

friend. My wife, Evelyn, and I are thinking about his family during these difficult times.

May you be in glory, my brother.

SUPPORTING UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

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

Mr. GARCÍA of California. Madam Speaker, mankind has existed on this beautiful blue marble that we call Earth for nearly 200,000 years. Yet, just 118 years ago, we learned to fly in our own planet's atmosphere.

As a nation, we are thirsty for something to rally behind, something that unifies us, something that we can all be invested in, be intrigued by, be impassioned about, and something to be positive about.

There isn't a better movement to get behind than our Nation's modern space program. Some question the value of spending precious taxpayer dollars to overcome our planet's gravity to go to space, but those people aren't seeing the big picture.

In the early 1900s, many questioned the value of spending so much capital and risking so many lives in hopes of conquering flight, and now we can't imagine a world in which we don't have the luxury of modern aviation.

We had no idea that a little canvas glider flown on a beach in North Carolina would evolve into the modern fighter jet.

We have no choice but to think outside the box, think outside of our own solar system even, to make sure that we not only understand the answers to our most profound questions but also discover new questions for tomorrow that we can't even fathom asking today.

We have no choice but to better understand the extensions of God's creations, to know if we are alone in the universe, to know if there is a second home somewhere out there beyond our sights and imaginations.

Failing to press on is a disservice to previous generations who have sacrificed so much and worked so hard to get us here today. Failing to press on is a disservice to current and future generations who benefit from our progress today.

You see, space is a domain where we, as a nation, can thrive, but it is also a domain where we can be vulnerable and susceptible to the malicious intent of foes such as China, Russia, and Iran. There are existential threats right now in space.

Any decision on our part to divest from this adventure will not dissuade our foes from advancing their own space programs. It would only serve to highlight a massive strategic vulnerability and potentially create capability gaps that will be impossible to fill in the future.

A path of divestment is an unforgiving one and the damages irrep-

arable. While we as a nation currently hold an advantage in space, our lead, like the nearly 118 years that separates today from the Wright brothers' first flight in 1903, can vanish in the blink of an eye.

In this new frontier, time is as precious as money. Now is not the time to slow down.

As big as space is, we must, as a nation, be bigger, be bigger as a united team. As a nation, we must recognize that this investment in our future is more than science and curiosity; it is more than resolve and perseverance; and it is more than just discovery and challenges. It is about survival, excellence, and inspiration; it is about national security; and it is about planetary security against threats that are not slowing down. It is about a new golden era for the American space program.

As a result of the construction of the International Space Station, we have not had all humans together on this planet for over 20 years. That is remarkable to think about.

In 2020, SpaceX, a critical commercial partner in our quest for low-cost and frequent space travel, averaged one rocket launch every 2 weeks. That is 26 launches in a year or almost three times the number of flights that the space shuttle did in its best year.

Earlier this year, NASA successfully landed a JPL Mars rover on the Martian surface for the fifth time. We were the first and only nation to have done this until recently when the UAE and China just landed on Mars.

In April, we flew a helicopter in the Martian atmosphere. No other nation has done that, but the United States now has.

In 2024, we plan to once again land Americans on the Moon and further make history with the first woman on the Moon. Still, to this day, no other nation has done that.

During our lifetimes, we will land Americans on Mars. No other nation has done that. The U.S. will be the first.

As Americans, we are, in fact, exceptional. Our successes in space are testimonies to this. We should take pride in those successes, take pride in our exceptionalism, especially in the space domain.

In 1962, JFK had to inspire us with his moonshot speech. Today, we have no excuses not to be inspired. We in Congress have no excuses to not support these exceptional programs in earnest and with pride. We have no choice.

URGING SENATE TO PASS FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. UNDERWOOD) for 5 minutes.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge the Senate to pass the For the People Act, or H.R. 1.

This urgently needed legislation would fight corruption and the over-

whelming influence of money in politics by strengthening ethics rules and reforming our campaign finance system.

It would protect the foundation of our democracy, the right to vote, at a time when it is under attack in many States.

I am proud that my home State of Illinois is not one of them. In fact, our legislature recently voted to expand ballot access. But for those who aren't lucky enough to live in Illinois, H.R. 1 is a much-needed defense against widespread voter suppression.

As the Senate considers these long-overdue reforms, I rise today, here in the House of Representatives, to insist that representation matters.

That is Congress' role in our representative democracy: to represent the American people. If the Members elected to this Chamber don't represent the diversity of the American people's backgrounds and their experiences, we can't do a good job of representing their perspectives and advocating for their needs.

Consider that women make up just over a quarter of the 117th Congress, and that is the highest percentage it has ever been. We see the effects of this lack of diversity in the way our government works for women, or, rather, the fact that it doesn't work for women.

Women have been hit harder than men by job loss during the pandemic. This is partly because women still do more childcare than men, and the pandemic triggered a childcare crisis. But this doesn't come out of nowhere. It is a result of chronic failure to address areas that disproportionately impact women.

Because women haven't had a seat at the table, our needs have been sidelined. As a result, everybody loses, not just women. All Americans are part of an economy that depends on childcare to function.

It is no coincidence that the Biden-Harris administration's bold plan to invest in human infrastructure comes just months after our first female Vice President was sworn in. This is just one of many instances in which everybody benefits when different perspectives and life experiences are represented in our elected leadership.

When we talk about candidate diversity, we are talking about growing our economy, improving childcare, and strengthening our infrastructure. Good policy starts with good representation.

H.R. 1 will give Americans the government we deserve by enabling us to elect people who truly represent us.

One of the most important provisions in the bill for improving representation is the creation of a small-donor public financing program.

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In the States and cities where it is already in use, public financing is popular because it empowers candidates to get their message out to voters, even if

they don't have deep pockets or corporate connections.

