

fame after releasing the Grammy-nominated ballad “Superman”. While written and released well before 9/11, “Superman” became something of an anthem during the tough days following 9/11.

As our Nation came together as one, “Superman” struck a chord with the survivors and families of those we lost on that terrible day, as well as our troops serving around the world. And its lyrics resonated with people and comforted those who needed it the most.

Mr. Speaker, since then, John has been deeply involved with our troops. He has performed at dozens of USO shows for our servicemembers overseas and also works with several veteran-oriented charities. John has spent the past two decades writing deeply personal songs that include social messages that make an emotional connection and invoke the human spirit.

Some of these songs are included on the “CD for the Troops” project which is a collection of 13 songs from top artists, including John’s, that was compiled specially for U.S. military members.

Since 2007, John has distributed over 1 million copies of “CD for the Troops” to servicemembers and their families around the world as a way of thanking them for the sacrifices that they have made and continue to make.

John’s support of the U.S. Armed Forces is unwavering and, like many of us, when he saw the devastating images coming out of Afghanistan during the onset of the U.S. withdrawal in August, he was horrified. Terrified mothers were throwing their babies over barbed wire fences and men were clinging on to military aircraft as they lifted off, all in an attempt to flee the Taliban. How could this be happening?

John then did what many musicians in pain do. He sat at his piano and he wrote a song. He penned “Blood on My Hands” which is a song that mourns the Americans who died and the ones who were left behind in Afghanistan due to the failures of the administration. “Blood on My Hands” encapsulates the emotions that I and many Americans felt following the terrorist attacks in Kabul that killed 13 U.S. servicemembers and dozens of Afghani allies. Similar to “Superman’s” effect on people post-9/11, “Blood on My Hands” went viral and quickly became an anthem for veterans and servicemembers in the wake of the deadly attacks in Kabul.

Mr. Speaker, many people cautioned John not to release the song. Still, he kept coming back to the idea that this song sent an important moral message about the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. John says of “Blood on My Hands”: “It’s not a political song. It is a moral message about promises that we made to people there, that we promised to protect, that we left there. We broke our promise. It’s about accountability and admitting when you make mistakes because that’s how you

can rectify them and learn not to do them again.”

Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with this sentiment. What happened to no person left behind? We put American citizens, SIV holders, and Afghan allies’ lives at risk. The United States of America and this administration broke that promise to these people. The administration’s decisions surrounding the withdrawal will go down, I believe, as one of the worst foreign policy decisions in American history. As a result, American lives were needlessly lost.

It is time our leaders reflect on the mistakes that were made and take accountability for failures so that we can do better for the American people and our allies in the future.

Mr. Speaker, John’s work is evidence of the power that music holds. It brings people from different corners of the world together. It transcends time, and I am confident that John’s song, “Blood on My Hands”, will do just that.

We will never forget 9/11 and, in the same vein, we can never forget the heroes who fought in the subsequent 20-year war in Afghanistan. Thanks to brave storytellers like John Ondrasik, we won’t forget these heroes.

Mr. Speaker, John is a true patriot, and I applaud and admire his courage to stand up for what he believes in, and even more so, demand accountability from our Nation’s leaders.

#### LINCOLN BEACH

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

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, let me paint a picture. It is the east side of New Orleans in 1959. A Black man at a swimming pool jumps off the high dive, arched in the sky. Fellow swimmers and passersby watch him from the shade of a palm tree. A Ferris wheel turns at the amusement park, and families picnic on the sandy shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

That is what Lincoln Beach was like in its heyday: a beach, amusement park, performance area, and pool for the Black community of New Orleans who were not allowed at the all-White swimming pools in the area.

Growing up, my community had fond memories of Lincoln Beach, as it was in the process of shutting down after courts decreed a racial nondiscrimination policy for private facilities on public lands, desegregating the all-White pools.

Since its closure in the sixties, Lincoln Beach has fallen into decline. It was a site for picnics and outings. Without any maintenance, and over the decades, mountains of debris have piled up. This historic site, where so many Black kids and families built communities in New Orleans East, was fenced off and forgotten to many, but not to everyone.

