

roles in her personal life. She was an adventurous traveler; an avid reader; a doting dog mom; and beloved daughter, sister, and friend.

Despite the hectic Hill schedule, she still prioritized time with colleagues, friends, and family. Principled work was a passion, but a principled life was the goal.

So her memory is more than a legacy. It is a call to action, to take care of yourself, and take care of others as well, to give selflessly, and to savor what you have. Courtney dared to dream. She challenged us to act.

Alongside the many joyful memories she leaves with us, it is those actions that we remember. On and off Capitol Hill, Courtney helped advance the progressive cause and, through it all, remained a kind and grounded person.

As my staff and I mourn her passing, we also resolve ourselves to honor her legacy by continuing to fight for the better, fairer world that she so passionately believed in.

My prayers are with Courtney's parents, Jill and Kevin; her sister, Marissa; and the incredible network of friends she made along the way in Milwaukee, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. Rest in peace, Courtney.

#### OUR NATION'S CURRENT ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great concern for our Nation's current economic trajectory.

Inflation is spiraling out of control, unemployment numbers continue to disappoint, and millions of small businesses are unable to fill job openings. This pattern is increasingly alarming; and for anyone who is paying attention, it is not a surprise.

The Biden administration's plan to throw money at problems is failing the American people. This so-called rescue plan is stunting our economic recovery and impeding our Nation's comeback from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As President Biden makes even more plans to squander our taxpayer dollars, prices are skyrocketing. American families are experiencing this firsthand. As they see every day, the staggering 5 percent increase in inflation is affecting nearly everything, including essentials. Together, food and energy prices have increased nearly 4 percent. And with the current cost of materials, not even the kitchen sink is safe.

At home in Pennsylvania, no one is shocked that gas is more than 50 percent more expensive today than a year ago. Our Commonwealth already has one of the highest gas taxes in the Nation, burdening workers and families alike. We cannot afford to keep paying more at the pump.

For hardworking families in Pennsylvania and around the country, the cost

of inflation is real. It is real at the grocery store. It is real at the gas pump. It is real at the hardware store and at the local diner. It is real for every Pennsylvanian every day of the week.

As a nation, we cannot ignore the sound and source of this alarming trend. This is rooted in President Biden's and the Democrats' broken economic agenda. From higher taxes and fewer jobs, to more regulations and burdens on American industries, their plan is not working.

Day after day, we see more evidence of this. Just last week, the developers of the Keystone pipeline stopped this project after the Biden administration effectively eliminated its opportunity to succeed. Not only will this decision hinder America's energy independence and security, it is also killing family-sustaining jobs for American workers.

The Biden administration already killed the pipeline. What will be next?

As inflation rises, the unemployment rate remains disappointingly high and our work force is suffering. This should be a major warning to all of us that we must stop this trend now. We cannot afford to stay entrenched in President Biden's 1970s-era economic crisis.

We must advance pro-work, pro-growth solutions that will jump-start America's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and it starts with getting Americans back to work, supporting our small businesses, and strengthening the workforce. It also requires ending the current administration's infatuation with Big Government intervention.

The American people don't want more of the same. We simply cannot afford more of it. This is a time to invest in American workers, to promote the dignity of hard work, and restore our Nation to the path of recovery.

#### NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate a truly essential industry at home in Pennsylvania and around our country.

Dairy farmers go to work every day of the year to produce safe and healthy food for all American people. Despite mounting regulations and obstacles, these hardworking men and women continue to persevere.

Dairy products, including nutrient-rich whole milk, are good for our kids and good for our families, and they are essential for our region's economy.

I have the distinct privilege of representing nearly 20 percent of Pennsylvania's dairy farms, which are home to more than a quarter of our Commonwealth's dairy cows.

This robust industry is a key part of our local community and our economy. It is truly my privilege to stand up for dairy farmers and to serve as their voice here in Congress as we seek to eliminate barriers to the dairy industry's success.

