

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

#### FALL PREVENTION AWARENESS WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LOIS FRANKEL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, about a year ago, it was 4 a.m. in the morning when I got a call from the West Palm Beach paramedics. They had received a call from my mother's Apple watch—believe it or not—and they rushed to her apartment, and they found her lying on her apartment floor. She had fallen and broken her hip.

I stayed close as she suffered through surgery and hospitalization and rehabilitation. I counted the endless medical bills paid by Medicare and her own personal funds. I watched as my independent mom became fearful of living alone and moved into an assisted living facility.

Mr. Speaker, I will say, there is some very good news about my mom, she is alive and well and adapting to her new lifestyle. She uses a walker and aging has reduced her stamina, but her bridge partners will tell you she still has a very sharp mind.

Listen to this. Her surgeon told me her recovery at her age, which was 96 at the time of the fall, was an exception, that most her age, after a brutal injury, quickly sundown to death.

Mr. Speaker, you may ask why am I telling this story? Because tomorrow is the first day of fall, and not only are the leaves turning, but it marks the start of Fall Prevention Awareness Week, a nationwide effort to raise awareness that falls are preventable, and also, to bring awareness to fall prevention strategies and resources.

Mr. Speaker, after my mom fell, I started hearing story after story from friends and colleagues about their own personal experiences of people who had fallen, and you know what I learned? Falls are the most frequent cause of injuries and injury-related death among people over 65.

There are 36 million falls a year in people over 65 here in America, leading to broken bones and broken spirits, and 34,000 of those becoming deadly. The cost—this is an amazing figure—the cost to the American health system is \$50 billion a year from injuries related to falls. That is billion with a b.

Here is the most important message I have today: Falls are preventable. I am going to say it again: Falls are preventable. There are simple things that seniors can do with assistance from their doctors and their family and their friends and caretakers to stop the falls before they happen.

Here are some of the top tips from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Make sure that medications

don't have side effects that can cause dizziness or loss of balance, stay hydrated, get eyes checked every year. And because most falls happen in the home, make critical changes like installing grab bars, clearing tripping hazards, and make sure that the rugs are flat on the floor. If necessary, use mobility aids like walkers and canes, when needed, even in your own home.

There are also simple exercises that seniors can do to improve joint strength, especially in the ankles, to help improve balance and stability.

I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that the House Labor, Health, and Human Services' budget plusses up fall prevention research and programs in the 2023 budget. I am hoping that the Senate will go along with that.

Mr. Speaker, I call on all my colleagues to recognize this week as Fall Prevention Awareness Week and help me spread the word: Falls are preventable. It is on all of us to keep our loved ones on their feet.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS

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

Ms. LETLOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express disappointment and frustration of thousands of my constituents after our effort to bring H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, to the floor for a vote, which was delayed this week.

The Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset are unfair, bureaucratic deductions that cheat nearly 2 million Americans out of their earned Social Security benefits.

These rules impact our public servants—the teachers who educate our children, firefighters and police officers who keep our communities safe. At a time when we desperately need more men and women to enter these fields, knowing these penalties exist deter them from pursuing these occupations.

WEP and GPO have been in place since the 1980s and Congress has ignored this problem for decades. I want to be clear, we are not trying to create new entitlement programs or forgive debt. We are trying to ensure that retirees obtain the benefits that are rightly theirs.

Just last week, I received a letter from Carla Moreau, a teacher from Bunkie, Louisiana, who retired after spending 23 years in the classroom.

Carla recently lost her husband, Gerard, to cancer at age 60. However, due to WEP and GPO, she is ineligible to receive his Social Security survivor benefits simply because she was a teacher. If Carla had chosen any other profession outside of public service, she would automatically receive those benefits just like any other American would.

Mr. Speaker, Carla's story is just one of the many from across my district and around our country, and each one

is heartbreaking and unjust. Not a single day goes by that I don't hear from a constituent who is impacted.