But the Brennan Center for Justice found that public financing doesn't just increase the socioeconomic diversity of candidates for public office, it also boosts racial and gender diversity.

That is why I introduced an amendment to H.R. 1 to include an assessment of the impact on candidate diversity in the required report to Congress on the new public financing program, and I am grateful that my colleagues voted to pass my amendment.

This is personal for me because I firmly believe that we can have a Congress that looks like America if we just give people a fair shot.

I became the first woman and the first person of color to represent my district because I refused to be counted out as unelectable in my own community. I know that women and people of color are electable everywhere. No seat in Congress should be deemed out of reach for certain types of candidates.

When everybody has a fair shot, all candidates are electable, and small donor public financing gives people that fair shot. Small donor public financing and the other crucial reforms in H.R. 1 would make our representative democracy both more representative and more democratic. In other words, it would make America more American, aligning our system of government with our highest national values.

So I urge my colleagues in the Senate to pass the For the People Act with the small donor public financing program intact and help America live up to our values.

REMEMBERING MARINE CORPORAL JEFFREY STANDFEST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MCCLAIN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Marine Corporal Jeffrey Robert Standfest, a St. Clair County native who was killed while serving his country 11 years ago today.

Corporal Standfest was only 23 years old when an IED struck and killed him and his K-9 partner, Sergeant Rupert, in Afghanistan.

Like all of our fallen heroes, Jeff was not just a soldier in war. He was a son, a brother, a nephew, a grandson, and a friend. A star runner at St. Clair High School, Jeff was an all-American kid who loved his country and followed in the footsteps of his grandfather by serving in the Marine Corps. This is who he was, and this is how he will be remembered.

I recently introduced bipartisan legislation to rename the St. Clair County Post Office after Corporal Standfest. Renaming this post office would serve as a permanent reminder of his selfless service to our country. To his friends, family, and loved ones, it will demonstrate that the United States will

never forget his bravery and ultimate sacrifice.

It is the courage of Corporal Standfest and all of those who have worn the uniform that protects the freedoms we hold so dear.

Today, on the anniversary of his tragic death, I hope all of those who knew and loved him find comfort knowing that Corporal Jeffrey Robert Standfest will forever be remembered in history as a patriotic American hero. I am hopeful my colleagues in Congress will join me in honoring this courageous American.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR GEORGIANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. BOURDEAUX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BOURDEAUX. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address a serious problem facing our country, one that many of us have been dealing with firsthand since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. As I do so, I also want to acknowledge that while we are headed in the right direction, earlier this week we crossed the solemn milestone of more than 600,000 American lives lost in the pandemic.

Today, I speak for millions of Americans from across the country who lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19. They then did exactly what they had been told to do and filed for unemployment insurance, and then they waited. But in Georgia, for many, that unemployment check never came.

Many of us have received a flood of calls and emails regarding this issue. Currently, my office is processing nearly 150 cases dealing with unemployment insurance, our second highest of any issue area, and the stories are truly frustrating.

There is a substitute teacher in my district who couldn't find work due to the COVID pandemic. When Georgia schools reopened to in-person instruction, she was unable to go back, as she lives with a high-risk family member. In April of 2020, she applied for unemployment benefits and received them for just a short amount of time before they mysteriously stopped, even though she is still eligible. She contacted my office in February, and we have sent five inquiries on her behalf, and not a word of response from the Georgia Department of Labor.

We have another person who was approved for benefits in July and began filing claims weekly but has never received a single cent. That person contacted our office in March. We sent four inquiries. Not a word in response from the Georgia Department of Labor.

Let me be clear: This isn't just the slow gears of government bureaucracy. Every day delayed means a human being has to decide between putting food on the table or keeping a roof over their heads. One such person my office has talked to had their car repossessed

and are on the verge of eviction because their government can't get it together.

Along with the rest of the Georgia Democratic congressional delegation, I sent a letter in March asking the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of the Inspector General to conduct an audit of the Georgia Department of Labor, and they recently replied.

What they found was that they couldn't figure out what was going on because Georgia couldn't even supply basic data on a number of key issues, including the timeliness of benefit distribution and the number of Georgians who requested the federally funded unemployment insurance supplement.

There are two other States which were unable to provide data on the timeliness of claims through all three Federal enhanced unemployment insurance programs. There were four other States which apparently did not report the required claims volume data. Georgia is the only State that was unable to provide data on either.

In other words, the Georgia Department of Labor stands out as uniquely unable, by either choice or competence, to report on its administration of enhanced unemployment benefits.

While factors such as initial understaffing and limited technology may have prevented the Georgia Department of Labor from processing claims, after over a year and after over 67 million in Federal dollars to help the State, extensive questions remain about how the agency plans to identify solutions to address the serious backlog that currently exists.

Georgians are lawfully entitled to the benefits they applied for. They are also entitled to transparency and accountability from their government. It is time for answers and for solutions.

CLARENCE CUMMINGS, JR. IS OLYMPIC BOUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Carolina (Ms. MACE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MACE. Madam Speaker, I rise today with great honor and pride to announce that Clarence Cummings, Jr., a 21-year-old constituent of mine from Beaufort, South Carolina, will be an important part of the 2021 Olympic weightlifting team and their effort to bring home the first gold in over 60 years for the red, white, and blue.

Mr. Cummings' record is extensive, to say the least. He holds 23 American records in weightlifting. In his weight class, he holds the Junior World Record in the snatch, clean and jerk, and total.

He is world respected and well regarded for his feat in the clean and jerk.

He was the IWF Junior World Champion in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. In 2016 and 2017 he was the IWF Youth World Champion. He is also the Pan-American Champion for 2019 and 2020. I also