

approximately 6,700 individuals were encountered.

To put this in perspective, President Obama's Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson, stated in his tenure that 1,000 apprehensions a day was considered a bad day. We are more than six times that now, and on top of it, we face a global pandemic.

We are currently watching a debacle unfold in Del Rio, Texas, where this weekend alone there were estimated to be approximately 15,000 migrants crossing the Rio Grande. This surge is overwhelming an already overburdened system, and the agents and officers of CBP need Congress to focus on this crisis.

While it is promising that CBP will be surging resources to the area, it remains extremely worrisome to me that, as the OIG found, CBP is not required to test these migrants. And I understand there is also a measles outbreak at Fort Bliss.

Moreover, we will continue to see the border crisis of varying scales until we institute policies that will deter illegal immigration.

Programs such as the Migrant Protection Protocols and Title 42 health restrictions should be utilized to stem the flow of illegal migration and help keep our communities safe during the pandemic.

Notably, the DHS OIG report also states that the "erosion of Title 42 authority has had a significant negative impact on CBP's COVID-19 mitigation measures and creates increased risk."

I encourage this administration to continue to implement these health restrictions for migrants crossing illegally, especially while we see new variants emerging.

As the former director of the Iowa Department of Public Health, I know we must ensure that any individuals the Biden administration insists on releasing into our communities do not have COVID-19 or other infectious diseases. In fact, the Biden administration is recognizing the need for COVID-19 testing and vaccinations for another group of individuals, those who are being paroled in from Afghanistan.

I cannot comprehend how we can vaccinate those individuals for not only COVID-19 but also measles, mumps, rubella, polio, and any other age-appropriate vaccinations that are required by the CDC but not those coming across our border illegally.

It is clear that this administration is creating a double standard not only for U.S. citizens and migrants but also for individuals they are bringing into this country.

If I may, I will also add a boisterous happy birthday to my husband, Curt.

RECOGNIZING KMPH TELEVISION'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a significant mile-

stone for one of the local news stations in my hometown and district in Fresno, California. KMPH Television is celebrating 50 years of TV programming and broadcast news excellence.

First taking the air in 1971, by the Pappas family, KMPH launched its news department 7 years later, serving as a vital source of information for viewers across the Central Valley.

It has not been an easy time for journalists in the last decade throughout our country. Nearly one-fourth of America's newspapers have shuttered their operations, and a significant portion of print and TV journalists, sadly, have lost their jobs. This leaves many smaller stations with fewer reporters to inform the public on what is happening in their communities. Getting local news is so critical to having an informed public.

KMPH is no stranger to these challenges, but it continues to thrive, make a difference, and inform the public.

A free press, as we all know, is the cornerstone of our democracy. Local news plays an integral role in shaping America, keeping people informed, and allowing them to be active in participatory democracy.

During a time of disinformation—sadly, these days—in social media, I think supporting local journalism has never been more critical.

Fifty years of public service is worth celebrating. Congratulations to KMPH in Fresno for 50 years of informing the public.

CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, to honor the cultures, history, and achievements of the Hispanic community, both in my district and across the country, for generations.

Throughout the last year, every segment of our society has been impacted by the COVID pandemic. Certainly, Hispanic Americans have felt this impact as well, but they have worked hard to do their part.

Many of them are essential workers who have to be on their job every day, like the farmworkers, some of the hardest working people you will ever meet in your life, putting food on America's dinner table every night. Some are healthcare workers—doctors, nurses, technicians, first responders—and they risk their lives every day doing their jobs and putting their families at risk.

Every day, the Hispanic-American community's quest for the American Dream has impacted our communities. They are living the American Dream of immigrants past and immigrants present.

There are examples such as the Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation, where over 320 female small business owners have participated in the Latinapreneur and Womanpreneur programs to grow their small businesses, creating jobs and creating vital economic activity.

Other individuals historically have played a role and have been barrier-

breakers, like our valley's own Coach Tom Flores, son of migrant workers in the San Joaquin Valley. He spent 30 years in the NFL, as the first Hispanic quarterback and then coaching and becoming the first Hispanic Super Bowl champion. Just a month ago, Coach Flores was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame for these achievements.

