

between St. Louis, Missouri, and Carbondale, Illinois.

The latest push for the Southwest Illinois Connector began in 2017 when officials in my district from Jackson, Perry, Randolph, and Monroe Counties formed the Four County Highway Coalition.

In 2019, this group partnered with the Illinois Department of Transportation to do a report and the project that would indicate exactly what this would affect. What they discovered was that it would create thousands of construction jobs. It would reduce auto accidents. It would boost economic development. It would benefit national security, and it would improve public health.

Now, I can't overstate how much of a difference this would make. The planned route of the Southwest Illinois Connector includes a stretch that is currently in the top 5 percent for traffic fatalities and injuries on two-lane highways. The Southwest Illinois Connector would also have an important impact on helping grow the economy and spur new investments in the region. It would also prove timely in the delivery of aid and assistance following a natural disaster and help address patient transport issues from rural areas for their healthcare needs.

In closing, I thank Murphysboro Mayor Will Stephens and Marc Kiehna, the Randolph County board chair, for their leadership in building a coalition of support for this long-sought-after project. This project would be the difference maker for southern Illinois.

#### “JOAQUIN'S FIRST SCHOOL SHOOTING”

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, today, I rise with a heavy heart, a heart of grief. I grieve for a Nation where 111 Americans are shot and killed every single day. I grieve for a generation of kids growing up surrounded by violence. I think of William Cho, 6 years old, who lost his parents and his younger brother, not living in a war zone but going to a shopping mall in our country.

I grieve for the parents who have suffered the inconceivable pain of losing a child, a beloved family member, parents like Patricia and Manny Oliver, who are here with us today, whose son, Joaquin, was murdered alongside 16 classmates and staff in Parkland, Florida.

Ahead of Mother's Day weekend, Patricia and Manny published a children's book, a book that illustrates the horror of America's gun epidemic from the perspective of its youngest victims.

Madam Speaker, I would like to read from “Joaquin's First School Shooting.” May it give some pause to all of us, especially my colleagues who continue to prioritize guns over our children.

“Joaquin's First School Shooting.”

The end of the day, was also my own.  
Bled out on the floor, and never got home.  
We heard a loud bang!  
Then off went the alarm.  
My classmates freaked out, but I tried to keep calm.

Out in the hall, a killer had a gun.  
He shot into a class, then came right for us.  
He took aim and fired—again, and again, and again.

One life at a time, my friends met their end.  
He came up the stairs, hunting for more.  
That's when we all panicked, and ran for the door.

We tried to get clear, but it was a bit late.  
It was his machine gun, that decided our fates.

Our country is numb, to violence like this.  
Politicians don't care. They still keep their seats.

We must not forget, or I've died in vain!  
Enough is enough. Please . . . never again!

Let us remember all of the victims and remember that this is a choice. We have solutions. We can end gun violence in this country.

#### THE SOUTHERN BORDER IS NOT SECURE

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

Mr. KUSTOFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 2, which is the Secure the Border Act.

Everyone knows that the southern border is not secure. At the start of his Presidency, Joe Biden halted construction of the border wall, essentially prevented Immigration and Customs Enforcement from doing its job to keep our country safe.

And took steps to end the Migrant Protection Protocols as well as other enforcement policies.

President Biden's open border policies have led to the humanitarian and national security crisis at our southern border today. Since Joe Biden took office, there have been over 5 million illegal border crossings at the southern border. Customs and Border Protection officers have seized over 14,000 pounds of deadly fentanyl that have come across our southern border. For perspective, that is enough fentanyl to kill every single American.

Furthermore, in just the first 6 months of this fiscal year, 2023, the names of 80 people who appear on the terrorist watch list were stopped trying to cross the southern border.

It is about to get much worse, because tomorrow, title 42, one of our most powerful tools to quickly expel illegal immigrants, will expire. Again, that happens tomorrow.

