

California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, so what have we had so far under the Biden plan? Well, what we have heard about lately is that for Republicans trying to be more fiscally responsible, we hear that he is complaining that we are worried about deficits and spending.

He says we are affecting lives. Boy, are we affecting lives with the policy coming out of Washington, D.C. Inflation. Energy crisis. But that is part of the incredible transition, we are told, that is being forced upon us to put us out of our vehicles or not being able to use gas appliances, if they have their way.

On the Republican side, crisis acting is the new term. We are crisis acting. Well, I guess if we want to talk about crisis acting, let me remind everybody that carbon dioxide is only 0.04 percent of our atmosphere, right. You would think it is 40 or 50 percent by the way the hype is on that, and everybody has to change their lives in this incredible transition as we get forced into electric cars and have our appliances taken away, and who knows what else, as part of the Green New Deal that is being forced upon us, indeed, by executive action because it is not passing Congress.

So when you are looking at the American people out there, they think of you in Washington, D.C. as the great reset. You are the spring in the great reset button. You are not being listened to. Your pain is not being felt by Washington, D.C.

Inflation? Oh, not a big deal. It was 8.6 percent this month, right. Wages—though some of them have gone up for some people or are being forced up by legislation—are being outstripped by inflation. Wages up a little bit, inflation up a lot more.

Why? Trillions and trillions of spending and policies that take energy options away from Americans being productive. Oh, Well, let's get it from Russia—until we finally banned that. Let's get more from Saudi Arabia.

Why don't we get it here? Why don't we do more here instead of cutting off leases, cutting off permits for known reserves we have in this country? No, no. We are going to have the incredible transition forced upon us by these policies.

It doesn't matter what it costs. It doesn't matter what it is taking off the table. So live with it. Inflation and wages. Let them eat cake, as Senators drive past in an electric car, laughing at what the costs are at the gas stations.

Well, not everybody can turn around and go buy an electric car at \$50,000 or \$70,000, or even any new car right now with the way they are living paycheck to paycheck, and it is going to be more and more so.

So what is the Federal Government's answer? Well, we are doing something about inflation and the deficit. Yeah.

Instead of borrowing trillions and trillions, I guess by not borrowing the trillions, it makes the deficit go lower.

So let's put things back on track, have our energy policy be one that actually produces in the United States of America by our American workers producing more things in the USA.

Food, for example. In my home State of California, as the water gets cut off more and more so they can flush water out to the ocean, hundreds of thousands of acres of food crops are being left out, not grown.

It isn't all because of a drought. We still get lots of rainfall. We had an incredible amount of rainfall and snow in December. Of course, the planters decided well, we are going to go ahead and let all the water run out through the delta in northern California instead of being able to cut back some of it and keep it in storage, although our lakes were at record lows last year. No, no, no. We will keep doing the environmental thing on that, saving nonexistent fish.

In the meantime, the price for food keeps going up. In America, we see empty store shelves in the land of plenty. It is an incredibly dumb policy that has been put in place, piled on by energy that is almost unaffordable.

Ask any trucker when the price of diesel has gone basically from 3 bucks a gallon to 6 or 7, even, in my home State, what does that mean?

That means all the input costs of bringing fertilizer and seed to a field to grow your food and bringing the finished product from the harvest to the mill and from the mill to the store shelf, it all has to be passed along. There is no free lunch.

So we haven't even seen the full effects of this yet because in 2022, some of the people had these inputs carried into the crop year. It hasn't been fully felt yet.

Wait until 2023 when the price of a bale of hay, that you need in order to feed cattle or what have you, kicks into place. Wait until that all happens because then, chicken might triple in price from today, beef, or maybe even just a loaf of bread.

So what are we supposed to think about that? Oh, Americans can afford that. We can just cut back on other disposable income or disposable items, you know, maybe less frivolous spending.

Well, is your government telling you what you can spend on? Basically, they are dictating that by these policies, yes.

When your energy goes up, when your water gets taken away, you will feel it all the way through, all the way through your whole economy, and your wages will be outstripped by inflation.

