

I extend my most sincere sympathies to everyone who has been affected, who has been harmed, and whose lives have been disrupted.

I also extend my most heartfelt gratitude to all the first responders who are working tirelessly to mitigate these impacts and to protect life and property.

My office is working to ensure the greatest measure of Federal assistance is available to the affected communities. FEMA has issued an emergency declaration for most counties in California now, including Placer, Sacramento, El Dorado, and Yuba.

My office is in constant communication with FEMA, and I have spoken personally to FEMA Regional Administrator Bob Fenton, who briefed me on the State Operations Center in California.

We are also in close contact with local authorities, including members of the boards of supervisors in affected counties, and continue to closely monitor developments as more storms are expected.

Mr. Speaker, California now finds itself in both a flood emergency and a drought emergency at the same time. That absurdity underscores a fundamental failure of governance.

Citizens are told to take shorter showers. Farmers are told to fallow their fields. All the while, they watch water flow abundantly into the ocean. An estimated 8 billion gallons of water from these storms will flow into the ocean in the Los Angeles Basin alone.

Cycles of wetness and dryness are nothing new to our State. Joan Didion, in 1977, wrote: "California summers were characterized by the coughing in the pipes that meant the well was dry, and California winters by all-night watches on rivers about to crest."

Yet, since that time, we have done little to build the storage capacity that is needed to stabilize our water supply. That is why I am cosponsoring the WATER for California Act to expand our storage capacity. We must also strengthen our flood defenses to be better prepared for extreme weather events in the future.

Our focus right now is on the days ahead. These storms are impacting different areas very differently, so it is important to be closely attuned to the advisories of your local government.

On my website, we have a comprehensive emergency contacts document that constituents in affected areas can access for resources and phone numbers. You can find that at kiley.house.gov.

WE CAN'T GO BACK

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have heard the women of Congress come to the floor one by one by one to tell their personal stories about abortion. I am a very private person, and I

just couldn't do it. I didn't want to relive the most painful time in my entire life.

But, yesterday, I read these startling statistics about my State, yes, the great State of Florida, the beautiful Sunshine State with all the beaches and the theme parks and the immigrant-rich communities, my Florida, my State.

If abortion is banned nationwide, Florida will be the most impacted State, seeing maternal deaths increase by 29 percent. That is the mother.

The Nation will see a 24 percent increase in maternal deaths, with a disproportionate 39 percent rise in maternal mortality for Black women.

All I ever wanted since I was a little girl was plenty of children that I could love and cuddle and raise to greatness. That was the school principal in me even back then.

So, after getting married in 1968, I would soon become a mother-to-be. It was the joy of my life. I was ecstatic. My husband was walking on the clouds. My husband and I would touch my stomach all the time just to feel the movement of our baby boy and the glory of a life growing inside of me. It was amazing.

Then, at 7 months, the baby stopped moving. He was soon pronounced dead right inside of my womb, and the doctor was prohibited, by law, from inducing labor.

I had to learn how, first of all, to handle the immense grief that comes with losing a child and the fact that the corpse of that child was still within me.

I cried every night and all day. My little body was wracked with pain, weakness, and frailty. I lost 50 pounds. I would crawl into a fetal position in my mother's lap most of the day and in my husband's most of the night.

I beg you, I plead with you, we can't go back. Lord have mercy, please have mercy on women like me.

I almost died. As the days became weeks and the weeks became months, the baby began to disintegrate, and the flesh from the corpse began to spill into my bloodstream. I was at risk for toxic shock. Poison was flowing through my grief-stricken little body.

At 8½ months, I went into labor, hard, painful labor, and what was left of the baby Wilson boy was born. Oh, what a day. Oh, what pain. Oh, what grief. Oh, what despair. Oh, what suffering.

After 3 days, I left the maternity ward in a wheelchair emptyhanded, no baby, nothing. I watched other mothers and families celebrate their newborns while I grieved and cried.

