

Dave Van Patten's work is iconic. You can see it all across the city of Long Beach, the city of Bellflower, and across the State and beyond. His ability to blend surrealism with comic book designs makes him a unique artist with a distinctive style across southern California. I am honored to know Dave. He is a constituent. He is a friend, and amazing artist transforming people's lives.

Dave, congratulations.

□ 1215

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was National Agriculture Day, a day to celebrate the contributions of America's farmers, growers, and ranchers.

These hardworking men and women provide our families with the food, fuel, and fiber we need each and every day. According to the USDA, the agriculture sector contributed nearly \$1.3 trillion to our GDP in 2021 and accounted for a tenth of all U.S. employment.

My district in southern Illinois is home to more than 10,000 producers, and one of the most diverse agricultural districts in the region.

In addition to corn and soybean, southern Illinois produces rice, specialty crops, livestock, dairy, wine, and more than one-half of the horseradish in the United States.

But these aren't easy jobs. Farmers are often at the mercy of the weather and other factors well beyond their control.

As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, I believe that the new farm bill provides us a critical opportunity to put farmers first and support programs like crop insurance to strengthen our food security.

I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 235 designating March 21, 2023, as National Agriculture Day, and I will continue to fight for our southern Illinois farming families every day that I serve in Congress.

WORLD WATER DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, on World Water Day, I rise on behalf of every American who lacks access to the most basic necessity of human survival.

Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago, 15,000 households in Newark, New Jersey, were forced to rely on bottled water due to the lead in the city's supply. As lead contamination levels approached record highs, residents of my State's largest city were forced to reckon with the reality that access to safe drinking water would not be and could not be taken for granted.

I am grateful that Newark has since replaced nearly all of its lead pipes, and their residents can once again trust that their tap water is safe to drink.

In fact, had this emergency been unique to one city at one time, I probably wouldn't have been compelled to speak here today.

However, the year after Newark put an end to its emergency, infrastructure failures in Jackson, Mississippi, cut off residents' access to safe water. Mississippi's capital city still lacks the resources to support residents in need.

Let me be clear. This is not a Newark crisis or a Jackson crisis, or for that matter, even a Flint, Michigan, crisis. It is an American crisis.

Due to climate change, outdated infrastructure, and systemic disinvestment in our most vulnerable communities, millions of Americans risk losing access to water.

As the wealthiest Nation on Earth, we have the resources—not to mention the moral imperative—to change that situation. Safe, clean water is a human right. If we continue to ignore the water crisis, communities across the country will face dire consequences for their health, safety, and well-being.

Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the WATER Act because the time to act is now. In addressing water scarcity, we must revitalize our failing infrastructure, remove dangerous contaminants from our water supplies, and reinvest in the communities that have been hit hardest by decades of privatization and austerity. The WATER Act tackles the crisis on all three fronts.

My legislation would provide \$35 billion annually to modernize our Nation's water and sewer infrastructure. Cities like Newark are not outliers. Lead pipes are used in every single State. By overhauling our infrastructure, we can remove these dangerous components and eliminate the threat of lead contamination.

My legislation would also clean up other contaminants, as well, including PFAS, "forever chemicals." New Jersey has some of the highest PFAS levels in the country and Black, Brown, and low-income communities suffer disproportionately from this contamination.

Everyone, regardless of their race, their income, or their ZIP Code deserves reliable water access. That is why, in addition to cleaning up contamination, my legislation will provide grants to low-income communities to stop water shutoffs due to unaffordable bills.

With these long-overdue investments, we can prevent further water shortages, protect our current supply, and make emergencies like those in Flint, Jackson, and Newark a thing of the past.

Water is the essence of human life, and as public servants, we must ensure that every family in every community has reliable access to it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this Chamber to take up the WATER Act and pass it without delay.

PUBLIC SCHOOL RADICAL GENDER IDEOLOGY

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about an extremely important topic that is very current and very disturbing in our Nation, in our Nation's schools, and the relationship of parents and their kids.

Mr. Speaker, during the COVID lockdowns, schools were closed, and much of the learning was conducted online, except for those courageous schools that did manage to stay open and teach their kids the normal way.

During this time, parents gained a valuable opportunity to see firsthand what their children were being taught in public schools, and in some cases, what is in their libraries.

What they found was very shocking to them. We heard a conversation a bit earlier about, Oh, this is banning books.

If you see the content that is in some of the books, some of the so-called educational materials, it is really nothing short of pornography that is being allowed to be in there.

Mr. Speaker, when did it become okay for kids to be subject to that kind of material or the performances that are being brought to their libraries under the guise of openness where it wouldn't be really any different than what is going on in a strip club?

You would get in big trouble should you take your kid to one of those. How is that allowed to be normalized these days?

Rather than teaching children the skills that they need and the knowledge to become successful adults, these activists, whether it is teachers, counselors, superintendents, they are filling their heads with this woke far-left propaganda and pushing radical gender ideology on children as young as elementary age.

In response to the backlash, teachers and public school administrators have attempted to keep this indoctrination and these agendas secret from their parents. Unbelievable.

This included helping encourage students to keep secrets from their parents, hiding their lesson plans and curriculums, trying to ban recording in the classroom, obfuscating what materials are being shown to students, and shutting down parents who spoke out at public school meetings when they heard about this, even so far as having the U.S. Department of Justice refer to them as terrorists.

They asserted time and again that parents did not have the right to be involved in their children's education. They claimed that once children walked through the schoolhouse door, those children belonged to the State.

What is that? Where are the echoes of that coming from?

In 2021, parents across the country revolted at school board meetings and

gathered to make their concerns heard in free assembly, a First Amendment protection.

