

(Mr. ESTES), my dear colleague, a member of the task force, to give his thoughts on what he saw and worked on, on our budget.

Mr. ESTES. Madam Speaker, I thank the Republican Study Committee for hosting this Special Order hour.

Today, our Nation's debt is more than \$28 trillion. With a number that large, it is hard to really understand how much taxpayer money we are really talking about. Well, \$28 trillion is \$1 million 28 million times. Or another way to think about it is it is 28 with 12 zeros behind it.

Spending far beyond our means and watching the debt clock grow astronomically higher has real implications for the future of our country and for our citizens. While many out there would like to believe that we can go on spending without some sort of restraint and it doesn't have any consequences, common sense tells us that is not true.

Because of overspending, the debt held by Americans has already eclipsed the size of our economy and will top 200 percent of the GDP by 2051. Every American, adult and child, bears a burden of more than \$85,000.

The problem is so stark that our country spends about \$800 million per day on interest payments alone. The net interest costs for taxpayers financing this debt will skyrocket from 1.4 percent of GDP, about \$300 billion this year, to 8.6 percent of GDP. That would be more than 2½ times higher than what the U.S. currently spends on defense as a percent of our GDP.

Another way to look at this problem is through the lens of any family budget and take away some zeros.

Let's say in 2020 an individual made \$34,000. That same person spent \$65,000, meaning they spent \$31,000 they didn't have. And they also had a credit card with \$280,000 already on it and growing. This would clearly be absurd and unsustainable, yet somehow that is how the Federal Government operates.

Madam Speaker, American families understand that we should tackle the spending problem first and live within our means. This has to be the focus of our body. It is our duty and our responsibility to those we represent.

We have got to tackle the out-of-control spending before it brings down this great Nation. We need to stop mortgaging our grandkids' future just to sustain and spend our lifestyle today.

Madam Speaker, we need to do the hard work now to address our spending, balance the budget, and fiscally secure our Nation for future generations. Our constituents deserve it.

Mr. HERN. Madam Speaker, the Biden administration has put themselves on the side of Big Government, big taxes, and big bureaucracy.

To paraphrase the great President Ronald Reagan, he said: You can't be for Big Government and still fight for the little guy.

Our budget is a clear outline for middle and working-class Americans that

their government hasn't left them behind. We have a plan and it will benefit all Americans.

I am proud of the budget we put together this year, and I am ready to defend it in front of any committee and any Member of this House.

We have spent the last hour talking about conservative principles. Well, I want to make it clear that this budget is not just for conservatives. It is not just for Republicans. It is a budget for all Americans.

It doesn't matter if your children grow up to be Republicans or Democrats. They will be paying for our debts regardless, long after we are gone. That is why it is important to have leaders who are thinking about our grandchildren and great-grandchildren's future.

It is clear that Joe Biden, KAMALA HARRIS, NANCY PELOSI, and CHUCK SCHUMER would rather auction off that future in order to pay for an unpopular radical agenda.

The American people need to know that we are the captains of this ship and we will not let economic doomsday destroy America's future.

Fiscal responsibility does not have to be partisan, which is why I am calling on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to help us bring this budget to the floor for a vote.

I thank everyone who supported this budget tonight and to everyone who helped us put it together.

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

#### AMERICAN FAMILIES PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOWMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, tonight, I am pleased to be joined by many of my colleagues in the Congressional Progressive Caucus to talk about the long overdue investment we would need to make in the care economy, something that our infrastructure has always relied upon.

I introduced the Care for All Agenda earlier this spring calling for the Federal Government to dramatically expand and strengthen the care economy.

The American Families Plan outlines the next step we need to take to get there, which must include improving work conditions and compensation for care workers nationwide.

The care economy impacts all of us: Our children, elderly loved ones, family

members with disabilities, childcare workers, home health aides, nurses, and so many more. Care is something we all need at different stages in our lives.

The care economy includes our essential workers who put their lives on the line every day during the most devastating global pandemic in a century. Many of us will be caregivers ourselves, if we haven't been one yet.

Ask any working family about how hard it has been to find affordable, quality childcare even before COVID.

Ask a childcare worker if they can afford to send their own child to the center they work at.

Ask any one of the vast majority of workers who do not have paid family and medical leave how hard it is to care for a loved one who is ill while holding on to their job.