During COVID-19, some inspiring local activists and community mem-

bers including Sage, Reggie, and Bliss, took it upon themselves to take the first steps toward reopening historic Lincoln Beach. They got into some good trouble and cleaned up the beach all by themselves, spending their own resources, time, energy, and money.

All on their own time, their own dime, they removed hundreds of bags of garbage and debris. About 3 tons of refuse was removed by these good-doing volunteers. After Hurricane Ida, they are facing some setbacks once again with flooding that floated the more than a year’s worth of trash collection away. However, these committed activists are already back to work, cleaning up the beach and trying to remove obstacles to the future of what can be a revitalized, renewed Lincoln Beach.

After Hurricane Katrina, the primarily Black community of New Orleans East repopulated essentially at the same rate as the city of New Orleans, but businesses did not come back at the same strength. Many of the major commercial areas are full of vacant businesses in this thriving, rich, strong community of New Orleans East. The once-popular mall was razed instead of being rebuilt.

In 2019, a report said that 19 percent of the homes are vacant. Reopening a beautiful beach on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain could be a catalyst that will attract a renaissance of economic development in a community that has historically been underserved and should have equitable investments.

One of the most important things a Member of Congress can do is to fight for allocations to fund projects for development to improve the lives of the constituents in a particular area, like New Orleans East. This is an equity issue. This is a racial issue. This is an issue of economic development. This is an environmental issue and a recreation issue.

Lincoln Beach has a rich history, important cultural significance, and a huge potential for the future of this great community. I support the efforts of the city of New Orleans to direct RESTORE Act funds toward the project and today, I reaffirm my commitment to support the renewal of Lincoln Beach in any way possible from Congress, State, and local resources.

I came to Congress to fight for the people of the Second Congressional District, to fight for good jobs, healthy communities, equity and opportunities. One way to achieve this fight is for us to revitalize New Orleans East and to bring Lincoln Beach back to its full luster and beauty for the community to enjoy, to use as a catalyst for further economic development, to show what revitalization and community efforts, joining with Federal, local, and State resources, can do.

We can and we will do better. The people of New Orleans, the people of Louisiana certainly deserve it, and we will fight to continue to bring those resources to bear.

## BORDER CRISIS

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

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, West Virginia, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Maine, Montana, Rhode Island, Delaware, North Dakota, South Dakota, Alaska, Vermont, and Wyoming. During President Biden's first year in office, the number of illegal immigrants that the Border Patrol has encountered on our southern border has surpassed the population of these 12 States and the end is nowhere in sight.

I am not sure if the Biden administration knew that their policies would lead to the number of illegal immigrants surpassing the population of over 20 percent of U.S. States, but by reversing the successful policies of the previous administration, they have created this crisis.

This administration has listened to special interest groups over the will of the American people. This administration has implemented catch-and-release policies. This administration has canceled the remain in Mexico policy, and on his very first day in office, President Biden issued an executive order ending border wall funding.

This administration has turned their back on every State of the Union to pursue a far-left agenda. This administration has created a new State of chaos in our Nation with their failed policies. It is time for us to reverse course and to return to commonsense policies that work and that protect our Nation's borders.

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## REMEMBERING OUR VETERANS

Mr. GUEST. Former President Ronald Reagan once said: "Veterans know better than anyone else the price of freedom, for they've suffered the scars of war. We can offer them no better tribute than to protect what they have won for us."

Today, we remember the service of our veterans, the price they have paid and the Nation that they helped build and fought to protect.

We know that America's veterans risked their lives on the field of battle to preserve this Nation and the ideals of democracy, liberty, and freedom.

But we must not forget that they not only fought to protect the rights that were established by our Founding Fathers, but they also returned home to set an example of enduring patriotism and leadership in our communities, our States, and our Nation.

When their service ended, our veterans helped advance our country by embodying the American spirit of hard work and perseverance.