We have so many others who have made a difference, such as my dear friend Joseph Castro from Hanford, California, who is today chancellor of the California State University System, the largest public university system in America. We also have Juan Sanchez Munoz, who is chancellor of UC Merced, one of the newest universities in America, making a difference. In addition, my neighbor, Dr. Saul Jimenez-Sandoval, is the newest president of Fresno State University. Go Dogs.

All of these individuals have played a role. All have unique stories and careers. They have helped to educate and create new opportunities, and they serve as a role model for future leaders. But we must not forget that many in our Hispanic community live in fear of attaining these important goals.

Over the past few years, I have met with DACA students across my district to hear their stories and discuss the need for immigration reform. For them, America is the only country they have really known, and so immigration reform is so critical.

As we commemorate this month, let us not forget that they are counting on Congress to bring about comprehensive immigration reform.

As a proud member of the Hispanic Caucus, I work with my colleagues every day to ensure the promise of America is accessible to the 62 million Hispanics living across the country.

MILITARY NEEDS LARGER PAY INCREASE

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

Mr. GARCIA of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on an important facet of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022. While I am pleased that the NDAA bill delivers good top-line and procurement financial support for our Nation's defense capabilities, the bill is not perfect.

Specifically, I want to share my frustration with the bill's failure to properly increase our Nation's military pay, specifically for our enlisted personnel. The 2.7 percent pay increase for our military servicemembers is simply not enough. Throughout today, during the debate over the NDAA, we will hear Members from both sides of the aisle talk about the 2.7 percent, almost touting this.

I want to put this in perspective. For the average junior enlisted personnel member, this translates to roughly \$1.80 a day more for their service. This

is unsatisfactory, especially given the gap between military pay and their civilian counterparts is currently at an all-time high.

The reality is that many of our U.S. servicemembers and their families must serve 3 years and gain the rank of E4 before they can be at or above most States' minimum wage. This is also based on the assumption that they are working only 40 hours a week, which we all know is not true. Most servicemembers are actually working 50 to 60 hours per week, given the current operational tempo worldwide.

We should never have to discuss food insecurities for those protecting our security, but the reality is that we have a significant percentage of servicemembers and their families who actually qualify for food stamps. This is unacceptable. We should start by paying them an adequate amount of base pay and avoid the burden of food stamps for our military.

Earlier this year, during committee markup of the FY22 Defense appropriations bill, I offered an amendment that would ensure that all servicemembers make the equivalent of \$15 an hour, or \$31,200 a year, in base pay. These are not seismic numbers. These are not numbers we, as a Nation, cannot afford.

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When considering the 2.7 percent pay increase included in the FY22 NDAA, we must realize that this would still leave many servicemembers below that \$15 minimum that I advocated for in July. Not to mention, the 2.7 percent pay increase actually falls below the current inflation rate, so they are actually losing ground relative to current prices. It also fails to keep pace with servicemembers' pay relative to their civilian counterparts.

If we want to attract and retain the requisite skill sets and warriors needed in a complex battle space against a threat like China, we need to be willing to pay our troops a living wage. In the grand scheme of things, this pay raise for our enlisted ranks is extremely affordable. It not only pays for our servicemembers and their families, but also deepens and solidifies our Nation's security. This is a priceless return on a relatively small investment.

While the amendment I offered to the FY22 NDAA bill was not included in the final bill, I secured a commitment from Defense Subcommittee Chairwoman BETTY MCCOLLUM that she would create a working group to find a way to address the necessary military pay raise in conference negotiations with the Senate, and I appreciate the Chairwoman's willingness to work with me on this issue.

Let me be clear: While the FY22 NDAA is not perfect and it does not properly raise our military's pay, I plan to support the overall bill as it does make important strides to provide a large majority of the necessary funding and, frankly, the initiatives that

our Nation's military needs. I also promise to continue to work on ensuring our servicemembers receive the pay raises that they actually deserve.

