

Our BLUE Pacific Act establishes a comprehensive, long-term framework for United States foreign policy in the Pacific Islands, focusing on three essential pillars:

Security, development, and shared values.

Our legislation would expand diplomatic and development presence; increase maritime security cooperation and assistance; deepen and diversify trade; support regional economic and social development in areas like public health and education; invest in climate adaptation and climate resilient infrastructure; coordinate with existing regional institutions and like-minded allies and partners; promote shared values like press freedom and gender equality; and strengthen people-to-people relationships and civil society. It would back up our commitment by authorizing \$1 billion in assistance programs for the region for each of the next five fiscal years, more than triple current levels of assistance.

In naming this bill, we not only pay tribute to the concept of the “Blue Pacific” embraced by leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum themselves as a shared identity and platform for collective action, but also intend for our efforts to be informed by and coordinated with the work of existing regional institutions and frameworks. This legislation would also integrate these programs with those of our like-minded allies and partners, including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Taiwan, and more.

I have no doubt that the introduction and enactment of the BLUE Pacific Act will be welcomed by our partners and allies in the Pacific Islands.

In uncertain times, this legislation sends a clear and powerful statement of what our foreign policy seeks to achieve—a regional order, built on mutual assistance and benefit, free of coercion, and fully respectful of the sovereignty of all nations. We seek to empower the countries and people of the region to determine the course of their own destinies. As a Pacific nation, we hope to share in that future alongside our Pacific Islands neighbors.

The BLUE Pacific Act is the first step in that direction. I encourage my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring the BLUE Pacific Act and urge swift consideration of this critical legislation.

CONGRATULATING EDDIE DRILLING

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

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my longtime friend, Eddie Drilling, who recently announced that he will be retiring later this year after a 41-year career with AT&T.

Eddie currently serves as the senior vice president for External and Regulatory Affairs at AT&T, where he leads the national regulatory organization.

His ties to Arkansas remain strong. He currently serves the University of Arkansas Board of Advisors, the Sam Walton College of Business Dean's Executive Advisory Board, and the Razorback Foundation Board.

Eddie has been a leader in Arkansas for four decades, and a member and mentor of many organizations. He received the Pinnacle Award from the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce, the highest award our chamber gives for service to the community. He also received the Lifetime of Service Award from the city of Little Rock.

Mr. Speaker, I join all Arkansans in congratulating Eddie Drilling.

RECOGNIZING KEN REEVES ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE GAME AND FISH COMMISSION

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ken Reeves' outstanding contributions to conservation in Arkansas and his dedication at keeping Arkansas the “Natural State.” Ken served on the Game and Fish Commission as chairman for 5 years.

He grew up in Harrison, Arkansas, where he attended Harrison High School and went to the University of Arkansas School of Law. Ken's love of fishing and passion for conserving wildlife from a young age made him an easy and successful appointment to the commission.

Ken has demonstrated his passion for making a positive change as the chairman of the commission. He is leaving behind a legacy of improved outdoor services that will be enjoyed for generations to come.

My congratulations to Ken Reeves.

JERRY EVANS—OUTSTANDING COACH OF THE YEAR

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jerry Evans for being named one of Arkansas' Outstanding Coaches of the Year.

This year, Coach Evans led the Searcy High School Girls Wrestling Team to victory as the girls Arkansas State champions, also picking up two individual championships on the team.

In 2019, he was the 5A Wrestling Coach of the Year for the Arkansas Wrestling Coaches Association, and was chosen by the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette as the All Arkansas Preps Wrestling Coach of the Year, and named the Arkansas High School Coaches Association Wrestling Coach of the Year through the Arkansas Activities Association.

Coach Evans received his master's in kinesiology at Harding University in Searcy, graduating as the first member of his immediate family to earn a college degree. In an interview with the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Coach Evans said, “I knew I wanted to be a coach ever since I was in 8th grade. I knew I wanted to be in education and become a teacher.”

Mr. Speaker, I thank Coach Evans for his commitment to his students and his leadership as their coach.

