

It would deprive our students of an accurate and fact-based education. Extreme Republicans are bringing culture wars into our classrooms.

I want to be clear, Mr. Speaker. I support a parent's right to be involved in their child's education. That is why, together with President Biden, Democrats are delivering the support and resources our schools need. House Democrats are working together to provide our American children with the highest quality level of education everywhere in America. That is what parents want for their children.

Parents want their children to feel safe in their schools. Moms worry every day, everywhere, about whether or not they are going to get that text or that call about a shooter at their child's school.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, I spoke at a seniors' event, and afterwards visited with the seniors for Q&A. This question came up from a grandmom. She is worried about her grandbaby. When will we do something about guns? Will her grandbaby be safe?

Sadly, today, the leading cause of death in children is firearms, but House Republicans have not held a single hearing on gun safety. Instead, they have found the time to ban and censor books in school libraries.

House Republicans continue to waste time on political stunts.

House Democrats, on the other hand, are focused on improving public education and making our schools safer.

Americans want Congress to work together to solve real problems. House Republicans need to stop wasting time on circus-style hearings and divisive legislation that, frankly, will go nowhere.

The real problem in our schools isn't books or critical race theory; it is keeping guns out of schools, addressing teacher shortages, and keeping students and staff safe.

House Democrats will always continue to put children over guns, books over bullets because every child deserves to go to school without fear of losing their life.

□ 1015

CORPORATE GREED IS A VIRUS THAT INFECTS EVERY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT

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

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, our residents are saying: Enough. Enough with giving billionaires and corporations taxpayer dollars that should be going to improve the quality of life of our residents, especially in a city that is still struggling with water shutoffs and foreclosures.

In the city of Detroit, billionaire developers are now lining up for \$800 million in tax giveaways after decades of broken promises. They even have the nerve to say the money isn't enough or coming fast enough.

Billionaires are asking a recently bankrupt city, the city of Detroit, for 800 million in public dollars, from a city still grappling with poverty, with the lack of affordable housing, and so much more. I just cannot believe how easily we give this money away to people with a track record of failure.

In Detroit, the Ilitch Holdings took \$400 million for what they called "District Detroit" just a few years ago. They showed us these beautiful images and renderings, and said this is what they were going to do with the public dollars.

Do you know what we got?

We got parking lots, just parking lots. We got just asphalt—even though they got much of the property on top of the tax dollars—for just \$1.

Many of these parking lots sit empty while we struggle for affordable housing and so many other things. Again, because of these broken promises, we are stuck grappling with poverty.

They took the money from the people. They didn't deliver on those promises, and we are just going to go ahead and give them double the amount with little assurance that they actually would do their jobs this time? I ask my colleagues: really? Really?

For those that are in Michigan, we are going to go ahead and trust a company that continues to tell us they are going to do this and give us this?

Corporate greed is a virus that infects every level of government. Campaign contributions from those corporations are killing our democracy. Our residents deserve better. Our neighbors pay taxes so our government can provide much-needed resources and services to our communities, not billionaires seeking profits, no matter that they are now functioning, literally, a few blocks from a school, a public school which doesn't have clean drinking water.

We say: Enough. We need community benefits protections to ensure that we all are able to thrive.

CELEBRATING RAMADAN

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say Ramadan Mubarak to our Muslim neighbors around the world and wish all who celebrate and observe a peaceful Ramadan full of family, faith, and community.

As a Muslim myself, I know how critically important it is that we celebrate, again, our neighbors and help those that are most vulnerable among us during the month of Ramadan.

Ramadan is observed by more than a billion Muslims around the world. It involves deep prayer, reflection, robust charity and giving, as well as fasting from sunrise until sunset, and, yes, that includes water.

Ramadan is observed during the ninth month of the lunar calendar and is also meant to bring consciousness in the heart and mind to be closer to Allah.

I invite my colleagues and those watching to learn more about Ramadan, its meaning, and to even break

fast with us. Join our iftars that are near you in your communities. We welcome you.

Again, Ramadan Mubarak to all of our Muslim neighbors across the country and the world.

KEEP MEDICAL DEBT OFF CREDIT REPORTS

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, nearly one in five adults have medical debt collections listed on their credit report. That means one in five Americans may be denied housing, be forced to pay more in rent, struggle to purchase a vehicle, or other necessities because of a sudden health crisis or visit to an emergency room.

That hits particularly hard in communities like mine where residents already face challenges with access to credit.

This week, I am reintroducing the Consumer Protection for Medical Debt Collections Act to prohibit the collection of medical debt for 2 years and prohibit debt from medically necessary procedures from even being included in a credit report.

We passed this legislation in the House last year, and it will be a major step in fixing our broken credit system.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, would also provide protections and safeguards for people who, through no fault of their own, got sick and could not afford the medical care due to our broken healthcare system.

In the wealthiest country in the history of our world, medical emergencies should not send a family into financial ruin. Collectively, Americans owe more than \$195 billion in medical debt, and this is immoral. We need to stop punishing people for being poor and getting sick.

