

women seeking reproductive care across the South. As States like Georgia and Florida enacted dangerous 6-week bans, North Carolina stood as a bastion for women's reproductive freedom.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans in my State are now turning the clock back 50 years by enacting a dangerous abortion ban and restrictions on providing healthcare.

The truth is women will suffer and doctors will be penalized under this dangerous law. We will not stay silent in the face of attacks on our rights and our healthcare.

#### STANDING UP FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during National Police Week to memorialize our officers who lost their lives in the line of duty and call for action.

In my district in Riverside County, we have lost six deputy sheriffs in the line of duty since 2020. This is in addition to the losses our local police departments have suffered over the years, including Palm Springs Department Police Officers Lesley Zerebny and Gil Vega, who we lost on October 8, 2016.

It is because of Officers Zerebny and Vega and Deputies Brett Harris, Darnell Calhoun, and Isaiah Cordero that I have authored legislation to support families of fallen officers and why I have fought to improve the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program so that their families can get the support they need.

This National Police Week and all year round, I am standing up for law enforcement officers and their families. I am pushing for support for those grieving the loss of their brothers and sisters in uniform, and I am calling for action on behalf of those who protect and serve our communities every day.

#### FUNDING SMALL POLICE DEPARTMENTS

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

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, this week, National Police Week, is a special time to recognize the courage and sacrifice of police officers in my district and across the country.

Police chiefs have shared their challenges with me, from difficulties with recruitment and retention to the high costs of modernizing their equipment and technology.

That is why I am cosponsoring the Invest to Protect Act that funds small police departments, like many in Pennsylvania-07, to help with retention and training, small departments like this one in Weatherly, Carbon County, Pennsylvania.

It is why I voted to institute stricter consequences for assault of law enforcement officers and voted to memorialize fallen officers killed in the line of duty.

It is why I am opposing the extreme GOP budget proposal to cut by 23 percent the number of local law enforcement agencies receiving Federal funding. That is why I am proposing that we increase funding for public safety programs.

Police officers put their lives on the line to keep us safe every single day. They deserve our thanks and our support, but they also deserve the Federal resources that they need to modernize and retain their officers. I will keep working to ensure they have those resources.

#### CELEBRATING HAITIAN FLAG DAY

(Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to wish the entire Haitian-American community a happy Haitian Flag Day.

The Haitian flag is a global symbol of resilience and freedom and represents the spirit of Haiti, the world's first Black republic.

Haiti's flag represents the indomitable spirit of the Haitian people. From the triumphant fight for independence to the resilient efforts to recover in the wake of a catastrophic earthquake, Haiti has inspired us all.

The flag embodies the richness of Haiti's history and culture and unites over 1.3 million Haitian Americans across the United States.

Haiti's journey has certainly not been without challenges. Today, Haiti finds itself in turbulent times, battling instability, violence, and threats to its democracy.

It is so important that our communities remain present and united so we can address these difficult times as good neighbors.

Hope is a powerful force. We will never stop hoping, but most importantly, we will never stop fighting for a better tomorrow.

Union makes strength: strength through unity. "L'union fait la force." Have a wonderful Haitian Flag Day.

#### INVEST IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, my friends, this National Police Week, instead of helping communities recruit and train the next generation of principled police officers, we voted to let officers buy their department's retired handguns, and we voted on a non-binding resolution opposing defunding the police.

So many of us here are willing and ready to work together to address the

problems that I hear about when I meet with our police chiefs and police officers. In fact, my bipartisan Pathways to Policing Act has been endorsed by law enforcement and is still awaiting action on this floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get to work and legitimately invest in law enforcement. Let's stop creating campaign slogans and start working on congressional solutions like my Pathways to Policing Act to ensure safety, security, and justice for all.

#### SUPPORTING LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

Mr. VASQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our local law enforcement officers in New Mexico and across the country.

These heroes in uniform keep our communities safe. That is why I voted in support of the POLICE Act because assaulting an officer is never acceptable—never.

However, I have serious concerns about how this bill was written and how it can be interpreted. The vague language creates the risk of wrongfully criminalizing law-abiding people who are legally in this country.

Let me be clear: Assault is never acceptable, especially when it comes to our officers of the peace and to our first responders.