Title 42 is a public health order that allows migrants, who would otherwise be held in processing facilities, to be quickly expelled due to a risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The end of title 42 is expected to incentivize a worsening influx of illegal migrants. Border Patrol officials at our border are already seeing an unprecedented surge at our southern border with over 26,000 migrant apprehensions in just 72 hours.

For more than 2 years, President Biden and his administration have ignored the crisis. I can tell you that House Republicans have listened to the concerns of Americans and are working on solutions to the crisis. In our Commitment to America, we promised to create a Nation that is safe.

We are going to vote soon on the Secure the Border Act, to make sure that our southern border is, in fact, secure and to combat illegal immigration.

Just a few things that our Secure the Border Act will do:

Number 1, it will force the administration to restart construction of the border wall.

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It will deploy technology to the southern and northern border. It will increase the number of Border Patrol agents, and it will increase their pay. It will require transparency regarding illegal crossings from the Department of Homeland Security. It will strengthen our current law to protect unaccompanied children from human trafficking. It will end catch and release. It will end the abuse of executive immigration authority. It will strengthen and streamline the asylum process.

This bill, the Secure the Border Act, fulfills our promise to the American people to offer solutions to a crisis that affects not just cities and States along the border but every city and every State in this Nation.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

#### CREATE A LEGAL PATHWAY TO CITIZENSHIP

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

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today as the daughter of immigrants to urge my colleagues to please vote “no” on an even more dehumanizing bill. It dehumanizes our immigrant neighbors. H.R. 2, which is known better as the child deportation act, is fueled with hateful rhetoric that I think is very dangerous for our country.

I am honestly not sure if the goal with this bill is to worsen our broken immigration system or to simply keep as many Black and Brown immigrants out of our country as they can. I know bringing back family and child deportation is immoral. Prohibiting funds to organizations providing lifesaving humanitarian aid to migrants is simply cruel.

This bill dehumanizes and is incredibly painful to see our colleagues pushing forward. Many have called it racist and inhumane, that it is fear-mongering, and that it is failed policies that will continue to worsen our broken immigration system.

We must in this Chamber protect all of our neighbors. We also must work toward protecting those who are fleeing horrific violence. We need to continue to be leaders in creating a safe haven for those who seek asylum.

We cannot and should not embrace hate rhetoric and policies that only seek to pit communities against each other, tear families apart, and put our immigrant neighbors in harm's way here in the United States, Madam Speaker, and also those from other countries.

No human being is illegal. I believe that in my heart, I will continue to fight to make sure that we pass some sort of comprehensive immigration reform that gives our immigrant neighbors the dignified, legal pathway to citizenship they deserve.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to voting against this horrible, racist bill and urge my colleagues to vote "no."

ENGAGING WITH THE MAMAS' CAUCUS

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize mothers of the Michigan 12th Congressional District and across our country. I wish them all Happy Mother's Day.

I am proud to be a mother of two incredible boys. That is why, last year, I joined Mothering Justice, a national organization made up of mothers to create the first-ever Congressional Mamas' Caucus.

We are fighting together for fair and equitable access to childcare, paid leave, and benefits for our care workers, and real economic justice for our families.

In the Mamas' Caucus, we are committed to advocating for all mamas. We must not only pass important policies about mothers to help mothers but with our mothers. That is why the Congressional Mamas' Caucus is so incredibly important.

We all know the cost of raising a family in our country is among the highest in the world and that our policies and social safety nets too often leave our families behind, especially communities of color. We also know that mamas are on the front lines of our fight for reproductive justice and more.

Again, we cannot leave them behind, and we cannot continue to talk about policies that directly impact them without them being there at the table to shape those policies so it can be transformative and meaningful.

If anything, Madam Speaker, the pandemic exposed just how broken our safety nets were, and the Mamas' Caucus remains committed to ending child poverty, to focus on those safety nets that continue to not serve our families currently.

I read a quote during the pandemic that I think resonates why the Mamas' Caucus is so important in this Chamber. It was a quote by a wonderful poet, Sonya Renee Taylor. In the midst and height of the pandemic, she said: "We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate, and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to

stitch a new garment, one that fits all of humanity and nature."