GUY-PERKINS PTA PURCHASING SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Parent

Teacher Association at the Guy-Perkins School District for once again providing students with school supplies for the upcoming academic year. All students in grades K–12 will have school supplies provided to them, regardless of whether students have chosen on-campus instruction or distance learning for this fall.

As parents, teachers, students and educators begin a uniquely challenging school year, the PTA's long tradition will help parents with back-to-school costs and ensure that our teachers do not have to purchase their own supplies.

According to Betty Vickers, Guy-Perkins PTA's secretary and treasurer, the initiative helps boost the community's economy because all the supplies are purchased locally. I am happy this wonderful tradition has continued into the 2020–2021 school year, especially during these extraordinary times where educating our kids presents unique challenges.

JENNIFER CARNAHAN RECEIVES SERVICE AWARD

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jennifer Carnahan as CHI St. Vincent's recipient of the 2019 Sister Teresa Joseph Babcock Service Excellence Award.

Jennifer was born in Dumas, Arkansas, and received her nursing degree from the University of Houston before attending the Academy of Health Care Professionals for surgical technology.

Jennifer has been serving in the medical field since she was 19 years old, starting in the ER, and she currently works in neurosurgery. Sister Teresa Joseph worked at CHI St. Vincent for nearly 30 years, exemplifying St. Vincent's core values of reverence, integrity, compassion, and excellence. Jennifer currently works in the neurology area in the North Campus.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Jennifer Carnahan.

FARMERS FEEDING UTAH

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

Mr. MCADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize some incredible things that have happened in my State.

In Utah, COVID-19 has hit families and the food-buying public very hard. Many supply chain elements have closed, leaving farmers unable to sell their Utah-grown products.

But Utah farmers are passionate about feeding people, so the Utah Farm Bureau launched “Farmers Feeding Utah.”

Donations to the nonprofit campaign went to farmers to purchase their products, and the Utah Farm Bureau handled processing costs and partnered with hunger relief organizations to get the food directly to needy families.

Since May, they have received more than \$300,000 in donations that allow

them to purchase 20,000 pounds of beef, 10,000 pounds of flour, 200,000 eggs, and \$100,000 worth of dairy products. They have delivered 600 live sheep to the Navajo Nation and donated to numerous food pantries throughout Northern Utah.

Utah routinely leads the Nation in volunteering. Farmers Feeding Utah is the latest example of how Utahns come together to protect lives and livelihood and to overcome adversity.

HONORING THE CITY OF SOUTH JORDAN'S PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL

Mr. McADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the City of South Jordan, Utah, its public safety personnel, and also its residents for showing tremendous leadership and courage during a recent public safety crisis.

On Pioneer Day, July 24, 2020, approximately 600 people were quickly evacuated from their homes and their businesses after public safety officials discovered explosive material in a nearby home. Officials determined that the substance had to be neutralized through controlled detonations.

Our State's official holiday, Pioneer Day, is usually reserved for festivities and gatherings with family to remember a legacy of overcoming hardship. Instead, South Jordan city officials and residents had their holiday interrupted and were called to react quickly, work together and demonstrate courage and leadership. They did so valiantly, and they did so bravely. The detonations were completed with very minimal damage caused to nearby homes and no injuries whatsoever. Given the circumstances, the outcome could hardly have been better.

I applaud these Utahns who came together in the face of adversity to support one another. South Jordan has much to be proud of on this Pioneer Day.

OPIOID CRISIS EPIDEMIC

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

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to appear before you today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring awareness to the public health crisis that continues to devastate communities in Ohio and across the country while we grapple with the unprecedented challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic—the opioid crisis.

I have been proud of Congress' bipartisan work over the past several years to not only advance recovery and treatment efforts, but also to prevent the trafficking of lethal, illicit opioids, like fentanyl. I was even prouder when, in 2018, those efforts resulted in our Nation's first decline in drug overdose deaths in nearly 30 years. Tragically, our progress is slipping away.

The CDC's preliminary 2019 overdose death data shows that fatal overdoses hit a record high last year, accounting for the deaths of 70,980 Americans.

