

was a fierce advocate in Lansing for our Upper Peninsula way of life.

Tom was a strong and universally respected voice, confronting challenging issues head-on and working across the aisle for the benefit of his constituents. His unwavering commitment to his family, his faith, and his community is unquestionable. The entire State of Michigan is a better place because of him.

To Tom's family and friends, Isaiah 41:10 says:

Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

Please join me in honoring the extraordinary life of Senator Tom Casperson.

AMERICAN PEOPLE WAITING FOR COVID RELIEF

(Ms. SCANLON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, this week, December's rent and mortgage payments came due for millions of Americans, marking another gut-wrenching deadline for families who have been forced to make the impossible decision between putting food on the table or keeping a roof overhead.

We have been asking for months for the Senate to take up one of the relief packages that the House has passed and sent for consideration or for the Senate to come up with its own COVID relief proposal. While there has finally been some movement this week, it is way overdue.

My constituents cannot wait any longer. As the coronavirus surges yet again in my region, I hear every single day from folks who have exhausted every resource to scrape by, but they cannot make ends meet without more relief.

These are folks like Denise from Linwood. Last spring, she and her husband both lost their jobs in the hospitality industry. They have two kids at home learning virtually. Now they are faced with the expiration of unemployment benefits, and they fear eviction come January.

Ann from Wayne is a schoolteacher who is trying to get a COVID test so she can take care of her elderly mother and do her job, but she has had to jump through hoop after hoop because we still lack a national testing strategy.

My constituents and our local officials are doing everything in their power to feed their families and stay safe. It is past time that the Federal Government does the same. America is waiting.

HONORING SENATOR TOM CASPERSON

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

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the comments from the Congressman from the First District of Michigan.

Today, I recognize a good friend and great American, Tom Casperson, who passed away this weekend. Tom lived in Representative BERGMAN's district in Escanaba, Michigan.

I knew Tom as a State senator when he worked on numerous issues across State lines with me. The Good Neighbor Authority promoting better management of our national forests originated at a hearing Tom and I put together in Breitung Township, Michigan. Tom Casperson may have had a greater impact on Upper Peninsula issues in the Michigan Legislature than anyone who served the Upper Peninsula.

While I knew Tom as a State senator, he will be remembered for far more than that, including as a man of great faith.

Mr. Speaker, I send my deepest sympathies to Tom's wife, Diane, and their family.

It has been a great privilege to have known such a fine man. May Tom Casperson rest in peace.

DECriminalIZING CANNABIS

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

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, in my city of Philadelphia and across the country, people of color are thrown in jail more and with harsher sentences than White people for the same cannabis-related crimes.

Cannabis is one of the fastest growing U.S. industries, but Federal law keeps many businesses of color out of this market. That is why I urge my colleagues to support passage of a jobs bill, the MORE Act. It would decriminalize cannabis at the Federal level and expunge prior Federal convictions related to marijuana. Half of all States have already decriminalized cannabis.

This jobs bill would also create the opportunity trust fund, which would generate grant programs to provide services and funds to those most negatively impacted by the war on drugs. This includes the equitable cannabis licensing program that I introduced in the Homegrown Act.

The House and Senate need to pass the MORE Act now, as the growing cannabis industry is an important economic development tool for communities of color like mine. Let's pass this jobs bill.

CONGRATULATING DR. DIANA GREENE

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

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Duval County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Diana Greene.

This week, she was named the Florida Superintendent of the Year by the Florida Association of District School Superintendents, and we are all incredibly proud of her well-deserved recognition.

Over these last 5 years, including during Dr. Greene's leadership, the Duval graduation rate increased from 76 percent to 86 percent, an amazing accomplishment.

She has also helped to improve safety and security within our schools and fought to secure additional educational funding for Duval County Public Schools. Dr. Greene is an excellent example and mentor to both educators and students alike.

On behalf of the Fourth Congressional District of Florida, I thank Dr. Greene for her commitment to education and for working hard every day to make Duval County Public Schools a place where students can learn, grow, and thrive.

CALLING FOR COVID RELIEF

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

Mr. LEVIN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of every American who has lost a loved one because of this pandemic. I rise for those who have lost their jobs or who are struggling to make ends meet in the wake of this virus. I rise for the doctors, the nurses, the caregivers, and the first responders who put themselves at risk every day as they try to save lives.

These folks in my district and across the Nation know that the enemy is not our neighbors or our political opponents. The enemy is this virus. And they are counting on us to come together to provide relief.

We must act urgently to provide State and local governments with the funding they need to maintain essential workers and provide critical services, including in public safety and education.

We must act so that small businesses don't shutter their doors, laying off the good people who live and work in our communities.

The American people cannot and should not have to wait any longer. I urge my colleagues to put their differences aside and treat this emergency like our lives depend on it—because they do.

CONGRATULATING RITEDOSE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Ritedose Corporation of Columbia, a South Carolina company on the front lines of America's spectacular effort to secure a coronavirus vaccine.

Thursday, it was announced that Ritedose has been selected as a subcontractor of ApiJect Systems America, led by CEO Franco Negron, to produce prefilled single-dose syringes for the vaccine.

