

first, ask questions later” approach to addiction and to stop trying to solve social problems with more criminalization.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to support the MORE Act. This is a commonsense bill.

FUNDING COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Ms. TLAIIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the recent passage of the omnibus bill, which included over \$15 million in funding for local community projects in 13 District Strong.

From funding for work-based learning programs in Wayne-Westland Community Schools to a senior wellness center in Inkster, Michigan, I know that these direct dollars will have an enormous impact on the lives of my residents.

The 13th Congressional District, Madam Speaker, is the third-poorest congressional district in the Nation, and these are important efforts to help the most vulnerable among us.

The Boys and Girls Club of Southeastern Michigan, which is the oldest in the Nation, will be funded for improvements to the Fauver-Martin Club in Highland Park. It will empower so many of our young people.

The Urban Neighborhood Initiative for the Southwest Detroit Creative Connections Collaborative will also be able to employ high-speed broadband and build community space for our young people.

Enterprise Community Partners will also fund the Detroit Energy Efficiency and Home Improvement Program to provide energy-efficient home repairs and so much more.

TAXING OUR FARMERS

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, since the founding of our Nation, American farms have been at the bedrock of our economy.

Our farmers, growers, and ranchers produce the dairy, wheat, corn, apples, and peaches that we have relied on for generations to feed our families, our neighbors, and the world.

There are over 52,000 farms across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the struggles that affect them affect each and every one of us.

Right now, our farmers are facing so many difficult challenges. The cost to run a farm is estimated to grow by nearly 7 percent next year. To make matters even worse, the cost of fertilizer has already risen by over 50 percent in the past 12 months. Now, the Biden administration is preparing to implement new taxes on fertilizer imports from overseas.

Now is not the time to tax our farmers even more. President Biden cannot use our growers and producers to pay for his out-of-control budget.

We need to ensure that our farmers have the resources that they need to

continue producing the food that each of us relies on every day. We need to make sure that they have the fertilizer, the grain, and the seeds that it takes to work a farm or to tend an orchard.

American farmers feed the world. It is time to stop imposing new and crippling taxes on our hardworking farmers. It is time to let them get back to work on feeding all of us.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S FAR-LEFT SPENDING PROPOSAL

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on Monday, President Biden laid out his budget for the coming year, a budget that contains \$73 trillion in spending, \$58 trillion in taxes, and over \$16 trillion in debt.

When he unveiled this far-left spending proposal, President Biden said that a budget is a statement of values. However, by failing to mention our border security, by tacking on billions of dollars for environmental justice, and by stripping out the Hyde amendment, President Biden has delivered to the American people a budget that does not share our values.

We need a budget that protects the border. We need a budget that stops the flow of illegal drugs, like fentanyl, into our communities. We need a budget that promotes American energy in the face of egregious Russian aggression. We need a budget that defends all human life.

We don't need this socialist spending spree; we don't need \$58 trillion in taxes; and we certainly do not need \$16 trillion in new debt that mortgages the future of our children.

CONSERVATIVES HELPING PUTIN IN WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, as we stand here on the House floor, Ukrainians are bravely defending their country against an illegal invasion by Russian forces ordered by Vladimir Putin.

We have seen hospitals attacked and mothers and children crushed by the rubble. We have seen civilians fleeing this tragic conflict via humanitarian corridors, agreed to by the Russian Government, attacked by Russian troops. We have seen a theater-turned-shelter, with the word “children” clearly displayed, reduced to rubble.

The blood of all of these innocents lost in this senseless war is on the hands of one man: Vladimir Putin.

Ukrainians are standing up to this tyrant. They are fighting to stop the advance of an autocratic leader who has launched an illegal, premeditated invasion.

Yet, if you listen to certain prominent voices, you will hear some conservative leaders not condemning Vladimir Putin's war, not praising the heroism of Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, Ukrainian troops, and

Ukrainian citizens. No, they are instead lauding the so-called genius of a violent, power-hungry dictator.

There is a term we use in politics for people who propagandize for a cause whose goals they don't understand and who are then used by the cause's leaders: useful idiots.

I will not purport to know if the individuals who are praising Putin and spreading misinformation genuinely believe their own words, but I do know that Putin finds them useful.

There is a concerning long list of American conservatives who have turned themselves into Putin's useful idiots. When the invasion first began, one host claimed on his news show that Ukraine was not a democracy. This is the very same lie that Putin himself has used in the effort to justify his invasion of Ukraine. In fact, these comments were aired on Russian state television, and a member of the Russian Defense Ministry's public council said these remarks were excellent.

Another conservative voice has used her platform to criticize Zelenskyy and echo Russian propaganda, including a Kremlin talking point that Russians created Ukraine, which has been used to justify this invasion. Her social media posts have been amplified and shared by other Russian accounts.

Even our own former President has praised Putin, calling the horrific invasion of Ukraine “genius.” A Member of this very body called President Zelenskyy a “thug” and the Ukrainian Government “incredibly evil.”

Exactly 2 weeks ago, every Member of this body had an opportunity to hear from President Zelenskyy directly as he joined us virtually from Ukraine's capital. His bravery and courage were on full display. He is a hero.

Vladimir Putin is a thug, and the repeating of these lies by American voices is playing into his hands. Aiding Putin in this way is not just disturbing because of the role it plays in enabling his messaging of this premeditated invasion; it also speaks to a broader trend among some American conservatives toward sympathizing with autocrats that should worry us all.

Last year, I spoke before this body to condemn conservative American pundits who were praising Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Like Putin, Orban is an autocratic leader who wields strict control of the media, restricts LGBTQ rights, and suppresses free speech. At that time, I expressed my concern at what this may indicate about the growing sympathy for autocrats in our own country. Unfortunately, this latest trend of praising Putin and condemning Zelenskyy tells me the slide toward autocracy continues.