Ask anyone who qualifies for long-term care under Medicaid but has been unable to access it due to the healthcare workforce shortage.

Ask a home health aide how much they make hourly, and the need to redesign our care infrastructure will become abundantly clear.

Just as our physical infrastructure is crumbling, the United States today suffers from a lack of care infrastructure. These two truths are intertwined.

Our crumbling infrastructure disproportionately harms Black, Brown, Indigenous and low-income communities. The negative health impacts arising from fossil fuel use, industrial pollution, and toxic materials in our homes and schools are literally making us sick.

We need to invest in eliminating carbon emissions, and we also need to invest in the caregivers we are counting on to heal us now.

We are calling for a broader shift to a society based on care for the people, communities, and the planet we share.

We are still grieving more than 600,000 lives lost to COVID in our country, many of them caregivers themselves. In this last year, we saw how badly we need a robust care economy and what happens when our investment in care doesn't match our needs.

I know that for some, talking about caregiving as infrastructure sounds like a new idea and a "nice to have." None of this work is new, and all of it is necessary.

I have heard directly from New Yorkers who rely on caregivers every day; like a constituent of mine in Westchester, who was born with diastrophic dysplasia, and wrote in about how we need to do better by our caregivers and pay them a living wage. Now in her fifties, she qualifies for Medicaid and needs home-based care. The home health aide who cares for her has to work two additional jobs to make ends meet. That should give us all pause.

One of the biggest champions for caregivers and domestic workers, Aijen Poo, said that: "The definition of infrastructure is that which enables society and the economy to function. So

what is more fundamental than the ability to take care of our loved ones?"

Caregiving is almost always provided by women, especially Black and Brown women. This work has historically been made invisible, which creates opportunities for the exploitation and poverty wages many of our caregivers face without protection or recourse.

When it comes to finding care, millions of families are left with no option but to figure it out, which we know so often means women not taking paid work in order to provide unpaid care for their own families.

The American Families Plan will help us bring the care economy out of the shadows with key investments in childcare, paid leave, Medicaid, home and community-based services, and more.

This goes so much deeper than making it possible for families to enter and remain in the workforce. We need to ask ourselves what kind of systems and structures we want in place not only for people to survive, but also to thrive and reach their full potential.

Given how common it is to need care and not get it, we must ask ourselves: Are we, as a nation, structured to listen? Are we structured to care?

We need to listen to the caregivers and the families who rely on them so that we make the most powerful investments that will not only boost our economy, but also allow us to heal and truly move forward as a society.

We need to rebuild our Nation with a new foundation; a foundation rooted in love, care, and equality. That is the kind of thinking we need in the infrastructure package.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield to my other colleagues who will highlight other critical care economy needs. I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL), the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman BOWMAN for yielding to me and also for his tremendous leadership in the Progressive Caucus. We are so proud to welcome him into the Progressive Caucus, into Congress, and to have the benefit of his tremendous experience in education, in caregiving, on so many fronts. I am so proud to cosponsor the Care resolution with the gentleman. I think it is a very important statement.

Madam Speaker, I am also very proud to be here as the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. This is our Special Order hour that we get to devote to any topic that we want; and, today, it is a real privilege and an honor to devote it to the American Families Plan.

Why?

Because the American Families Plan and the American Jobs Plan are what this country needs and what this country wants. Democrats, Republicans, and Independents across the country have said clearly that they are ready for a big, bold investment that allows us, allows America, to build back better.

That is what the President has proposed because, Madam Speaker, at the core of any society is how we care and look out for each other. That reality was made undeniably clear as we have struggled to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, with over 600,000 deaths.

And at the root of our recovery is how we look out for each other, how we give each other opportunities, how we ensure that America truly is a country where we are all better off when we are all better off.

For me, coming to this country by myself at the age of 16, now getting to serve in the United States Congress as the first South Asian-American woman, I have watched how too many people across America do not have that opportunity. They do not have the investments that we, as a Federal Government, should make in order for them to be successful.

Now, our care economy is broad. I am not just talking about essential healthcare providers, like nurses and doctors who cared for patients struck by COVID-19. I am talking about the broader care infrastructure, and that includes childcare. It includes home- and community-care services. And it includes providing everyone with basic paid family and medical leave and more.

The American Families Plan also includes investing in healthcare for everyone across America, investing in education, the kind of education that gave me my opportunity to come here. We need to provide that 2 years of free community college or college for people across this country so that they can get the additional skills they need.