As we mark National Dairy Month, I thank dairy farmers in Pennsylvania and across the country for their stead-

fast dedication to our communities and to American families.

#### HIGHLIGHTING THE STAFF OF MANCHESTER VA MEDICAL CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the incredible efforts of the staff at the Manchester, New Hampshire, VA Medical Center, who worked long hours to resolve a massive backlog of unpaid medical claims for community care.

In a district where veterans travel long distances to get to a VA facility, community care has been a game-changer for vets to receive the services they need closer to home. But in the early years of the Choice Act, and now the Mission Act, provider payment delays and bureaucratic errors threatened the stability of community care networks and, ultimately, the access to critical lifesaving care for veterans.

One of the first providers who contacted our office was an acupuncturist who provides care to veterans experiencing PTS and debilitating pain. The acupuncturist was passionate about caring for those who served, but the chronic billing delays were creating severe uncertainty and financial hardship for her office.

She introduced me to a group of veterans that she cares for in her office to learn a little bit more about their experience. They all had a remarkable story about how their quality of life had improved since accessing these services through VA community care. But they understood that payment delays could disrupt that.

Countless other providers, including large hospital systems and small care organizations, were also caught up in this claims backlog. The VA was making it difficult, if not impossible, for many of these providers to continue serving veterans.

The issue of unpaid claims was compounded in the Northeast region by VA's multiple transitions between third-party administrators over the last few years. It created confusion and frustration in both the provider and the veteran communities.

I knew we couldn't let our veterans down, and that is why I am so thankful for the efforts of the community care team at the Manchester VA for working with our office, with providers, as well as the third-party billers to thoroughly address this issue.

Our office worked closely with the leadership at the Manchester VA Medical Center and the New Hampshire Hospital Association and its members. A plan was developed to painstakingly delve into the minutiae of the claims backlog, line by line, so that providers could be paid for legacy claims and receive timely payments for future services.

The Manchester VA Medical Center's Office of Community Care steadily plowed through the backlog, giving specialized attention to each provider. After more than 15 months of their hard work, I am proud these diligent efforts have resulted in tens of millions of dollars of paid claims to New Hampshire's VA Community Care providers. They were so successful in this work that their internal process is now being shared nationally across the VA system as a model.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to personally thank the team members at the VA in Manchester who put in so many hours to address this backlog, including:

Michelle Mercer, who spent considerable time dealing with each member's hospital billing department;

Patricia Patterson, who also spent considerable time dealing with each member's billing department;

Tracy Allaire, who worked closely with Tri-West on claims on behalf of hospitals on the back end;

Charlene Eaton, who supervised and provided oversight to the VA Office of Community Care staff;

Dr. Brain Phemester, who worked and provided leadership and served as a conduit between VA Central Office and the New Hampshire Hospital Association and its members;

And Daniel Wilson, who initially spearheaded the billing resolution effort within the VA Central Office, and worked with our district office and the Hospital Association.

These Manchester VA Medical Center employees went above and beyond the call of duty for our veterans and the providers, as well as the future of community care. I couldn't be more proud to be able to recognize them for their efforts here today.

□ 1015

#### AMERICA DESERVES BETTER

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

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in fierce opposition to President Biden's proposed budget.

When he released his budget just a few weeks ago, nearly 3 months later than any President in a transition year, by the way, President Biden reminded Americans of advice his father gave him years ago. "Don't tell me what you value," Biden's father told him. "Show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value."

If that is true, then Biden's \$6 trillion budget reveals to us exactly what President Biden values: destroying America's oil and gas industry, prioritizing the rights of illegal immigrants over law-abiding Americans, funneling foreign aid away from our longtime ally Israel, turning a blind eye to protecting the unborn.

Under the Biden budget, President Biden suggests we spend our hard-

earned dollars fixing problems he created.

