

year in California, food shelves are going to be even more empty and prices even higher.

Someone in rural America has to be producing something. So for people to say that well, climate change, times are changing, we have to shift in a new direction, and we don't need these people there, and we don't need these towns there, we do need these towns. We need them there, and we need to help them to thrive by letting them manage the timber to begin with.

#### DISASTER RELIEF IN PUERTO RICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN) for 5 minutes.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, we were thinking about the 5 years since Hurricane Maria, and 5 years felt like nothing. Maria was one of our greatest natural disasters, causing collapse of all of the essential infrastructure in Puerto Rico. We still see the effects linger.

My colleagues in Congress came with me to the Island and responded with funding for recovery. Staff from FEMA and other agencies have been working hard, but the effects have been slow to be seen. Major obligations for permanent infrastructure rebuilding began only in late 2020.

Meanwhile, challenges continued: Earthquakes, COVID, supply chain crisis, a power grid that remains unreliable, uncertainty about the continuity of Medicaid and nutritional assistance funds. The people were exhausted and stressed.

Then came Hurricane Fiona. Fiona did not bring Category 4 or Category 5 winds but, instead, rainfall like never before, up to 30 inches in some locations. It was raining 2 days before the hurricane and 2 days after the hurricane.

Fiona caused a lot of flooding. It was historic and, in many places in the south of the Island, and the West, and the central mountains, beyond what was experienced for Maria. Thousands of families needed to be moved from flood waters in places like Salinas, leaving behind everything.

In rural areas like Arecibo, San Lorenzo, Orocovis, Utuado, Barranquitas, bridges that had been repaired or replaced after Maria, and roads that had been cleared and repaved, are again washed out, damaged, and blocked by landslides.

Housing and transportation work done after the last disaster, some even barely finished, now needs to be addressed again.

The power system again fell into a blackout. Although a majority is back up, it is still shaky. More than 70 percent of the Island now has power. Plants at Aguirre and Costa Sur are running available units at the edge of capacity; distribution networks at Aguadilla, San Sebastian, and Baya-

mon needed to be attended by local governments. This slow-down recovery of the water system is a problem for citizens needing life support devices, and keeps businesses closed.

Although there are sufficient fuel and supplies in the depots, communities have difficulty receiving enough because of transportation problems at a time of increased demand.

The agricultural sector, that was expecting finally the first normal productive year after devastation of Maria, lost everything again. We lost 90 percent of our agriculture in plantains, bananas, and many others; back to square one. Across the land, in Lares, Patillas, Aibonito, Guanica, mostly small or family farms now are at risk of simply never coming back; a lot from damage, and others from heartbreak.

Our low-income families face faster depletion of the funds for Medicaid and for nutritional assistance programs. It is not just a matter of more eligibility but continuity of the funding.

A real answer to this would be true permanent equal treatment for Puerto Rico in these Federal programs, instead of a special provision over and over every year.

I have engaged the President and many Federal agencies on this and other issues, to seek the needed support for the Island at this moment.

Some Members of Congress, of this House, are traveling to Puerto Rico after Fiona, and I am, again, inviting all my colleagues who want to come and join me to see the need directly and hear from those who can tell you what is really happening.

Today, we watch Florida also face a major disaster, and knowing firsthand what that means, I keep the people of Florida in my heart. Take care, and God bless and keep you in this time.

I am sure that both Florida and Puerto Rico, we will come back from this disaster, and, as Americans, we must all stand together, in a bipartisan way, to make sure the rebuilding happens visibly and promptly.

#### HONORING THE SERVICE OF CHAD ROBICHAUX AND STAFF SERGEANT DENNIS PRICE

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

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary heroism of Chad Robichaux and Staff Sergeant Dennis Price during the Afghanistan evacuation last year. Their selfless actions evacuating tens of thousands of Afghan interpreters and their families, vulnerable women and children, persecuted Christians, and American citizens, represents the highest levels of patriotism.