We need to invest in housing and, of course, we need to invest in this broader care economy.

At the end of the day, our American Families Plan, the President's American Families Plan, the jobs plan, has to be about every person across this country, working-class, poor, people who are seeking opportunity, people who deserve to have the American Dream that is no more; to make sure that every person, White, Black, and Brown, with understanding that the disproportionate burden of our inequities and racial injustices in the United States have fallen on Black, Brown, and Indigenous people, we need to make sure that all people are taken care of and have opportunity.

□ 1900

Care infrastructure is the critical infrastructure that allows our families and communities to thrive and stay healthy.

Take, for instance, the home care workers across the country who have been serving on the front lines of the pandemic. For those most vulnerable to COVID, such as people with disabilities and seniors, home care workers were often the difference between life and death. Home care workers allowed many of those most vulnerable to avoid congregate settings, like nursing and

group homes, that saw a high spread of COVID.

Yet, this critical workforce shrunk by 280,000 people at the beginning of the pandemic, despite an increasing need for home care services. That is why the Biden administration has proposed investing \$400 billion to expand the home care workforce, something I was very proud to help negotiate last year as part of our Unity Task Force on healthcare.

But we can't stop there, and the American Families Plan doesn't stop there. The American Families Plan also recognizes that the majority of caregivers, as Mr. BOWMAN said, are women and disproportionately women of color. Many of them are responsible for care at home, which is a huge reason why we have seen women forced out of the workforce in record numbers.

In December 2020 alone, women accounted for nearly all the jobs lost, with a disproportionately high number of job losses coming from women of color.

That is why we need robust investments in universal childcare. No family, regardless of income, should pay more than 7 percent of their income on childcare. And we have to eliminate administrative barriers, like work requirements, that make it much more difficult for low-income White, Black, Brown, and indigenous people to access childcare.

Finally, we have to ensure strong labor standards for this care workforce. We cannot entrust people to care for the most valuable people in our lives and deny them a living wage, the right to join a union, and paid leave. These workers give our loved ones dignity. They give so many of us the ability to work outside of our homes to support our families.

As we talk about domestic workers, I am so proud to have the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights that I have introduced in Congress. Let's remember that this care work is the work that allows all other work to be possible.

This is an important moment for us to pass the American Families Plan to invest in education, to invest in healthcare, to lower the Medicare eligibility age, to take on prescription drugs, and to invest in this oh-so-important care economy. It is time to deliver for the American people so we continue to build back better and ensure that everyone has the support they need.

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), my friend.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for his work. We are indeed friends. We both were teachers, Mr. BOWMAN a principal. We are educators at heart.

To recover from one of the worst economic crises we have faced as a Nation, we must invest in families, our care economy, and our Nation's childcare.

For most American families, quality childcare and preschool are

unaffordable. In Riverside County, where my district, the 41st District of California, is located, it is unavailable. My district is a childcare desert. My constituents do not have childcare locations available, even if eligible, to help them care for their children while they attend school or work.

It doesn't have to be this way, and it shouldn't be this way. In fact, we should use our path toward recovery as an opportunity to address the disparities communities like mine have been facing when it comes to affordable childcare options. The American Families Plan will secure universal access to preschool and will expand the supply of quality childcare options for all families.

Studies have proven that quality preschool will positively impact children's cognitive, behavioral, and social-emotional development that is critical for their long-term success and mental health. If we are serious about investing in our children's education, we must provide universal preschool and affordable childcare for every child in need.

Investing in preschool and affordable childcare will not only help our children, but will also greatly benefit our workforce. As more preschools and childcare centers are available, more families can get back to work without worrying about their child's well-being.

This is our opportunity to help struggling families and take bold action to create a just and equitable post-COVID economy. I urge my colleagues to invest in our care economy by supporting the American Families Plan Act.

We just can't go back to the way things were before. We have to be bold and act with urgency to give families and parents access to the resources they need to help our country bounce back stronger than ever before.

Let me just close with a short anecdote, a short story. This happened on the weekend, the Friday before the Memorial Day weekend. I, as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, joined Secretary McDonough in a ceremony to honor our Nation's veterans at the Quantico cemetery. I met the commander of the base, who has responsibility not just for the Marine base that is there but also the FBI training center. There are a number of different facilities that are sort of associated with the base.