□ 1030

THE LCS IS A LEMON

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

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, everyone knows what a lemon car is, but we have a fleet of lemon ships. They are called littoral combat ship, except it is a misnomer because it is not survivable in combat.

Today, we are calling them the leaking, cracked ships, and let me tell you why. If the LCS was a car sold in America today, they would be deemed lemons, and the automakers would be sued into oblivion. But in the Federal Government it is big business as usual—\$50 billion over the lifetime of the program. That is a lot of rotten lemons.

My concerns and warnings about the LCS go back a decade, along with the late Senator John McCain. It is costing taxpayers billions of dollars, yet has failed to produce a reliable ship. So I was stunned and outraged to see that the proposed 2023 defense appropriations bill only decommissions four LCS, when it should be nine, as President Biden and the Navy have proposed. The annual cost of five LCS ships could pay for eight childcare centers in the military, four barracks, or a \$1,000 bonus for every enlisted E-3 and below.

The LCS program's legendary failures have made it the subject of two Government Accountability Office reports. Those reports found each LCS costing an astounding \$59 million a year to operate. Or actually, not to operate because they are, more often than not, in dock because they aren't working. That is three-quarters of the cost of operating a destroyer, which has three times the crew and a much greater capability, such as antisubmarine warfare.

LCS is notoriously unreliable, plagued by breakdowns that have seen some ships spend more time in the repair yard than in deployment. On this chart, you will see the USS *Little Rock*, commissioned in 2017, lost power at sea in 2022. In March 2018, it was stranded in ice for 3 months on its maiden voyage.

Or how about the USS *Milwaukee*? Commissioned in November 2015. In December 2015, it broke down due to software malfunctions and was towed 40 miles.

Or how about the USS *Freedom*? Commissioned in 2008; in 2011, had a 6-inch crack in the hull; in 2013, immobilized during trial run; in February 2016, coupling cracked; in August of 2016, engine replacement needed.

What do we have going here? The GAO found that the LCS experienced engine failure in 10 of the 11 deployments reviewed. The aluminum hull of the *Independence*-class punctures easily. I mean, this is not funny. This is real money. And the combining gear for all *Freedom*-class ships must be replaced.

One major reason for the excessive cost of LCS? Contractors. Unlike other ships where sailors do the maintenance, LCS relies almost exclusively on contractors who own and control

the technical data needed to maintain and repair.

So what is this ship's mission and what does it contribute to national security? Nothing.

The Navy says it plans to use the LCS for partner engagement, as a replacement for obsolete minesweepers for long-range fire capability, and for counterdrug activities. But the LCS are not well-suited for minesweeping due to their lack of endurance, and their already years-late mine countermeasure package isn't even operational.

Our top priority in national defense strategy is China and Russia. We can't waste scarce funds on costly LCS when there are more capable platforms like destroyers, attack submarines, and the new *Constellation*-class frigate. Most importantly, the cost of sustaining LCS isn't just felt in lost dollars, but lost lives.

The Navy has a severe undermanning problem. Our surface fleet is 15 percent undermanned compared to required levels for safe operation. The average sailor is overworked and gets 6 hours or less of sleep per night. A recent GAO report on pierside maintenance found undermanning was so bad on some ships that half of the electrician slots were empty. On others, the crew members had to work 80 to 100 hours per week to prepare to deploy.

On these ships, the operational tempo is so high, several sailors have left due to behavioral health needs. At least one has died from suicide. This is unacceptable, especially in the wake of the deadly *McCain* and *Fitzgerald* collisions that killed 17 sailors 5 years ago. The key contributors? Undermanning and fatigue.

We can and must prevent this. Let's decommission all nine ships.

GOD BLESS FIRST RESPONDERS AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TONY GONZALES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the first responders in Uvalde. It has been 22 days since the terrible incident in Uvalde occurred, and many of the discussions have been about the victims. I will talk about some of the survivors. Some of those survivors are first responders.

In particular, one gentleman, Javier Martinez, is a lieutenant for the Uvalde Police Department. He was one of the first people on the scene. He engaged with the shooter. He was actually wounded. He goes in there and he clears the room.

