continually pushed for these lands to be open to exploitation on behalf of a few wealthy mining interests. The idea that we need to mine around the Grand Canyon—mind you, the Grand Canyon—to meet our energy needs is patently false. There is ample data to show it, and national security and nuclear non-proliferation experts have routinely raised the alarm that this fear-mongering about supplies is based on fantasy. It is time to stop rehashing the same worn out arguments. We shouldn't be mining for uranium around the Grand Canyon, period.

This is an effort I have been involved in for over a decade, and I hope we can move forward today. I urge my colleagues to help me protect access to clean water and a healthy environment for the people of Arizona by supporting H.R. 1373, the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in opposition to H.R. 1373, the so-called Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act. It is an antimining attack on northern Arizona and my district.

This legislation imposes a massive land grab of more than one million acres, permanently banning mining and other multiple-use activities in an area nearly the size of Delaware. The withdrawal is also, I would like to point out, very far outside the Grand Canyon. The actual Grand Canyon, of course, is already subject to a multitude of Federal protections.

Around one-third of the proposed withdrawal area in this bill is in my district. The rest is in Representative O'HALLERAN's district. And none of the lands in this bill are in the sponsor of this bill, Representative GRIJALVA's, district.

This bill would have direct negative impacts on six counties in Arizona and Utah, with an estimated two to 4,000 jobs lost and \$29 billion in foregone overall economic activity. The withdrawal area also contains 4,204 acres belonging to the Arizona State Land Department for the benefit of Arizona's school children. This withdrawal will mean hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue for local communities and for our schools. I think every single school district is hurting for money in Arizona.

Further, the majority of the active and historic mining claims are in my district, and the main point of this bill is to lock up those lands for mineral development.

I said that this is an attack on northern Arizona, and that is true, but that is not all. This bill is a specific, targeted attempt to prevent access to the