We just got in a chat, and I wasn't fishing for any sort of answers from him or any information. But I said: What has been your biggest challenge, in terms of reopening your base?

He said: Congressman, quite surprisingly to me, the biggest challenge has been childcare. That is what has held us back, and that has been my biggest challenge as a base commander.

I said: Do you think other base commanders across the country have had the same challenge?

He said: Yes.

This challenge of providing quality childcare and preschool is something

that is really holding our road to recovery back, and it is slowing it down. The American Families Plan is a sound and substantive answer to meeting this challenge.

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS), my friend.

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from the great State of New York for his leadership. In such a short period of time, what he has demonstrated to all of us about being a leader, I applaud him for this.

I am pleased to join with my colleagues in the Progressive Caucus as we continue to advocate for President Biden's American Families Plan and investing in the care economy.

That means things like funding for high-quality, affordable childcare, including universal pre-K; making sure that childcare costs do not exceed 7 percent of income for working families; ensuring that childcare workers, who are largely women and people of color, have a \$15 minimum wage—let me repeat that—ensuring that childcare workers, who are largely women and people of color, have a \$15 minimum wage; and meaningful investments in Medicare home and community-based services, which would help workers in the home care industry.

Everyone would like to say they are pro-family and pro-children. This is the chance to prove it.

Earlier this month, I joined with SEIU members in Philadelphia to rally for passing \$400 billion for caregiving. I told them funding for childcare and other caregiving is essential, since we actually want people to be able to go back to work.

We started this year off big and bold with \$1.9 trillion in the American Rescue Plan. That was a big step in the right direction. It was a down payment.

The American people voted into office a Democratic President, a Democratic Senate, and a Democratic House. As we promise to build back better, they expect us to do more than just reset the calendar to February 2020. The old normal wasn't so great for millions of Americans, including many Philadelphians I represent. They deserve better than the old normal. The American Families Plan would do a lot to deliver on our promise. Let's get it done.

Again, I thank Mr. BOWMAN for his leadership and the importance of this leadership and all the members of the Progressive Caucus demonstrating how we are going to lead the charge.

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. OMAR), my friend.

Ms. OMAR. Madam Speaker, as our country recovers from this devastating pandemic, it is critical we prioritize our families. All working families deserve to thrive, and that starts with ensuring high-quality, affordable childcare.

This is a generational opportunity to invest in affordable, quality care for all

children, and I urge my colleagues not to let it go to waste.

Right now, the average cost of childcare for children under 5 is around \$10,000 a year. This amount is even higher for infants. In my home State of Minnesota, we have some of the highest childcare costs in the Nation, ranking fourth in the country.

A minimum-wage worker working full-time in my district in Minneapolis would have to work 30 weeks to cover the cost of childcare for one infant. This is unconscionable.

As a mom, I know how difficult it can be to find affordable childcare options and how a lack of childcare impacts all aspects of life, including the ability to graduate from college while taking care of young children or even the ability to find a job and thrive.

We need universal childcare and pre-K for all families, and we need to pay our childcare workers a living wage.

Ensuring affordable, quality care for every child and family would stimulate the economy and have a lasting benefit for children's development and growth.

The American Families Plan moves us closer to this goal by investing in universal preschool, ensuring childcare costs do not exceed 7 percent of income for working families, and guarantees childcare workers make a \$15 minimum wage.

I urge my colleagues to ensure that women and families are not left behind in our recovery. Families across America are counting on us to do the right thing.

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. KAHELE), my brother.

Mr. KAHELE. Madam Speaker, mahalo also to my brother and my freshman colleague from New York for allowing me this opportunity to speak about something really important in our country, and that is the American Families Plan.

Today, I rise in support of our Nation's students, the future of America, an engaged generation of young Americans working to create a better future for our country. We must stand with them. The time is now to do that, as they embark on their journey to unlock their potential and achieve their dreams. But that journey starts with a quality education and the opportunity for higher education, the great equalizer in our society.

□ 1915

Now, our children wield tremendous potential and remind us to dream big. However, too many of our students do not have that opportunity because of the high costs of public higher education. Skyrocketing tuition, application fees, student fees, overpriced textbooks, meal plans, dorm plans all contribute to \$1.4 trillion in crushing student debt and are barriers preventing all of America's children from pursuing higher education.

The American Families Plan will change that. The American Families

Plan will enable the opportunity for every student across the country to obtain a degree or certificate through a community college for free.