In Loudoun County, Virginia, a father of a young girl who had been assaulted by a biological male was arrested for speaking out against the school board's decision to hide the perpetrator's history of assault against young girls. That decision put his innocent daughter and countless other students at risk.

In my own district in Northern California, a school district was caught secretly changing a young girl's name and pronouns and even encouraging that something was wrong with her body—she was in the wrong body—filling her head with falsehoods. The counselor who encouraged this activity allegedly manipulated the young girl to keep her transitioning secret from her own mother.

In both cases, parents rightfully pushed back against these assiduous attempts of public schools to force woke gender ideology on their children.

Unfortunately, parents across the country have been met with State force when they have tried to assert their rightful place as the supreme authority in their children's lives.

The Department of Justice infamously circulated a memo calling parents who exercise these rights as “domestic terrorists.”

As Americans gradually become aware of the rotten corruption that permeates so much of our public school system, it became clear that Congressional Republicans needed to take action to support parents across the Nation and enshrine protections against government retaliation.

Last Congress, I introduced two bills: one that prohibits doctors from performing gender reassignment surgeries on minors and another allowed victims of these life-altering procedures to sue those who pushed these surgeries on them as minors.

These permanent, life-altering surgeries are being forced onto vulnerable children by radical activists. Mutilating a child's body is not medicine. It is not science. It is not affirming, nor is it care.

As we have seen in the recent exposure of the inside workings of a Missouri clinic, children manipulated into undertaking these surgeries are not informed about the life-altering damage being done to their bodies. They are being rushed through the process, and in the worst cases are outright lied to by the people who are somehow going to make their lives better or more in order, and that they know better who should be taking care of them instead of their parents when this harm is being caused.

Doing this to a child is immoral, and it should be punished with the full force of the law. Children whose lives are permanently altered due to these surgeries should be allowed to sue for damages and put parents back at their rightful place, their God-given right to

oversee their children's education, their well-being, their health, and their bodies.

OUR NATION'S SMALL COMMUNITY BANKS

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

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to defend our community banks. For decades, we have had leftwing, out-of-control Federal administrations that have been hammering on our community banks to put them out of business. You take Sarbanes-Oxley, Dodd-Frank, or the Federal agencies who have been regulating and regulating these small community banks to the point where they either have to sell, close up, or worst, being taken over.

You see, these community banks, they are the lifeblood of small businesses, and small businesses, they are the backbone to this economy.

These community banks, they are a part of our community. They are out there in your civic and social organizations leading. Their kids go to school with your kids. They are out there on the ball fields helping coach. They are even going to church with you on Sunday.

You see, they have a vital interest in seeing the community succeed. That way they succeed. Yet, now we have this extra-woke, leftwing administration that has decided to pick winners and losers and take a different tactic.

The tactic they are taking now is to try to scare the consumer to where they will take their deposits from the community bank and move it over to one of the big banks, to where they can achieve that Big Government, be all, end all for every need and everything you ever need, and that is not America.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't be standing here, and I wouldn't be where I am today, if it weren't for my community bank.

So I have two things, Mr. Speaker: Federal Government get off the backs of these community banks. Take your leftwing ideology somewhere else.

To my fellow Americans out there: Continue to support your community bank out there. Continue to do business with them.

□ 1230

RECOGNIZING FLAU'JAE JOHNSON

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Flau'jae Johnson, a Savannah native and member of the LSU women's basketball team.

Flau'jae was recently named the SEC Freshman of the Year and was also selected to the 2023 SEC All-Freshman Team. She is the fourth LSU player to earn SEC Freshman of the Year honors, the first since 2009.

Flau'jae came to LSU as a highly talented freshman ranked as the No. 26 player in the Nation. She made an immediate impact in Baton Rouge, scoring 11.6 points per game and bringing down 5.9 rebounds per game. She was named SEC Freshman of the Week three times.

In her collegiate debut, she scored 14 points and grabbed 8 rebounds. She also recorded two assists, two blocks, and one steal. Through her first week of college basketball, Flau'jae scored in double figures all three games.

I congratulate Flau'jae on all of her success so far. We are excited to see everything that she will achieve.

RECOGNIZING NAT LEGREE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Nat Legree for his retirement from Wesley Monumental United Methodist Church.

For the last 42 years, Nat has been a fixture at Wesley Monumental for his constant service to the church. Most of his work was behind the scenes but certainly did not go unnoticed as he helped prepare Wesley for worship, study, and fellowship week after week for many decades.

Nat oversaw the grounds and in recent years was responsible for maintaining the beautiful garden at Oliver Hall. Nat's dedication to his church community is admirable and has helped create a wonderful, welcoming environment for many. Wesley Monumental Church will never be the same without Nat.

On behalf of the Wesley Monumental United Methodist Church family, we are grateful to Nat for all that he has given to our church.

RECOGNIZING BART DAVIS

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Bart Davis, who was named the 2023 Georgia Farmer of the Year at this year's Georgia Ag Forecast.

Bart began farming 41 years ago in Doerun, Georgia, following the loss of his mother and father during his senior year of high school. Since then, he has grown the then 500-acre operation to encompass 5,000 acres. Today, he focuses on cotton, peanuts, and corn, while also managing a cattle operation.

Bart has made impressive strides in using precision agriculture technology to ensure the efficiency of his farm, including the use of soil moisture sensors and irrigation in the majority of his fields.

In addition to the work on his own farm, he has given back in various industry leadership roles. He has served on the Georgia Cotton Commission Board, the Georgia Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, the National Cotton Council, and represents Georgia on Southern Cotton Growers and Cotton Incorporated.

I thank Bart for his continued dedication to his farm and to the agricultural industry.