We had a small graveside burial for baby boy Wilson, and the doctors were so afraid that I would also have had to have a graveside burial.

Do not take us back to the days before Roe v. Wade. Everyone who needs reproductive healthcare is different. Abortion does not only apply to women who have decided for themselves they

are not ready to have a child. Abortion affects women who are at risk of facing medical emergencies, life-altering emergencies, and death.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, let the women march on and on till victory is won.

You cannot put young, childbearing women at risk because of a group of ludicrous, hateful, majority male Congressmen, who have no idea what it feels to even bear the pain of childbirth or even have the courage to carry a child for 9 months and who take pride in monitoring women's vaginas.

How dare you. How dare you. How dare you.

May God help you find it in your heart to hear my story and never wish that kind of pain and grief that I experienced on another living soul.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

SECURING A BETTER FUTURE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. WILLIAMS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILLIAMS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer perspective on the purpose and mission of this 118th Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to speak here on the House floor for the first time. I am the first nuclear submarine veteran to serve in the United States House of Representatives in the last 50 years, and only the second in our Nation's history.

One particular submarine patrol, we pulled into Pearl Harbor to take World War II veterans out to sea with us for the day. By naval tradition, we stood at attention and saluted the USS *Arizona* as we passed by. One part of the experience we shared with these veterans was to demonstrate the tremendous pressure of the ocean.

In the control room with the periscopes, we would tie a string from one side of the hole to the other, about the width of this rostrum behind me. Our submarine's hole is made of high-strength steel to keep the water out and the crew safe. On the surface, this string would be taut like a guitar string and would sit about a foot off the deck. But as we submerged our boat, the pressure of the sea would compress the hole and that string would begin to droop. By the time we reached many hundreds of feet below the ocean, that string would lay flat on the deck. The incredible pressure of the ocean visible for everyone to see.

Now, like that submarine that I served on, America is under tremendous pressure. And like that string sitting on the deck, we can all see it. It is inflation. It is the border. It is the lawlessness of our Federal agencies. It is clear that our Nation is in trouble.

The failed policies of the current administration are only taking us deeper and deeper. Now, with a Republican

majority led by Speaker MCCARTHY, we have the leadership for this critical moment in time.

In 1963, the nuclear submarine, the USS *Thresher*, was conducting engineering trials off of Cape Cod when they encountered an engineering problem. The crew was able to bring the boat to within 100 feet of the surface, but they lost their battle as the submarine descended below what is called “the crush depth,” all hands were lost.

Americans have voted for a Republican majority in this House to reverse the policies of the current administration and to start to relieve the pressure that is all around us. The commitment to America is exactly that plan for exactly that purpose—to unite this Chamber and to lead America back to safer waters.

A typical submarine crew would be about a quarter of the number of seats in this Chamber. Imagine for a moment that many people together in a steel tube, hundreds of feet below the ocean for months at a time. I have spent 500 days at sea, and I can tell you that after so many days not everyone on the boat is going to like each other. The thing about submarines is there is no easy way off. No matter what we think of each other at the end of the journey, we arrive in the same place together.

Let’s talk about where we want to end up. For starters, when something is broken on the submarine you don’t scuttle the boat with the crew aboard. You keep fighting to fix what is broken, triaging critical systems, and getting the boat to a safe depth. That is exactly what we witnessed last week as we chose Speaker MCCARTHY. He has been chosen to restore faith in this Chamber and unite our party.

Freedom is a fragile thing. We saw that under Democrats’ one party rule. A strong Republican Conference is key to securing a better future for our children, our grandchildren, and for generations to come.

RESTORING NORMALCY IN AMERICA

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

Mr. ESTES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Restoring Normalcy in America Act.

In a little over a week, we will be 3 years past the first recorded case of COVID-19 in the United States, and over 2 years since the COVID-19 vaccine has been available, thanks to the rapid development under Operation Warp Speed.