Medical debt is the leading cause of personal bankruptcy in our country, and the pandemic has only made the crisis worse. No one, again, chooses to get sick. This is commonsense legislation, and we must get it signed into law.

CELEBRATING JILL DESTEFANO

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

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a true conservation leader who has dedicated years of her life to ensuring the Tule Springs Fossil Beds in Las Vegas would be declared a permanent national monument.

Jill DeStefano was one of the five founders of the Protectors of Tule Springs, and she worked tirelessly until the beds were officially designated the 405th unit of the National Park Service by President Barack Obama in 2014.

She has served as the board president of the Protectors of Tule Springs as they protect, preserve, support, and promote responsible stewardship of the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument and the Ice Age Fossils State Park.

Jill's passionate advocacy for Tule Springs has ensured they will always be safe and that our children and grandchildren can enjoy them for years to come.

These protected lands tell a story and teach the next generation about our American values for conservation and preservation of our most precious remnants of our national history.

I thank Jill for all of her hard work to protect Southern Nevada's beautiful outdoors. The people of Nevada's Third District are eternally grateful for Jill and all that she has done. I am wishing Jill the best of luck in her next chapter.

AZERBAIJAN'S BLOCKADE

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the proud Representative of a large Armenian-American community in southern Nevada as we mark 100 days since Azerbaijan began a devastating, heartless blockade of Artsakh, cutting off 120,000 Armenians from a critical humanitarian lifeline and their main artery to the outside world.

For 100 days, Azerbaijan has denied the citizens of Artsakh basic human rights and access to food, fuel, and medicine in freezing conditions on what is on its way to becoming a humanitarian catastrophe.

As if that wasn't enough, we have seen increasingly escalatory and troubling rhetoric from Azerbaijani officials in just the last few days.

It is long overdue that our government acts to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its heartless treatment of the innocent Armenian civilians in Artsakh.

That is why I was proud to join my colleagues as an original cosponsor of H. Res. 108 in February condemning Azerbaijan's brutal blockade and calling for an end to this manmade humanitarian crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to urge the administration to take action here and to respond to Azerbaijan's aggression by cutting off U.S. military assistance in line with section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act. Particularly, as we enter the thick of the appropriations process, I will also continue to work to ensure that vital humanitarian assistance is delivered to civilians who continue to suffer from the blockade and ongoing fighting.

During these difficult times, I share the serious concerns of my constituents in southern Nevada's Armenian-American community. I will continue to be an advocate for solutions to this manmade crisis.

I will always stand with the Armenian people and to work to secure much-needed relief as they face down continued threats and unjustified aggression from Azerbaijan.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 26 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Holy God, we need Your presence with us this day. As a deer longs for streams of water, so our souls long for You. Our very beings thirst for You, the living God.

Be with those who intentionally fast in this season of Lent and Ramadan. Even as they wash their hands, purify their hearts, and draw near to You, draw near to them. Call us each to come closer to You and fast from all that tempts and distracts us from a right relationship with You.

Deliver us from our dependence on our physical strength and uphold us with the power You alone bestow on us. Save us from our inclination to fill our minds with disparaging thoughts and our mouths with sarcasm and gossip. Release us from anything that deters us from the good and righteous life You call us to lead.

Then may we in our deprivation be privileged to receive Your revelation of truth. May we, in our weakness, learn to draw our strength from You.

Break into our lives this season and remind us once again that who we are, what we enjoy, and all that we receive are grace gifts from You. We humble ourselves before You in the hope that You will restore us to the fullness which is found only in You.

In Your most holy name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ROSS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. ROSS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN FLOOD COALITION

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the American Flood Coalition for 5 years of driving proactive solutions to combat flooding.

During this time, the American Flood Coalition has brought together political, military, business, and local civic leaders to build resilience against stronger storms and more frequent flooding.

In North Carolina's Fifth District, recent tropical storms have brought inches of rain in only a matter of hours, triggering destructive floods and landslides. These storms can leave behind millions of dollars in damages that burden communities for years.

The American Flood Coalition works across all levels of government, supporting process improvements and projects that directly protect against such impacts while lifting the experiences and needs of members to drive transformational adaptation policy at the Federal level.

Congratulations, American Flood Coalition, on 5 years of protecting our Nation's residents, economy, and military installations from flooding.

HONORING JULIE STIVERS 2023 SCHOOL LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR

(Ms. ROSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 2023 School Librarian of the Year, Wake County's own Julie Stivers.

At the Mount Vernon Middle School, she is the librarian and has worked to create an environment where students not only learn and thrive, but also where they can express their creativity and see their identities and interests represented in literature.

Outside her library, a sign boldly reads: "In This Library, We Don't Shush, We Roar."

Children's socioeconomic status should not determine their opportunities to learn, which is exactly why the library holds two book fairs a year where students can choose new books at no cost.

As others have worked to ban books from schools across the country, Julie has fought against harmful proposals that will ban LGBTQ+ books in Wake County.

Julie cultivates a welcoming space to ensure her students feel at home.

Congratulations on this well-deserved achievement.

BIDEN WILL BE JUDGED

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)