Today, we thank them for the example they set.

This day, more than any other, let every American reach out to a veteran and say: Thank you for your service; we are grateful for your many sacrifices that you have made on behalf of our Nation.

As we stand in this great institution of democracy that our veterans helped build and then fought to preserve, let our Nation remember the hundreds of thousands of men and women who fought for our freedoms, and let us always remember that our Nation would have been forgotten to history long ago if not for those men and women brave enough to protect it.

May God bless our country, and may God bless our veterans.

## HONORING LES HOUCK

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

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a truly dedicated township official from Pennsylvania's 11th Congressional District, which I am honored to represent.

Mr. Les Houck, of Salisbury Township, in eastern Lancaster County, is retiring as a member of the Salisbury Township Board of Supervisors after 48 years of dedicated service in that body; almost a half a century.

In fact, his service to the township began 2 years prior to his 48 years as a supervisor, in 1972, when he was appointed to the township's planning commission.

Les is a wonderful husband and father as well, but as I said, he has dedicated half a century working to improve his community. Over the years, Les has become a trusted voice who is sought out for counsel in Lancaster County and across the Commonwealth as well.

Beyond his service to the residents of Salisbury Township, Les served on several boards for Lancaster County, on advisory committees to the Governor and other State departments, and in leadership roles with both the county and State associations of township supervisors.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Les Houck for 50 years of service to the residents of Salisbury Township and for being an outstanding and true example of servant leadership.

## CONGRATULATING EHD OF LANCASTER

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate EHD of Lancaster as they celebrate their business' 125th anniversary; truly an impressive milestone.

The business, Engle-Hambright & Davies, now known as EHD, dates back to 1896 and has grown over the years, from previously working in real estate to now being a respected full-service insurance agency which employs 120 individuals with offices in Lancaster, Reading, Exton, and Pittsburgh.

They are one of only a few independent insurance agencies who achieved the Best Practices distinction for 6 consecutive years from the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America.

They continue to work to give back to the community they have called

home for over a century, supporting a number of local nonprofit organizations through their many charitable efforts.

Mr. Speaker, the American entrepreneurial spirit has led to the founding of many businesses. Some do well, some fail, but not many have lasted for 125 years. That is rare.

Today, I want to mention EHD. We celebrate with them. We congratulate them on achieving this milestone, and we wish them continued success.

## SUPPORTING THE SECOND AMENDMENT

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

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, President Biden and the Democrats want to defund the police, take away your Second Amendment right to self-defense, and then stand by and watch crime skyrocket in cities like Chicago.

The new push by the left, intended to diminish your Second Amendment rights, is to pass so-called red-flag gun confiscation laws.

This is a disguised attempt by Congressional Democrats and some Republicans to seize lawfully owned firearms and violate the Second Amendment rights of American citizens.

Congressional Democrats and some Republicans voted to pass the National Defense Authorization Act, which includes red-flag gun confiscation provisions.

I urge the Senate to reject red-flag gun confiscation provisions in the NDAA.

I will always stand up for the Second Amendment rights of my constituents.

Shootings in Chicago are up 220 percent due to the pro-crime policies of the left. Businesses and citizens are leaving Illinois at a record number. Officers are retiring from the Chicago police force at a record pace.

Our Second Amendment right to defend our home and family has never been more important. I will always stand up for the Constitution and for the safety of the people in Illinois.

## DIVISIVE MERGER AT JOHNSON &amp; JOHNSON

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, a jury instructed Johnson & Johnson to pay \$5 million in damages to Patricia, a retired teacher with two children and four grandchildren. One month later, she died, at age 61, of mesothelioma, an aggressive form of cancer caused by asbestos exposure.

Thirty-five-year-old Christina was a preschool teacher studying for her master's degree when she was diagnosed with mesothelioma. In 2019, a jury awarded her \$26 million in her case against Johnson & Johnson.

Gail was 36 years old when she collapsed on her kitchen floor. She was diagnosed with mesothelioma and has