I met Chad through his work supporting our Nation's veterans as the founder of the Mighty Oaks Foundation, a leading nonprofit serving the

military, veteran, and first responder communities around the world. Through faith-based combat trauma and resiliency programs, Chad has been instrumental in ensuring our brave warriors are supported when they return home from the battlefield.

Chad's work doesn't stop there. He is also the co-founder of Save Our Allies, a nonprofit focused on the evacuation and recovery of Americans, our allies, and the most vulnerable people trapped in Afghanistan. Save Our Allies began as a personal quest for Chad, as he set out to rescue his longtime friend and Afghan interpreter. However, the mission quickly evolved because of Chad's compassion for all people and his servant's heart.

While the U.S. military held the Kabul airport in Afghanistan, the Save Our Allies Task Force successfully extracted approximately 17,000 evacuees in a period of 10 days. Despite these courageous efforts, a report from the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff estimated over 142,000 vulnerable Afghans remained in the country following the exit from Kabul.

With the complete takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban, the report projected 20 million women would be vulnerable to sexual abuse and slavery; Christians would be persecuted and executed; Afghan interpreters and their families would be hunted down and killed; children would be abused through religious manipulation; and the 1,000-plus Americans left behind would be killed or held hostage for ransom.

Understanding the ruthlessness of the Taliban as a former Force Recon Marine, Chad Robichaux knew the rescue mission had to continue. In response, Save Our Allies launched several operations to explore new ways for extractions. Robichaux and his team first identified possible ground evacuations that could be feasible by cross-border movements into Tajikistan and quickly planned a reconnaissance operation. Robichaux hand-selected Staff Sergeant Dennis Price, a Force Recon Marine and Scout Sniper, to take part in the mission.

I want to share two stories from that mission to highlight their incredible acts of sacrifice, service, and bravery. Early in the mission, Staff Sergeant Price sought a higher vantage point to evaluate a potential river crossing area. Upon his ascent up a mountain, he came under sniper fire two separate times, pushing him back to return to the safe house to reconvene with Robichaux and discuss moving forward with the operation.

These two brave men humbly discussed their families, loved ones, and all that would be left behind should they not make it out of this mission ahead. Still, both men agreed to continue their mission of building safe passage for American and Afghan evacuees.

During day 3 of the mission, and upon confirmation of possible river crossing,

Staff Sergeant Price found himself 10 feet away from an armed Chinese militant hiding in the bushes, utilizing the vegetation as concealment.

□ 1245

Robichaux, using his uncanny observation and combat skills, noticed the looming threat and physically ushered Staff Sergeant Price into a nearby vehicle before he could be captured or killed, ultimately saving his life. Because of this heroic act, the two men were able to continue providing real-time information to American intelligence agencies.

During their 10-day operation, Robichaux and Price were able to cover 90 miles of border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, remaining undetected by countless Tajik, Russian, and Chinese military patrols, all while avoiding Taliban-infested areas and checkpoints.

These examples, and countless others that cannot be shared due to their sensitive nature, underscore the exemplary efforts undertaken by both Americans behind enemy lines to collect the critical information needed to bring so many to safety.

Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to stand before the House to honor their courageous bravery and willingness to sacrifice their lives for their fellow man. The mission that these men completed has saved and will continue to save hundreds and possibly thousands of lives.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I express my sincere gratitude. God bless Chad Robichaux and Staff Sergeant Price for their service to our country.

#### RECOGNIZING NATIONAL CLEAN ENERGY WEEK

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Clean Energy Week and the benefits of alternative energy sources.

National Clean Energy Week is a time to recognize and celebrate innovative policies that allow the United States to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Iowa leads the Nation in clean energy production, and Iowans are constantly seeking ways to make clean energy more affordable, accessible, and abundant. Just last year, the American Clean Power Association reported that over 50 percent of Iowa's electricity is generated by renewable sources, ranking it highest in the United States.

Clean energy sources, including renewable fuels, organic materials, wind, and solar, create affordable electricity and power our transportation sector. Additionally, alternative energy sources bring jobs and revenue while allowing the United States to remain a global leader in energy production.