□ 1030

Since I took office over 1 year ago, almost 3,000 people have contacted my office to ask us to fix WEP and GPO—by far, the most calls concerning a single issue.

High inflation and record price hikes continue to plague our Nation, and now, by refusing to address WEP and GPO, this Congress is essentially telling hardworking Americans that they must either not retire, reenter the workforce, or find other means to make ends meet.

It is astounding to me that this administration and the Democratic majority spend trillions to forgive student loans, bail out private industry, and create new government programs, but the people impacted by WEP and GPO continue to be ignored.

My colleague from Illinois, RODNEY DAVIS, brought forward H.R. 82 to repeal WEP and GPO. I am a proud cosponsor of this bill, along with nearly 300 other Members of this House.

Since the 117th Congress convened, we worked together as Democrats and Republicans to find a way to bring this bill to the floor for a vote. After nearly a year and a half of being denied, we worked to have it placed on the Consensus Calendar, a process that could force the bill to come to the House floor.

Only when we were on the cusp of forcing a floor vote and had 300 Members ready to support this measure did Democratic leadership take action to remove the legislation from the Consensus Calendar and essentially bog it down in a backlog.

Mr. Speaker, it is unconscionable to me that some would play procedural games and deny this body the opportunity to vote on a bill that fixes such an obvious wrong.

What am I supposed to say to the people like Carla Moreau? That despite the fact that we were sent here to solve problems, we will just kick the can down the road?

Is that really the answer that we are okay with relaying to her and the 2 million Americans who are adversely impacted?

Mr. Speaker, I was sent here to represent the people of the Fifth District of Louisiana, and today, I can say with grave sincerity that their voices, along with 2 million other Americans, continue to be silenced.

Instead of my standing behind this podium today, we should be doing the will of the people and bringing H.R. 82 to the floor for a vote.

#### STUDENT DEBT CANCELLATION

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

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in solidarity with the

millions of student loan borrowers across this Nation who slept a little easier last night knowing that essential student loan debt relief is on the way.

I am thinking of every person who has pulled me aside in community and dropped their eyes to the floor as they describe the financial burden and shame they were carrying, crushed by student debt—the teachers, the electricians, the nurses, and, indeed, even the grandparents, our elders, some 76 years old on fixed incomes whose benefits were garnished.

The coalition that rallied around our calls to cancel student debt is as broad and diverse as this Nation because so, too, are the families personally impacted by this economic justice issue.

We thank President Biden for taking action. We thank him for listening deeply and responding. With the stroke of a pen, he moved to cancel student debt for millions of borrowers, and this action is going to change and save lives.

In my home State of Massachusetts, the Department of Education reported yesterday that 813,000 student loan borrowers in Massachusetts stand to benefit from student debt cancellation.

I get emotional thinking about the profound impact this will have for our families, especially families that have been systemically denied the opportunity to own or build generational wealth. This is the type of transformative policy that sends ripples for generations. Student loan cancellation will change and save lives.

I thank my dedicated partners in this effort, Senator WARREN and Senator SCHUMER; my colleagues in the House who have worked on this issue for years alongside me: Congresswoman OMAR, Congresswoman ADAMS, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. JONES, and our partners in the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus, including Senator WARNOCK, Chairwoman JAYAPAL, Chairwoman BEATTY, and Chairwoman WATERS.

Our work to make education accessible and affordable across the Nation continues with urgency, and millions of families are going to start 2023 student loan debt-free thanks to the Biden-Harris administration. That is a beautiful thing.

#### RECOGNIZING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month.

The Massachusetts Seventh is one of the most diverse districts in the country due, in large part, to the rich Hispanic and Latinx communities who reside there: the Colombians, Salvadorans, and Ecuadorians in East Boston and Chelsea; the Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans in Jamaica Plain and the South End; and the Mexicans and Brazilians in Cambridge, Somerville, Everett, and beyond.