Our law enforcement put their lives on the line every single day to ensure our communities are safe. For that and so much more, they deserve our respect.

To my constituents, I want them to know that I am committed to finding solutions to address our public safety issues with my partners across the aisle and to support local law enforcement.

#### DEBT CEILING CRISIS WAS AVOIDABLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS), my friend.

#### HONORING LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Police Week. I am proud to stand with Virginia's police officers, not just during National Police Week but each and every day.

Our brave men and women in blue selflessly confront danger to protect us and our families, and I firmly believe it is only right to recognize all they do to keep our communities safe.

Unfortunately, as Americans face a rise in violent crime across the Nation, law enforcement officers have faced significant challenges and grave threats that have jeopardized the safety of those sworn to protect our communities.

These challenges range from increased violence against officers, efforts to defund police departments, lagging technology, recruitment and retention issues, and rising mental health concerns.

Last year, 246 law enforcement officers were tragically killed in the line of duty. This year, there have already been 41 officers killed in the line of duty serving their communities.

We must do more to support brave men and women of our Nation's law enforcement who serve our communities with courage, dedication, and strength. This week, I was proud to vote for several bills that showed them that we have their backs just like they have ours.

Whether it is through legislation or simple actions, we must prioritize appreciation of the men and women in blue who put themselves in harm's way to protect their communities.

The people of Virginia's Second District do an excellent job of showing our support for our men and women in law enforcement. This week, members of my team attended the annual National Police Week ceremony at the Virginia Beach Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. The ceremony and memorial serve as a solemn reminder of what our police officers put on the line every day when they wake up and go to work to protect our community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me and the people of Virginia's Second District in recognizing the brave men and women of our law enforcement community for putting their lives on the line to keep us safe.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia for her support of police and for her service representing the people of her State.

Mr. Speaker, the United States is close to defaulting on its debt. That would be the first time in our Nation's history.

The situation we face today was fully avoidable. The Biden administration's reckless spending and economic illiteracy over the past 2 years have propelled our debt crisis and driven inflation to a 40-year high.

The American people have directly felt the impact of this administration's negligence toward an effective and practical economic policy.

□ 1130

It is well past time for our government to rein in reckless spending and work together toward returning to a balanced budget, a concept that both parties used to agree to strongly for decades.

Through the years, policy negotiations were a key part of many debt ceiling agreements. Throughout our Nation's history, we have negotiated spending deals and reforms many times by using the debt ceiling vote as a constructive catalyst to action.

Yet, for over 100 days, despite promises to the contrary, President Biden has refused to take this opportunity and willingly and effectively negotiate with House Speaker KEVIN MCCARTHY.

Over the past 3 months, while the President has been unresponsive, Speaker MCCARTHY has been hard at work, alongside House Republicans and with support from our Republican colleagues in the Senate, to ensure that we address this debt crisis in a timely, responsible manner.

We have done our part here in the House by passing the Limit, Save, Grow Act, which responsibly raises the debt ceiling while addressing the other key issues our Nation faces today.

Finally, in recent hours, with less than 2 weeks to go, President Biden has surfaced and engaged in a conversation with Speaker MCCARTHY. This is good news.

President Biden, join House Republicans in a sensible and responsible agreement this week and avoid driving our Nation even further into economic chaos.

PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD READMITTED TO ARAB LEAGUE

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, recently Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was invited back into the Arab League after 12 years of being in exile. I can't tell you how incredibly frustrating and disappointing this is to many, particularly the innocent people of Syria who have endured more than a decade of war, murder, and torture.

Assad's readmittance to the Arab League sends the wrong signal. It sends the signal to the rest of the world that his atrocious war crimes against his own citizens over the past 12 years are acceptable.

A recent Reuters article had the headline "Arabs Bring Syria's Assad Back into Fold but Want Action on Drugs Trade." Well, that is rich, because the only reason that there is an epidemic in the drug trade in the Gulf and the region is because of Assad.

Assad turned to Russia and Iran to maintain his death machine, and now the Captagon drug trade led by his cousins, led by his military, is providing an independent source of funding for his regime while he poisons his neighbors, takes their money and fuels terrorism in the region; and yet he is invited back to the Arab League meeting. It is preposterous.