He wants us spending \$174 billion on electric cars, carports, car charging stations, and other subsidies to the electric vehicle market in a full-on attempt to replace the oil and gas industry; \$40 billion to retain employees who lost their jobs after he blocked the Keystone pipeline and destroyed thousands of energy jobs; and a total of \$36 billion to combat climate change, bringing back the waters of the U.S. rule and mandating 30 percent of our privately owned land be locked in conservation practices. President Biden's budget is the progressive's Green New Deal in disguise, and America doesn't want anything to do with it.

President Biden wants \$2 billion to provide care for unaccompanied migrant children at our southern border after he put millions of innocent children in harm's way and encouraged immigrants to cross illegally. He wants no extension of funding to complete the already nearly finished wall system or money to enforce our immigration laws at the border and instead instated an executive order stopping construction on the very wall that keeps our country safe.

President Biden wants \$63.5 billion for international affairs spending, a 12 percent increase from 2022 that lacks specific defense funding for Israel, America's only democratic ally in the Middle East. His omission is clear and comes at a time when the terrorist organization Hamas launched hundreds of rockets at Israel in the last month alone and when Democrats are on the record for their anti-Semitic language and slurs.

And President Biden refuses to protect our dollars from being spent on abortions or abortion services. Instead, for the first time in four decades, no such protection exists, a protection that 77 percent of Americans support and a protection even Biden supported for years before his Presidential campaign.

On top of all this, President Biden claims his budget is partly in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but like the American Rescue Plan, it, too, fails to investigate the origins of COVID-19. Even more, the Biden administration won't commit that none of the budget requests would include funding for the research at the Wuhan lab.

The economic disaster to follow from his reckless spending will cripple American families' purchasing power and leave future generations with the crushing burden of the national debt. It is time we hold President Biden accountable for a budget that would cause our Federal debt to reach 117 percent of gross domestic product by 2031, the highest level since World War II, and continue the record rates of inflation we are already seeing under President Biden.

I ran for Congress with the intention of creating a better world for my chil-

dren, our children, one where they don't have to pay President Biden's debts and suffer the consequences of irresponsible and egregious spending. America deserves better.

#### CELEBRATING CARIBBEAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, it is spring, the beginning of summer, but it is also Caribbean-American Heritage Month this June. It brings me great pride to join Virgin Islanders and other Caribbean people across the country in celebrating Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

As a Virgin Islander and an American of Caribbean descent, I am proud to celebrate the life, legacy, and achievement of Caribbean people in this country. Virgin Islanders and other Americans of Caribbean lineage have made enormous contributions to the United States through academia, athletics, the arts, and more.

Caribbeans have been involved in this country since its inception, such as des gens de couleurs libres, who included 800 French-Caribbean soldiers, 500 of whom were Haitian free men of color who fought at the battle of Savannah for the Colonies in the American Revolution.

Caribbean-American Heritage Month was officially celebrated and recognized on June 5, 2006, by Presidential proclamation signed by President George W. Bush. It had been unanimously adopted in the House in 2005 through the unwavering power of our colleague BARBARA LEE, who sponsored the legislation. Since 2006, the White House has released an annual proclamation recognizing June as National Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

Caribbean Americans have added to the history, culture, and communities in America in countless ways. The unique relationship between the United States and the Caribbean has enriched both regions, and this month is a wonderful time to celebrate our shared past and our future.

We should also look for opportunities for us as Americans to pursue new partnerships on a number of issues with the Caribbean. From trade, immigration, disaster preparedness, poverty eradication, and ending HIV/AIDS, the United States and the Caribbean share a number of mutual policy interests.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic adds a new challenge to both our country and our Caribbean neighbors. I will keep fighting to ensure that the United States works to be an active and constructive partner in safeguarding the health and welfare of our third border.

The people of the Caribbean are as much a part of the fabric of this country as anyone else. We are not monolithic, nor do we represent one culture, one ideology, or even one ethnicity.