The American Families Plan is built to invest in our children from early childhood through postsecondary education. Most importantly, this plan recognizes the importance of investing in access to community college.

Each year thousands of students in my home State of Hawaii benefit from community colleges across our islands, but unfortunately just 50 percent of those students are able to complete a postsecondary degree of any kind within 6 years of enrolling. As a product of community college myself, and an educator, I know how these public institutions can positively impact our most disadvantaged communities, which is why for so long I have fought to remove barriers to higher education.

The American Families Plan will redefine access to education, taking the long overdue step of ensuring 2 years of free community college for all students. This opportunity will invest in the future of our students, prepare them to compete and succeed in a highly competitive global economy, and level the playing field.

Every child in our country deserves the opportunity to live the American Dream, but in order to achieve that, we must believe, all of us must believe that we all have a stake in each other's prosperity.

President Biden's vision in the American Families Plan is a defining moment in our Nation's history and will give American children head starts and pave the way for the best-educated generation in U.S. history.

America's students have an amazing opportunity to pursue education beyond high school. Let us give them that opportunity.

Mahalo, Madam Speaker, and my colleague from New York.

Mr. BOWMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. KAHELE. I now yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN).

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Madam Speaker, it is great to stand here with Representative BOWMAN, with our colleague JAN SCHAKOWSKY, with Mr. KAHELE, with all of our brothers and sisters in Congress to say that we can and we must, and we will do so much better right now for our working parents, our workers, our kids.

As we recover from the pandemic and Build Back Better, we can't forget about the people who make up what we call the care economy—nursing home workers, home caregivers, childcare providers, and others who work every day to better the lives of other people.

Why is care work so important? The care economy has been central to my own life. I started my career helping nursing home workers organize with SEIU, but I think most parents can tell you about the importance of childcare in their own words.

Personally, I think back to the birth of my first son, Koby, and how so much

of those early years were spent juggling schedules with my wife to raise our son. I would stay home with the baby during the day so Mary could teach in public school, and then she would rush home and tap in while I took law school classes in the afternoon and evening. Ultimately, we had three kids under 5 in the house and later four kids altogether. It was joyful and exhilarating, but it was challenging and there was just no way we could have done it alone.

Providing quality childcare to every family in this country means providing every parent the opportunity to cherish raising their child or their children without fear of losing their income, of losing their job, of losing their career. Right now, in Michigan a year's worth of childcare for an infant costs well over \$10,000 on average. Who can afford that?

A record number of women have dropped out of the workforce during the pandemic. From August to September of last year alone, in one month, 865,000 women left the workforce. They didn't become unemployed. They left the workforce because of their responsibility for caregiving. And job gains in the recovery so far are disproportionately going to men.

In this crisis, we have an opportunity to Build Back Better and right this historic inequity. President Biden's American Families Plan and its investment in childcare won't just save families money by fully or partially covering their childcare costs. It will also create good-paying jobs that will go predominantly to women and people of color.

The poverty rate for early educators in my State of Michigan is 18.9 percent, much higher, almost double compared to the 10.8 percent rate for Michigan workers overall. Nearly half of U.S. childcare workers receive public income support. These statistics are totally unacceptable.

We need to take better care of the people taking care of our children and our seniors, and we can start by raising their wages to \$15 an hour by 2025 with no subminimum wages. That would lead to higher quality care and allow workers to provide for their own families.

Let's remember, high quality childcare and preschool don't just benefit working parents and the workers involved. They benefit our kids most of all. The data on the return on investment of investing in early education in childcare is overwhelming in terms of these kids' whole lives, their academic accomplishment, their earnings later in life.

There is so much at stake. We can't afford to let childcare become a bargaining chip in the next round of negotiations. Strengthening families, creating jobs, and giving kids the support they need to thrive should be the centerpiece of our work, not an afterthought. I am thrilled that the President's plan recognizes that.

Our work in this space won't end once we get the American Families

Plan signed into law. I believe we need to create a system of free universal childcare and that our caregivers deserve far better pay, benefits, training, and protection across the board. The American Families Plan is a great start and brings us closer to that goal. Let's get it done.

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. BOWMAN for his leadership in this.

Mr. BOWMAN. I now yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I appreciate Congressman BOWMAN's organizing this on behalf of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, which I am so proud to be a member of, and I really am grateful to him.