But afterwards he wasn't done. There are a lot of copycat threats, and Javier Martinez, even though he was going through all that, went down to the high school, and he secured the high school. The next day, he was on duty.

He put his uniform on, and he went to work the next day and the next day.

There are many stories just like this. When the fire happened, everyone ran to the incident, and they didn't stop. Some of the law enforcement officers, Border Patrol agents, after they got done clearing that room, they went to other elementary schools. There are seven elementary schools in Uvalde. This happened days on.

I mention that because while the community of Uvalde, while my district is healing, there are all these heroes that are walking among us.

Another person I will mention is Ann. Ann is the director of the ER there in Uvalde. She helped save lives.

There are so many people that have just helped. After the cameras are gone, after everyone stops listening or even remembering what happened in Uvalde, we will be there as one community coming together.

Over a year ago, my community asked me for a mental health hospital. Last year, we secured \$2 million for that. When I hosted the President a couple weeks ago, we asked for \$23 million on that. Mental health is at the core of all of this. There is a mental health crisis not only in Uvalde, but I would argue across the country. We have to make sure that we are devoting the resources necessary to protect our children, to protect ourselves.

My whole community of Uvalde, I would argue, needs mental health assistance right now. A lot of us are getting that. My own staff, essentially, we turned into a FEMA office, and we were dealing with all these crises.

Someone reminded me yesterday that I essentially have relived this crisis 22 days now. A lot of us are in that exact same boat. I mention that to say, we have to get rid of this stigma behind mental health. We have to realize all of us, from a young age to an old age, go through things in life, and we need mental health professionals in order to get through that.

Today, I thank all the first responders in Uvalde for everything they are doing, the men and women, just like Javier Martinez, who put their uniform on, go to work. There are heroes walking among us that sometimes get forgotten. They are not forgotten today nor every other day. God bless them.

RECOGNIZING OAK HILL CHARTER SCHOOL

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate the staff, volunteers, and board members of Oak Hill Charter School in Caldwell County, North Carolina.

The school was unanimously approved by the North Carolina Charter Schools Advisory Board, and its doors will officially open this August.

This accomplishment is amplified by the fact that Oak Hill is one of only

two accelerated schools to earn this opportunity this year. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, this is no small feat.

Recently, I received a heartfelt email from Kelly McIntyre, the board chair of the school. She marveled at how God has guided the journey of everyone involved at Oak Hill and how along the way the right people and resources came together in perfect harmony.

Kelly, I agree with you wholeheartedly. God's hand has been in your work every step of the way.

Right now, nearly every single class at Oak Hill has a waiting list. Families are beyond enthusiastic at this opportunity for their children.

The outpouring of support from the surrounding community must also be recognized. Donations of furniture, school supplies, and other essential items continue to stream in on a weekly basis, and volunteers continue without delay to see projects through.

Madam Speaker, there is a quote from American anthropologist Margaret Mead that encapsulates the story of Oak Hill perfectly: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

It is clear that these committed citizens are also working in the will of God. In Kelly's email to me, she remarked that, "It's the most amazing thing to see this mission that started as just a thought, a spark, grow into a force that I believe will be life-changing for many."

Madam Speaker, that sentiment is profound, and it is a direct reflection of the opportunity that charter schools provide across the country.

Parents, teachers, and communities recognize the value of charter schools because they challenge a failing status quo. Charter schools are guaranteed operational autonomy to provide rich alternatives to students and families. Most importantly, they provide educational freedom and choice, two fundamental principles that are desperately needed in education right now.

Instead of being held accountable to the education bureaucracy, charter schools are accountable to students, families, and their communities, as they should be, Madam Speaker.

Congratulations again to everyone at Oak Hill Charter School. The work you will undertake and the opportunities you will provide to our next generation of leaders in the coming months and years will be nothing short of spectacular.

May God continue to bless you in your mission of serving the Caldwell County community.

FARM BILL IMPACT SERIES

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

Mr. MANN. Madam Speaker, in preparation for reauthorizing the farm bill