Again, this was her expression, and it resonates for mothers like myself and across the country an understanding that the pandemic gave us an opportunity to recognize those broken systems and how we need to create a new garment. The way we can do it is by bringing mothers in the room as we develop these policies that directly impact all of our families.

Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleagues to be engaged with the Congressional Mamas' Caucus, to engage on the policies we are pushing forward. I appreciate this opportunity to uplift them in this Chamber every day—not only on Mother's Day, but every single day.

#### 18TH INSTALLMENT OF FARM BILL IMPACT SERIES

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

Mr. MANN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to deliver the 18th installment of my farm bill impact series and recap the time I spent in Kansas with House Agriculture Committee Chairman G.T. THOMPSON.

Last week, Chairman THOMPSON and I hosted a food and agriculture listening session with more than 150 farmers, ranchers, agricultural producers, and stakeholders on a wheat farm near Gypsum, Kansas. People from a wide range of perspectives shared their thoughts about the reauthorization of the farm bill.

While everyone had different viewpoints, we united because we care about American agriculture; we care about getting ag policy right; and we want to see American farmers, ranchers, and producers thrive. There is a picture of that unity right behind us in three combines, referenced right here, hoisting American flags.

John Deere, Case, and Gleaner—green, red, and gray. When you grow up on a farm, you are born into a loyalty to one of these trusted American brands. They are different. They have different styles and different features, but they are all designed to do the same thing: harvest. They are designed to produce, to take months and months of hard work and effectively churn out a product.

Our food and agriculture listening session was no different. Everyone present brought different styles, priorities, background, and tools to the table, but we were there to do the same thing: harvest, produce, and take hard work and effectively churn out a product. That is the farm bill.

Without the advocacy and input of producers and stakeholders, my colleagues and I wouldn't have a complete picture of what needs to be done on ag legislation. We would just be one combine.

At our event, we hosted people who care about title I and people who care

about title XII. There were people who care about row crops and people who care about livestock. There were representatives from commodity groups and representatives from trade associations. It was a rich, multifaceted picture of American agriculture, and I am grateful to everyone who joined us and for the Kansas agriculture heritage that inspired us to spend time together on that wheat farm.

The brave men and women who ventured west in search of new opportunities settled Kansas and took on the burden of feeding, fueling, and clothing the world. They struggled through the Dust Bowl, raised their kids in sod houses, and broke the prairie for the first time. In doing so, they laid the foundation for what we experienced last week: a shared history of feeding the world on the soil beneath our feet.

I remember in February 2021, when I just started this job in Congress, Kansas had 13 consecutive days of below-freezing temperatures, which was a 40-year record. While I was flying back and forth between Kansas and D.C., I couldn't stop thinking about the Kansas producers and all they were facing. They were out busting ice by hand at all hours so their cattle could have access to water. They were delivering baby calves and hauling them on the floorboards of trucks to someplace warmer, bottle-feeding them so they could grow and survive in the wind chills. They were out in the barn at all hours of the night, only to start over at 5 a.m. All this was so that Americans have a safe and secure food supply.

Whether it is trudging through knee-high snow in the dead of winter, working the fields in the heat of summer, or hauling water in a drought, American ag producers don't take days off. Agriculture inspires us to look back at our shared heritage, engage in the present, and plan for the future. That is what last week was about—planning for the future.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman THOMPSON for spending his invaluable time with me in Kansas, and I thank all of our hosts and those who came out to our event to share their perspectives.

As we work to reauthorize the farm bill, the American men and women who work tirelessly to feed, fuel, and clothe all of us are at the forefront of my mind.

Madam Speaker, I will be back on the floor soon to host another installment of my farm bill impact series.

#### NEW YORK CITY'S EFFORTS TO WELCOME MIGRANTS

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

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, New York City is again serving its traditional role as a beacon of light of opportunity for this Nation when it comes to the humane and just treatment of asylum seekers.