Let me just say this in no uncertain terms. Care infrastructure is infrastructure, and it is especially true for women whose opportunities are often limited because we don't really have a working care economy right now.

Every single day nearly 10,000 people turn 65 years old in the United States of America, and yet we do not have in the United States a long-term-care policy. Think about it. The United States of America does not have a real long-term-care policy.

Every family tries to figure out for itself, What are we going to do when grandma and grandpa get older? What are we going to do when I get older? What is the plan? Most people when they retire or have to retire actually don't have enough money to really make the kinds of decisions that they need to and will come up.

Of the people who turn 65, between 50 and 70 percent at that time need some sort of support or care. Where does that come from? Let me be clear; it mostly comes from women.

There is a sociologist who says many countries have a safety net; the United States has women. Paid and unpaid caregivers are women.

Let's talk about the paid caregivers first. People who work in nursing homes, people who work in home care. They make an average of about \$12 an hour, with no benefits. You can't live on that. They certainly can't plan for their retirement and to pay for someone to care for them.

And so what do we do? It is pretty clear what has to be done, and actually the Biden administration has actually begun to do it, because everyone should be able to provide and care for their families at any age, for childcare, and certainly for long-term care for the elderly, which is a particular concern of mine.

I am the co-chair of the Democratic Caucus Task Force on Aging and Families, and I am proud of that, coming up with proposals that are going to help our elderly. It is projected that right now we will need about 4 million additional caregivers, people who are either paid or unpaid, by 2028. That is just really around the corner. 4 million. We do not have enough.

First of all, we have to pay the workers a living wage. Now, President Biden

has come up with a plan for \$400 billion for home and community-based care. That is a lot of money. It can be a game changer.

The idea is to be able to provide more money, more wages for those who suit up every day and go to work, and during the pandemic often in very dangerous situations where they don't have enough of the PPE, the personal protective equipment, to take care of them and protect them against the virus. They suit up every day and go to work and can barely take care of their own families.

And what about all the women who have had to leave the workforce because they did not have anyone to care for their children or for their parents or both? The sandwich generation has to worry about making sure that they have someone to care for their children and someone who will help them to take care of their elderly relatives. That burden has fallen on women who have ended up having to leave the workforce.

We need to act now. We need to act to fill this gap, to have a real program for long-term care, to have real help for childcare so that women can go to work to care for their families, to have the income that it really takes.

This is not rocket science. It is that we need to pay attention. We need to have the policies in place. We need to have the infrastructure in place, the plan on how we are going to deliver the care that is needed. Without it, we will not be able to move forward economically in this country, and certainly women will pay, especially pay, the price, and often it is women that are low income, women of color that suffer.

□ 1930

So I am happy that we are seeing the Biden administration, we are seeing the Democrats, we are seeing the progressives move forward with that plan that will actually provide the infrastructure we need.

And let me just end by saying that care infrastructure is infrastructure.

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. PRESSLEY), my friend and sister.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York, my friend and colleague, for convening us this evening.

Care work is the backbone of our Nation's economy. Yet, for too long, policymakers have failed to make the critical investments needed to ensure that everyone, at all stages of life, has access to the high-quality care they need and deserve, and that our care workers are compensated for their essential work with livable wages. Their work is essential and so, too, are their lives.

I rise today on behalf of our Nation's care workers, whose labor continues to be undervalued, undermined, and unprotected, despite its essential role in our society.

I rise to lend my voice to the thousands of care workers, disproportionately Black and Brown women, who spend hours upon hours meeting the care needs of others, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Caregivers often juggling work while also providing care for their own families and struggling to cover the most basic of needs.

I want to take a moment to speak specifically on the critical role of home and community-based services. During the COVID-19 crisis and long before, these services have been a lifeline, supporting people from all walks of life with critical medical care in their home or community. This is an issue of quality care, of healthcare justice, of disability justice, and of liberty.

Again, throughout the pandemic, home and community-based services were a lifeline for so many, but the infrastructure needs resources. The Biden administration has proposed a historic investment in HCBS to meet the scale of the need and demand. This proposed investment is an investment in healthcare justice, but also an investment in human infrastructure, in our essential workers.

We must make these services readily available and compensate our home care workers, the majority of whom are women of color, with a living wage.

To build back better, we must center the people. We must invest in our communities and affirm that a better world is possible, a more just world, where every person can thrive.