Praise for autocratic leaders and what they represent is dangerous. At a time when political polarization has reached new heights and American vulnerability to misinformation is increasing, we cannot afford to watch anyone of influence, whether they be a

Member, or a member of the media, peddle in propaganda.

Conservatives should shake off the role of useful idiots and present Putin, this war, and all demagogic leaders as what they truly are.

Vladimir Putin has poisoned journalists and jailed his opposition. He has bombed hospitals and schools. He has slaughtered innocents in Syria. Today, he is murdering civilians in Ukraine.

If this has not been enough for these useful idiots and their ilk, I urge them to find the red line Putin would have to cross.

To the puppets that are on our screens, our social media, and in the Halls of Congress perpetrating his lies, I say: Enough. You are helping Putin in this war. You are helping him strip Ukrainians of their freedom. You are helping our own country slide further from democracy.

Lincoln reminded us that we cannot escape history, that we will be remembered in spite of ourselves. In the end, history will remember those who stood up for the truth and the cowards who did not.

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RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, it is undeniable that religious freedom is America's keystone. This great country was founded by men and women who fled religious persecution and sought to govern themselves according to their religious beliefs.

Despite religious freedom having been woven into our constitutional system for well over two centuries, and the precedents it has established, Democrats are choosing to play judge, jury, and executioner in its trial.

Today, religious organizations are under attack by the woke agenda of Democrats. Those on the left claim that faith-based organizations must abandon their conscience and amend their employment practices, or they should not have access to Federal contracts or funds.

It is a damning ultimatum. Imagine how many faith-based organizations would be forced to close their doors because of this.

Madam Speaker, this coordinated campaign is being carried out by the left, and it is guided by the assumption that a radical, progressive dogma is more legitimate than religious beliefs. That assumption is pure insanity.

In this country, faith is not subjugated or left at the door. It is carried with us no matter where we may go.

I applaud every man and woman who is standing up to this egregious assault from the left and is fighting for the right to live by religious convictions at work and in business.

President Biden's so-called Build Back Better framework is riddled with

discriminatory provisions. One clause would have required faith-based childcare providers to abandon their faith during program hours if they wanted to participate in the Federal program.

And in the Community Services Block Grant program, the Democrats want to strip a provision that protects faith-based providers' right to remain strong in their faith as they serve individuals in need.

This protection has been in place without controversy or harm to any individual seeking assistance for decades. Why change it now? I think we know.

This isn't just religious persecution; it is textbook coercion. Unfortunately, there is more.

Democrats have also sought to remove protections for religious non-profit organizations and Federal contractors. Like their secular counterparts, faith-based charities in the United States simply want to serve the less fortunate, but discriminatory legislation could keep them from being able to do that.

Faith-based charities and religious Federal contractors alike deserve the chance to practice their religion freely without government interference.

It appears Democrats need a refresher on the First Amendment.

The government does not bestow the freedom of religion upon us; it is a freedom we have possessed since birth.

Whenever we see protections for religious freedom being chipped away in this country, it is our solemn duty as Americans and people of faith to take a stand.

BUILDING A BETTER AMERICA

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

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the impact the COMPETES Act will have on our Nation.

We are seeing the best economy for American workers in decades, with people earning higher wages, better benefits, and better jobs, thanks to President Biden's leadership.

With that said, when I visited with the leadership from the Port of Houston in my district a while back, they expressed their gratitude for Congress' strong investment in the maritime infrastructure needed to keep America's economy moving in the right direction.

They also expressed concern, however, that more workers will need technical training than our current system will be able to provide.

The America COMPETES Act will be that critical next step in providing vital maritime workforce training.

My home district, Texas-29, will benefit greatly from the large grant program for domestic maritime worker training and education included in the America COMPETES Act.

I was proud to see this maritime grant program language included, as it

was originally part of my bill, H.R. 987, which was one that was introduced to strengthen our maritime workforce.

This investment will provide more Houston area workers the technical training, education, and resources needed to become qualified for good-paying maritime jobs.

For example, the San Jacinto College Maritime Center in my district helps thousands of students learn new skills so they can earn good paychecks, paychecks that hold families together.

Located just outside of Houston, the San Jacinto College Maritime Program offers maritime training and deck-level coursework for all professional mariners. They cover everything from entry-level deckhands on an inland towboat to unlimited tonnage masters on the world's largest ships.

The COMPETES Act will empower the maritime grant program that will directly benefit this community college; more workers for maritime work.

But like the San Jacinto Community College in my district, there are also similar training centers across the Nation that will benefit. The COMPETES Act will help thousands of students learn new skills so they can provide comfortably for their families and live a good life with good benefits.

This is another way the America COMPETES Act will strengthen our supply chains. While there will be plenty of large-scale improvements across the Nation, there will also be many local governments like this in our hometowns that will benefit.

I look forward to President Biden signing this bill into law. And this is yet, Madam Speaker, another example of how we are building a better America for generations to come.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT SPENDING

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

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, this morning, I wish to address the American people and thank them for their hard work and their outstanding effort that funds our government and our Active Duty military personnel and veterans who have kept us safe, our law enforcement, our first responders, and all those who go to work every day making sure we are safe in our communities, safe in our Nation, and safe around the world.

I also want to thank all the people that go to work every day to earn a living and support their families. And, yes, those are the people, all of them, that provide the revenue by which America can operate, something I think President Biden has forgotten.

He has been in Washington, D.C., for half a century, and he proposed a budget earlier this week that spends \$73 trillion over the next 10 years and increases our national debt by 50 percent by the year 2032. Under that budget, the debt will be \$45 trillion.