After 20 years of unprecedented deployment cycles during the global war on terror, now is the time to invest in our precious servicemembers and their families who provide our beautiful nation its security blanket on a daily basis. \$15 an hour or \$31,000 a year is a reasonable minimum base salary for our troops.

DOLLY PARTON AND THE HOT FERC SUMMER

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

Mr. CASTEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to declare for now the end of Hot FERC Summer.

Sixty-four days ago I kicked off Hot FERC Summer with Megan Thee Stallion and then Fergie to elevate the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's critical role in solving the climate crisis, and to urge the White House to nominate a fifth FERC commissioner.

Some, even in this Chamber, have lamented the bad dad jokes and puns, and many have asked what does this have to do with climate change?

Here's the thing. For far too long we have just used FERC's mind and we never gave them credit. And, frankly, allowing the most important Federal agency to fight climate change to continue to go unnoticed and short staffed, well, that would have driven me crazy, if I had let it.

I am thrilled to report that the President has embraced that Hot FERC Summer spirit and nominated Willie Phillips, taking us one step closer to restoring FERC to its full strength, enabling us to make this transition to clean energy at the pace the climate crisis demands.

Those commissioners and their hard-working, underappreciated staff, they are FERCalicious.

But they can't start working yet, and that is why today I am calling on my Senate colleagues to prioritize the confirmation hearings for Mr. Phillips so that he can start FERCing 9 to 5.

You see, when you tumble out of bed and stumble to the kitchen, pour yourself a cup of that ambition, your alarm clock, the lights, the hot coffee, they are in part, in no small part, thanks to the folks at FERC who are working to ensure that robust transmission system that we take for granted every day.

And when you jump in the shower hot enough that your blood starts pumping and drive out to the street before the traffic starts jumping, the charging networks for all those electric vehicles that stay cheap and reliable are also thanks to the folks FERCing 9 to 5.

FERCing 9 to 5, what a way to save the planet. We will not slow down this

rapid acceleration of devastating wildfires, hurricanes, heat waves and blackouts that have already impacted one in three Americans this summer until we build out a zero-carbon energy system. With FERC's help, we can turn this ship around, if we let it.

FERCing 9 to 5, what a way to save the economy. Every day FERC helps make sure that energy isn't just a rich man's game. They have the ability and the authority to bring about this clean energy transition while keeping our energy markets competitive, reliable, and affordable to make sure that your utility isn't just taking without giving.

So why FERC? Couldn't we just do this in Congress?

Well, as long as the Senate prioritizes the preservation of the filibuster over the preservation of the planet, a fully staffed, climate-focused FERC will remain the most powerful, most important, and maybe the only tool we have to get to a low-cost, zero-carbon economy at the pace that the crisis demands.

But let's be clear: Getting FERC fully staffed is necessary but insufficient. Once fully staffed, they have got a lot of work to do. We need new rules to debottleneck our inter-regional transmission system to deliver clean, cheap, and reliable energy to all Americans—and thank you to my friend Senator HEINRICH, and fellow nerd engineer, on that front—to ensure that market rules incentivize clean energy investments to decarbonize our system and lower the cost of energy, even as those investments lower the resulting cash flows; to ensure that the economic gains of zero-carbon energy are equitably shared by investors, by consumers, and by workers; to make sure that long-subsidized but inherently uneconomic fossil fuel plants can transition offline without unduly burdening consumers.

That stuff is really complicated. But the simple and important truth is that we don't have to keep paying too much for dirty energy. We don't have to accept the fossil-fuel-funded false dichotomy between our morals and our wallets. There is a better life, Madam Speaker, and you think about it, don't you?

FERC is the place where we can preserve a livable planet for ourselves, for our kids, for our grandkids. We are all in the same boat; and with FERC's help, the tide is going to come in and it is going to roll our way.

So at the end of Hot FERC Summer, the day after the 21st night of September, thank you to Megan, Fergie, and Dolly for the inspiration, and for helping me ensure that my daughters, however embarrassed they may now be, can inherit a livable planet. Thanks to all who paid attention, helped me prove that FERC is indeed hot enough to warrant this level of attention, and moved us a little closer, a little quicker to a fully functioning Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. And thanks to all the incredibly dedicated