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to legislate our values and to create a more just and caring America that takes care of everyone who calls this great Nation home.

Passing a robust infrastructure package that affirms care is infrastructure would leave a profound legacy.

Today, on the floor of the House of Representatives, we reaffirm our commitment to building a nation where every person can live and thrive with dignity.

As we craft a legislative response that actualizes that vision, we must make plain that what is needed in this moment of unprecedented economic crisis is bold, intentional legislation that recognizes the dignity and humanity of all workers, and affirms the right to meaningful, dignified work and a livable wage.

Earlier this year, I introduced a congressional resolution calling for a Federal job guarantee, which would provide every person in America with an enforceable legal right to a quality job. Extending beyond a project-based approach, our resolution calls for the creation of Federal jobs on projects that meet long-neglected community, physical and human infrastructure needs, such as delivering high-quality care for children and seniors, building and sustaining 21st century transit systems, strengthening our neighborhoods, and protecting the environment.

That is the type of bold, necessary approach we should bring to this process and beyond.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of these challenges and laid bare the deep inequities and disparities in our Nation.

From paid family and medical leave to home and community-based services, to universal childcare, to a dignified living wage and beyond, the people demand responsive policy that speaks to their lived experiences and struggles. The people are counting on us to deliver.

So let me make it plain: Any infrastructure package must deliver for our care workers, and it must take care of the people, because the care economy is critical infrastructure.

In this moment, as we fight for a strong economic recovery, we must also work to build a better, a more just, and more equitable economy than ever before.

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, the American Families Plan recognizes that childcare is infrastructure, and that it is not enough to settle for any childcare that enables a parent to go to work. This needs to be high-quality childcare that every child can access.

Babies are born learners, and it is well established by brain science that a child's environment and interactions in the first 1,000 days of life, whether positive or negative and long before they enter a kindergarten classroom, are highly formative during this critical period for learning and growth.

When those formative early childhood experiences include inadequate nutrition, homelessness on other adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, such as those brought on by a global pandemic, we know that a child's brain and body are changed in ways that are linked to poor health and learning outcomes later in life.

Without reliable supports in place to buffer our kids from the stress, that stress can quickly turn toxic.

The good news is that ACEs are preventable on a national scale if we are collectively willing to put in the investment worthy of our kids.

As the Representative for New York's 16th District and a former educator and school leader, I believe our goal for healthy early childhood development needs to be more ambitious than the prevention of ACEs, which aims to protect our kids from the worse effects of stress and trauma. That should be the floor.

We, ourselves, need to move past a scarcity framework and embrace a framework of shared abundance.

That looks like affordable, reliable access to quality childcare where young children, in the context of an intergenerational community, are empowered to explore themselves and their world with pure wonder; where they grow into self-directed learners, collaborative leaders, and adaptive community-centered problem solvers.

Madam Speaker, I now would like to speak a little bit about the child tax

credit. The child tax credit has been in place for years, and it is supposed to help offset the many expenses of raising children. This includes food, childcare, diapers, healthcare, clothing, and taxes.

But before the American Rescue Plan, it wasn't accessible to the families who needed it most because it wasn't fully refundable. Families that didn't earn enough income could not benefit.

The American Rescue Plan changed that when it enacted a much-needed expansion of the child tax credit, making it fully refundable and increasing the maximum credit from \$2,000 per child to \$3,000 per child up through age 17, and \$3,600 per child for children under age 6.

Because of the American Rescue Plan, nearly 66 million children will benefit from the child tax credit, making this the single largest contributor to reducing child poverty.

In my district, which includes the Bronx and Westchester, 124,400 children will gain from the expanded child tax credit.

The average benefit for 41,800 households in my district is \$2,800, lifting 9,200 children out of poverty and 4,700 children out of deep poverty.

This is historic, but we can't be satisfied with reducing child poverty. We need to completely end child poverty and eliminate it.

The American Families Plan would extend the child tax credit increases from the American Rescue Plan through 2025. The infrastructure we want for building back better shouldn't tolerate childhood poverty, and the American Families Plan moves us forward on that necessary path.

Before I close, I want to use my time on the House floor to share the experience of a New Yorker who needs home care services and wrote into my office. Her experience seeking care paints a very telling picture about the state of our care economy, and makes the case for the strong investments in the American Families Plan that we have heard tonight.