More than half of those deaths, 36,500 to be exact, involved synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl. In total, 37 States saw their number of fatal overdoses increase or remain stable from 2018.

That deadly trend is ongoing this year as the coronavirus pandemic continues to impact the mental health and economic security of Americans across the country. An analysis released by the White House last month found that overdose deaths were up 11.4 percent from January to April this year when compared with the same period in 2019.

Mr. Speaker, these are more than just statistics. These are real people—mothers and fathers, sons and daughters—and their deaths are causing real pain in communities across our Nation. Back home, a young man who had been sober for nearly 2 years—2 years—relapsed after the pandemic began and the place where he worked had to close its doors. Michael died at the end of March at just 31 years old, with both fentanyl and carfentanil in his system.

I saw Michael's mom, Cathy, on the local news the other night speaking out about her son's death, trying to bring awareness to not only the lack of attention focused on the opioid crisis right now, but the limited resources available to combat addiction during this pandemic and the continued rise of synthetic opioids, like those found in Michael's system when he died.

We have to act now to stop this crisis in its tracks. We have to redouble our efforts now if we want to prevent other families from enduring the same kind of loss that Michael's family is currently suffering. Having met with those on the front lines of the opioid crisis in my district, ranging from drug court judges to directors of rehab facilities to law enforcement officers on local drug task forces, I know that battling this epidemic requires an all-of-the-above approach that includes prevention and education efforts, promotes treatment, cracks down on illegal distribution, and enhances resources for first responders and law enforcement.

That is why I introduced the Comprehensive Opioid Program Extension Act. My bill, better known as the COPE Act, would help us implement an all-of-the-above approach by increasing the authorized resources available for the Department of Justice's comprehensive opioid abuse program. These grants will help local communities battle the opioid epidemic by:

Providing training and resources for first responders on opioid overdose reversal drugs and devices, like Narcan;

Improving collaboration between State criminal justice agencies and substance abuse agencies;

Enhancing law enforcement efforts to combat the illegal distribution of opioids;

And developing or expanding programs to prevent youth opioid abuse, drug take-back initiatives, or for treatment alternatives to incarceration.

The harsh reality is that everyone in this Chamber knows someone who has been impacted by this opioid crisis.

□ 945

With the coronavirus pandemic already causing an increase in fatal overdoses from last year's record high, action is long overdue.

We must advance legislative solutions that allow Democrats and Republicans to join together in a bipartisan effort to defeat this opioid crisis. I stand ready to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find a bipartisan solution like the COPE Act that will help us stop the opioid crisis from causing more death, wreaking more havoc, and resulting in more tragedy.

This crisis has been breaking apart families and threatening the safety of our communities for far too long, and the American people are ready for us to help them stop it.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE FELICIAN SISTERS LOST TO CORONAVIRUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS) for 4½ minutes.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to memorialize the beautiful lives of 13 nuns taken from Michigan's 11th District by the scourge of coronavirus between April and June of this year.

We honor the memory of:

Sister Mary Luiza,
Sister Celine Marie,
Sister Mary Estelle,
Sister Thomas Marie,
Sister Mary Patricia,
Sister Mary Clarence,
Sister Rose Mary Wolak,
Sister Mary Janice,
Sister Mary Alice Ann,
Sister Victoria Marie,
Sister Mary Martinez,
Sister Mary Madeleine,
And Sister Mary Danatha "Lottie."

These righteous women spent their days working and living together as members of the Felician Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary convent in Livonia, Michigan, some for more than half a century. At the time of their deaths, they ranged from age 69 to 99 years old, still wholly committed to serving the most vulnerable among us. They would call it "from the womb to the tomb," the dedication of their service to the community.

Prior to the pandemic, the Sisters could be found working in our local schools, libraries, and medical facilities, providing enrichment to our students and care for our sick. Many of them pursued degrees in higher education during their lifetimes, always seeking new ways to instill a sense of peace, justice, dignity, and truth in the world around them. My heart aches for the harm done to the soul of our community and with the loss of these incredible lives.