Many of these champions are on the front lines of fights that matter not just for their own community but for

our very humanity. They are justice seekers and movement builders, and given the number of servicemen and -women and veterans, they are defenders of democracy and freedom.

Their sweat equity makes our country stronger and our policymaking more informed. I am proud to call them partners in the work to build a more just and equitable world because, Mr. Speaker, if the story of America is one of progress, then we owe it to the collective power, resilience, and collective advocacy of our Hispanic and Latinx siblings.

So to those in Massachusetts and across the country, and those on my dedicated staff now and in the past, from Aissa to Lona, to Luz, to Alana, to Ricardo, to Dagoberto, to Kayla, we thank you. This month and every month, we give you your flowers.

#### RECOGNIZING ALOPECIA AREATA AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. PRESSLEY. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize September as Alopecia Awareness Month.

Across the country, approximately 7 million people have alopecia, an autoimmune disease, which I live with, that attacks one's hair follicles.

People of all ages, genders, races, and from every walk of life are living with this condition. Thankfully, although this does not threaten our lives, it does not mean that it does not impact it.

Collectively, we are fighting for bold investments in skin disease research, comprehensive medical coverage, and meaningful public education to combat the stigma, discrimination, bullying, and, indeed, even depression and suicide ideation that so many of us experience.

Whether we are sharing a meal in the heart of the Massachusetts Seventh or sharing our stories, to someone who is newly diagnosed, we choose strength over shame and purpose over pain.

I can personally attest to the fortitude that defines our community each and every day. Although there is no cure, there is community. We work to create space so that all of us may show up in the world as our full and authentic selves.

This transformation that I live with is not one of my choosing, but it is one that I have learned to embrace unapologetically with the support of my loved ones, team, and broader community in my decision to not wear a wig, recognizing the power of that representation for the 7 million-strong alopecia community in this country.

That is why, this September, on the floor of the House of Representatives, I can affirm that alopecia is my superpower. I am free to be me. I commemorate Alopecia Areata Awareness Month.

#### RECOGNIZING IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of agriculture education.

Last week, we celebrated National Teach Ag Day. This recognition of agriculture education is more important than ever.

The average age of the American farmer is around 57 years old. It is critical for our food security to inspire the next generation of agricultural leaders, and this starts in the classroom.

I have had the privilege of spending time with agriculture educators in Pennsylvania and throughout our country. Programs like the Future Farmers of America and 4-H are strong advocates for advancing agriculture education and exposing our youth to the agriculture industry.

Over the past few months, I have had the opportunity to witness these agriculture programs firsthand. I visited fourth graders at Glendale Elementary School in Cambria County who were working closely with seniors from the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology to bring textbooks to life. The lesson I participated in focused on science, soil, and agricultural operations. I had the opportunity to work directly with the students, where we discussed a plant's journey from seed to full growth. We examined soil, and students made observations of plant growth.

We interact with agriculture at least three times a day, and it is critical that students have the opportunity to really learn about the industry and the career opportunities that it offers.

In July, I joined CenClear and the YMCA of Centre County at the ribbon cutting of the antihunger program at Morgan Run Farm. This initiative will serve as a hands-on, community-centered educational tool to further families' understanding of agriculture processes, farming, nutrition, and community development.

Right now, more than ever, we understand food security is national security, and a country that cannot feed itself often finds itself in turmoil. Programs like the antihunger program at Morgan Run and the science lesson at Glendale Elementary are the first steps in educating our youth about our food sources.

As I mentioned earlier, we are at a critical point in our agricultural future, with the average age of our farmers hovering around 57 years old. It is important that we develop the next generation of farmers. That is why, in August, I held a listening session focused on the next generation of farmers.

We discussed how we can engage and support our next generation of farmers and encourage youth to get involved in the agriculture industry. We had remarkable panelists who were incredibly accomplished in their fields. Together, we highlighted their work to promote innovative technologies that inspire and engage the next generation of agriculturists.