In 4 months, Jody Chastain, the president and CEO of Ritedose, and his talented team have up-fitted a facility that will produce up to 45 million doses a month of the vaccine. That is American ingenuity at its best, and it is our capable workforce in South Carolina at their best.

The Ritedose success in Operation Warp Speed, led by Vice President MIKE PENCE, is a historic achievement and another Donald Trump victory, which the fake media will distort.

I am grateful that The Ritedose Corporation is integral in this effort for the health and safety of American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the courage of Claudia Tenney.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF ROBERT S. WASHOCK, JR.

(Ms. WILD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of a hero in my community who recently passed away from this devastating virus. Robert S. Washock, Jr., or Bob as he was known to everyone, was a devoted father, grandfather, husband, brother, and friend. He defended our Nation in the United States Navy and was a member of Dyle E. Bray VFW Post 739 in Bangor, Pennsylvania, serving as quartermaster and treasurer of the Home Association.

I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to know Bob, and the qualities that I can speak to are those that touched the lives of countless people across our community: kindness, humor, and compassion. The tributes that have poured in from people of every walk of life reflect the world of difference that he made.

At this extraordinarily difficult time for Bob's family and many friends, I extend my deepest condolences. On behalf of a grateful community, it is my honor to pay tribute to Bob for his lifelong service as an Active Duty servicemember and as a proud veteran to the country he loved. His spirit will endure.

PRIORITIZING NEEDS OF AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call attention to the only bill subject to a rule this week in the House of Representatives,

the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act.

Mr. Speaker, millions of Americans are unemployed right now due to this unprecedented pandemic, wondering how they are going to make ends meet, and thousands are dying each day from the COVID virus. But instead of working to find a bipartisan solution to provide relief to Americans, our Democratic majority wants us to convene this august body to vote on pot legislation.

This is simply unbelievable. The Republican Senate has voted multiple times on targeted relief that Republicans and Democrats agree upon, but Senate Democrats have blocked each effort.

We all agree that more PPP funds need to be made available. We all agree that unemployment benefits should be extended. We all agree that our healthcare workers need additional funding.

Mr. Speaker, we need to prioritize the needs of the American people, not Cheech and Chong. This is wrong and needs to be called out.

GIVING CREDIT TO OPERATION WARP SPEED

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

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, since the outbreak of the coronavirus in the United States, the promise of the development of a vaccine has allowed Americans to remain optimistic in the midst of tragedy. Now, after months of sacrifice, the coronavirus vaccine has been found. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the hard work of scientists working around the world and the support by the tremendous feat of government innovation known as Operation Warp Speed.

Now, following the discovery of the vaccine, we must focus on the production and distribution of the vaccine to the American people and to those across the globe.

Public officials are optimistic that distribution of the vaccine could begin in a matter of weeks, a massive jump forward in the process to rid the world of this dangerous virus. This production of millions of dosages of vaccine will not happen overnight, but thanks to Operation Warp Speed and the Trump administration, the vaccine will reach vulnerable Americans faster than anticipated, saving thousands of lives in the process.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all who helped advance this extraordinary accomplishment.

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IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM E. "BILLIE" CLANTON

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor William E. "Billie" Clanton of Odum, Georgia, who passed away on November 27.

Billie was raised in Wayne County and grew up picking tobacco and harvesting turpentine on his family farm. He was born with a robust entrepreneurial spirit which caused him to go from managing a successful fruit stand, as well as many other businesses, all the way to owning and operating the Chrysler Dodge dealership in 1965.

Billie went on to serve as vice president of Southeastern Chrysler and Dodge Advertising board for 30 years. He was an avid supporter of Wayne County and was very active in his community.

Billie was a 12-year host of the Day for Wayne, an event at his farm, which is a great event held in support of Wayne County. It is truly enjoyed by many every year and something I always look forward to.

Because of his prominence in his community and his life devoted to serving others, the new Highway 169 Overpass will be dedicated in his name.

Mr. Speaker, my deepest thoughts and prayers go out to Billie's family, his wife, Nell; his five daughters; his 16 grandchildren; his seven great-grandchildren, and two more on the way; his friends; and the entire Wayne community during this most difficult time.

PROXY VOTING

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

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, for months, Democrats have used an unconstitutional scheme to allow Members to vote from home. They call it proxy voting. I call it exactly what it is: shadow voting.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats are turning away from their responsibility to their constituents by staying home and handing their voting card to NANCY PELOSI. They are handing over their voting card and not coming to work.

But why? What is so important that they can't show up? Do you know what we found? Because they wanted to attend a space launch that never took off, or they want to hang out on their boat. Who knows what else they have done.

Mr. Speaker, they don't have to show up to vote because, guess what. Someone else will do it for them. Maybe if we renamed Congress "The French Laundry," they all might show up here.

This has been going on for months, and Democrats have worked overtime to hide it from the American people.

Mr. Speaker, to date, there have been 4,836 votes cast in this body by lawmakers who weren't even here.

Think about that: 4,836 votes cast in this body by Members who weren't even here.