She shared that seniors and people with disabilities like her struggle to find the home care she needs because the job pays under \$13 an hour in most of New York State.

One week into the COVID lockdown, her home health aide contracted the virus from a relative, a nursing home worker who contracted it through their own caregiving job.

The first health aide has been unable to return to work because the virus has caused long-term complications from their immediate family members, for whom they are the primary caregiver.

Just 1 week after her first health aide contracted the virus, a second health aide fell ill.

While the second health aide did recover, the health aide's childcare provider closed permanently.

The second health aide wants to return to work, but, due to the low

wages, they are unable to afford childcare.

Not being able to find a full-time health aide to provide her care means she is unable to receive assistance with all of her needs. Some days she only gets help to eat and use the toilet once per day. She cannot shower as frequently as she would like.

She shared: "I live in constant fear that should something happen to my health aide, that my literal independence will be taken from me overnight. I don't know when this situation will improve, and I have no other resources to lean on should my situation worsen."

The solution, however, is simple. We need home care jobs to be recognized and treated as quality, dignified jobs with family-sustaining wages. If we pay home care workers a living wage, these jobs will be filled immediately because of the high demand. We need to ensure our home care jobs never become minimum wage jobs again.

I want to thank her for sharing her personal experience and allowing me to share it tonight. It goes to show how connected and interdependent we all are on one another and the care economy.

We need to meet this dire moment with a substantial, transformative investment in the care economy, and we must do that with the American Families Plan.

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

#### BRIEF SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, we are back here after 3 weeks in our districts, and I think our minds should probably be on the border and the thousands of people—tens of thousands of people streaming across every month, or perhaps on the economic problems caused by higher inflation. But, instead, there was a few brief statements made by one of our prominent TV anchors that causes me to feel I have to speak tonight.

While we were gone, we celebrated both Memorial Day and the hundreds of thousands of American soldiers who have died for our freedoms. We celebrated another anniversary of D-day, the landing in Europe. And when we think about Memorial Day, we can't help but remember other names of battles during World War II: Okinawa, Iwo Jima, the Battle of the Midway, the Battle of the Bulge, as well as all the soldiers who died fighting the communists in Vietnam and Korea.

It is a time for superlatives talking about the heroic efforts of these great men and women.

Unfortunately, on a formerly major network, NBC or MSNBC, Brian Williams decided to compare or supposedly

compliment all of our brave troops by comparing them to people who fight under the most evil banner I think that has existed, or one of the two most evil banners that has existed in the last 100 years, and that is the banner of antifa.

□ 1945

Antifa is an organization. If we had their flag here before us, it is virtually identical to the flag used by the communists in the early 1920s in Nazi Germany. The socialist flag at the time, the communist flag, allied with the Soviet Union, which at the time millions of people were dying as they adjusted to life without the czar and life under communism.

The Soviet armies were soon responsible for killing millions and millions of Ukrainians as they guarded the food so the kulaks would starve to death, the communist armies that in Red China caused tens of millions of deaths, the communist armies in Cambodia, these countries with their anti-God philosophy, proud in Red China when the final Christian churches were closed.

Of all things, to compare our troops at D-day with antifa, I cannot imagine a greater insult to give these soldiers. I wish more of them were still alive so they could respond to seeing on television a TV anchor trying to compare them—these brave men to keep the world free—to compare them to antifa, a group whose flag is almost identical to the communist flag.

By the way, it is not surprising that we have a red flag for Nazi Germany and a red flag for the Soviet Union. Red at the time stood for socialism.

Our young children should be educated on the comparisons between the two. During the 1920s, there were times when both ideologies entered into joint strikes because they both wanted to get rid of what existed of a free country in Germany at the time.

We would like to hear from NBC. Shame on you, NBC, the once-proud network. Would you respond to the statements by Brian Williams comparing the men who died at D-day, the men who landed on European soil to free Europe? Will you respond to your anchor implying they were the equivalent of antifa, a group connected with communism? Shame on that once-proud number one network in America. What do you think of what you have done?

The next issue I would like to comment on that I heard about again and again when I was back is an issue that is not surprising. To a certain extent, some of the policies of the past are responsible for this, but recently, we have had a new round of checks go out, a greater increase in the money supply, both M1 and M2.

Not surprising, when the government prints money, we see an increase in the amount of gasoline, an increase in food prices led by an increase in soybeans, an increase in lumber, and massive increases in homebuilding.