Despite the time elapsed, President Biden and his administration continue to prolong the pandemic—promoting policies that are destroying our economy, burdening small businesses, and hurting Kansas families.

Just yesterday, the NFIB announced that their Small Business Optimism Index declined 2.1 points in December, making it the 12th consecutive month below their 49-year average.

The December jobs report was the worst of 2022 and the worst during the entirety of the Biden administration so far. With out-of-control spending in the name of COVID relief, rampant inflation has made real average hourly earnings fall 1.9 percent since last year, the 20th month in a row that inflation has outpaced wage growth following the implementation of the so-called American Rescue Plan in March of 2021.

While Washington was under total Democrat control, President Biden increased Federal spending, continued lockdown procedures for far past their effectiveness, and held the country hostage until his self-chosen vaccination rates were reached. Receiving the vaccine is a choice, a choice made with careful consideration between a person and their doctor; not an action that can be forced by the Federal Government.

When the Biden administration failed to achieve their vaccination goals, they forced through unconstitutional vaccine mandates. We are currently experiencing near historic lows of COVID hospitalizations and 41 States have ended their states of emergency.

Yet, the Biden administration has decided to extend the COVID-19 public health emergency—despite in September President Biden stating that the pandemic is over. The continuation of the public health emergency significantly strains State and Federal budgets when we are already combating inflation and rising prices.

These actions by President Biden and the administration have hurt the American people and stunted our recovery. It is long past due that Washington is accountable for persistent pandemic restrictions placed on the Kansans I represent.

The legislation I am introducing today holds the Federal Government responsible and is a step toward restoring normalcy through five objectives of research, accountability, process, access, and restoration.

The American people deserve answers from the Federal Government on the effectiveness of the forced Biden administration COVID-19 policies. My bill requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct research on the effectiveness of vaccines and current treatments, the rate of transmission of COVID throughout the public health emergency, and more importantly, an investigation into the origins of COVID-19.

We also need accountability. Over the past several years, trillions have been allocated to combat COVID-19. To ensure that taxpayer dollars are not being wasted, my legislation would audit the Federal agencies that received COVID-19 funds, and whatever finances can be recouped should be returned to Treasury.

Returning to our standard processes is also critical. In the early stages of the pandemic, using the Emergency Use Authorization, the EUA, was nec-

essary to develop vaccines and treatments. Now, with years of information and time, we should return to the normal approval process.

This bill ends the use of EUAs for COVID vaccines and treatments and requires any vaccines or treatments without full FDA approval to go through the process like any other medication or vaccination.

The choice to be vaccinated is personal, and whether it be for religious or medical reasons, vaccination status should not be the cause for discrimination and access.

My bill strengthens personal freedoms by preventing businesses from prohibiting entry or refusing service based solely on COVID vaccination status.

Lastly, my legislation reverses the damage done by President Biden’s destructive, unconstitutional vaccine mandates and brings restoration to the individuals harmed. Any servicemember or Federal employee fired or discharged due to failure to comply to Biden’s vaccine mandate will be reinstated with their record expunged of this incident.

The Restoring Normalcy in America Act provides the American people with answers and accountability for how this administration has prolonged the COVID-19 pandemic and works to reverse some of the damaging policies that have been put in place.

PENNSYLVANIA FARM SHOW

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania kicked off one of my favorite events: the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

For more than a century, 170 years, farmers have gathered each January at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This week-long event is the largest indoor agricultural exposition in the Nation, showcasing more than 6,000 animals, nearly 12,000 exhibits, and more than half a million visitors.

Each year, I host a listening session at the farm show, and we cover a range of topics during the public forum, from raising awareness about agriculture education to hearing very real concerns from our farmers, ranchers, producers, processors, and many more key rural stakeholders. This year, the listening session will take place on Friday, January 13.

The Pennsylvania Farm Show brings together so many different agriculture advocates from all different corners of the industry. It is an event like no other. I am very proud that this takes place in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Farm Show provides an atmosphere for everyone to walk through, observe, and educate