Since taking office, I have advocated for conservative, climate-friendly leg-

islation that promotes alternative forms of energy. Consumers should always be provided with choices as it promotes competition for businesses and lowers the cost of goods and services, which is crucial now with record-high inflation.

I have also introduced bipartisan legislation, such as the Biochar Research Network Act of 2022, to expand clean energy in the United States. This bill would create a national biochar research network, where the benefits of biochar can further be tested and explored. Research would include how well biochar works to sequester carbon, how biochar increases crop production, improves marginal soil health, improves water quality, and reduces the amount of fertilizers and pesticides regularly used. I was proud that Senator GRASSLEY introduced the same bill in the U.S. Senate last week.

Additionally, I have supported numerous bills, such as the Lower Food and Fuel Costs Act, which expands year-round E15, and the Home Front Energy Independence bill, which would prohibit the imports of petroleum from Russia while expanding production and availability of biofuels.

Increasing domestic energy production and the use of biofuels would also help our allies around the world wean off from Russia's dirty oil and cut off the funding for the Russian war machine.

Iowa's vast farmland is why alternative forms of energy like biofuels and wind and solar are successful. However, when determining our Nation's energy strategy, we must analyze geographic composure and natural resources in the area. Different geographical features allow for clean energy to succeed, such as solar in the Southwest, natural gas in Texas, hydropower in the Pacific Northwest, or nuclear energy in the South.

As we continue pursuing clean energy production, I hope my colleagues will look to Iowa as an example of an any- and all-of-the-above approach. In order to leave a healthier planet for our children and grandchildren, we must enact policies that benefit a wide variety of energy sources where they work best and flexibility within the States to do so.

I also wish a happy birthday to Kendyl Willox, who is an amazing health policy portfolio manager in our office. Happy birthday to Kendyl.

#### FARM OVERTIME WAGE THRESHOLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a looming catastrophe for New York farmers, farmworkers, and consumers across New York State and the country.

On September 6, the New York State Farm Laborers Wage Board voted to advance a proposal to lower the State's

overtime wage threshold for farm laborers from 60 to 40 hours per week, despite overwhelming opposition to the recommendation.

During the public comment period, farmers, farmworkers, and consumers all turned out in droves to oppose the recommendation. Farmers, who are struggling with inflation already, are now very worried about keeping up with yet another price hike. Farmworkers are gravely concerned about the possible lost hours on the job, cutting their wages. Consumers should fear even higher increases to food costs, which have already increased 11.4 percent over the last year, the biggest increase since 1979, with prices continuing to go up.

Their fears are real. Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences projected that the overtime rule's implementation could force two-thirds of dairy farmers to make significant changes to their operations, including, and dramatically bad, leaving the industry or investing in other States.

New York State already leads the Nation in the highest out-migration of people and jobs. This would be a disaster for our agricultural community.

Cornell University Ag Sciences also found that half of New York's fruit and vegetable farmers likely would have to reduce operations or leave the industry altogether. The second largest apple-producing county in the entire Nation is Wayne County, located in upstate New York.

Despite all this, the board still voted to advance the recommendation anyway. We are incredibly disappointed that the board ignored such compelling input from important stakeholders, worsening the already difficult headwinds for New York's agriculture industry. The board ultimately decided to undermine the very industry and workers they are supposed to be serving.

This week, I joined upstate farmers for a roundtable discussion hosted by Dale Hemminger and his son, Clay, at Hemdale Farms in Seneca Castle, New York. The feedback from the farmers was unanimous: Lowering the overtime threshold will devastate New York's agricultural industry and have a critically difficult impact on the future of family farms in New York and could leave New York as one of the few States in the country with such an onerous and unreasonable restriction on family farms.

Family farms, large and small, are the lifeblood of New York's economy. Everyone thinks it is New York City. It is actually agriculture.

Now, the recommendation is with the State labor commissioner, Roberta Reardon. I have and continue to urge her to reject this change and maintain the current 60-hour threshold. New York family farms and consumers simply cannot bear any further price increases.

I have also joined my other New York colleagues, Representatives ELISE