My bill that passed in last year's National Defense Authorization Act was

called the CAPTAGON Act and requires the U.S. Government to develop a multilateral and all-of-government approach to disrupting and dismantling the production of the Captagon drug right in the heart of Syria.

Recently the Treasury Department, along with our ally, the United Kingdom, took steps to sanction key actors in Assad's inner circle who are producing and trafficking Captagon. This is a good step, but it is months late, Mr. Speaker.

It is in the right direction of disrupting and dismantling the trafficking networks associated with this illicit drug, but it is just a start, and it comes years after we know the deadly impact of Captagon on the region, on families, but also the fueling of terror by Assad through the billions of dollars transferred from that illicit trafficking.

It is critical that governments across the globe continue to show their support for the Syrian people by denouncing those who seek to normalize relations with this repulsive regime. Granting Assad admittance to the Arab League once again sends the opposite message. It rewards barbaric behavior.

The United States Government has an obligation to sanction Assad in our efforts to dismantle the Captagon drug trade and hold Assad accountable for his war crimes. That is why I am pleased this week to cosponsor the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia Subcommittee Chairman JOE WILSON's new bill, H.R. 3202, the Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act.

This bill was passed this week unanimously in the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Congress will act where this administration has continuously failed to consistently do so. I look forward to supporting this bill on the House floor and seeing it signed into law.

COMMEMORATING 70-YEAR ALLIANCE BETWEEN UNITED STATES AND REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea.

To commend this momentous occasion, Speaker MCCARTHY and Leader MCCONNELL invited Republic of Korea President Yoon to visit the House Chamber and address Congress in a joint meeting.

From the ashes of the Korean conflict to now one of the world's largest and most successful economies, the Republic of Korea is a testament to America's dedication to support market economics and democracy.

The successful alliance between the U.S. and the Republic of Korea has maintained peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region for those past seven decades.

Now more than ever, it is critical that the U.S. continue to support our ally in their efforts to protect their vibrant democracy and prosperous economy from the daily threats from North Korea and the growing aggression from the Chinese Communist Party.

I thank President Yoon for his leadership, for the tenacity of the Korean people to come from an authoritarian republic to truly a democratic one and for building one of the top 10 largest economies in the world. That is an amazing transformation over those seven decades.

Together, we will continue to promote freedom and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world.

#### ARKANSAS TORNADO RELIEF EFFORTS

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the efforts of central Arkansas during the recovery period after a devastating tornado hit our district last month.

Our neighbors immediately began to work hand in hand, neighbor to neighbor to rebuild our community. Many volunteered and worked tirelessly to set up emergency shelters in our local schools and churches to ensure those impacted by this severe storm had safe housing in the wake of the tornado.

The response of our leaders at the State, county, and city level was invaluable and to be commended. The incredible efforts and active emergency response from Governor Sarah Sanders, Pulaski County Judge Barry Hyde, Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott, Jr., Mayor Terry Hartwick of North Little Rock, Mayor Jeff Elmore of Jacksonville, and Mayor Mary Jo Heye-Townsell of Sherwood, and many, many others all saved lives and accelerated the recovery process.

Not only did we witness their outstanding response and an outpouring of local volunteers, but we saw the swift action of our first responders and essential businesses.

Entergy Arkansas began repairs to the local power grid as soon as the storms passed, and many of our linemen and -women worked countless hours to restore power even when they themselves were affected. One lineman I met with was in his bed at the time of the tornado, and the roof was torn off his apartment. After a day off from that tragedy, he was out there working 16 hours a day to connect the power to his neighbors. Countless time was put in neighbor for neighbor.

Entergy Arkansas' corporate office also donated \$50,000 to the American Red Cross to be used toward tornado recovery efforts, with an additional pledge of up to \$50,000 matching employee donations.

The Arkansas Foodbank did an incredible job of delivering food, water, and other necessary items throughout our communities to ensure those affected by the storms were supported with necessary goods.

Additionally, our local restaurants and businesses all donated hundreds of meals and supplies to those in need.

I thank our community for demonstrating generosity and thoughtfulness during a time of great need. They simply demonstrated that core value that we all take pride in as Arkansans and Americans.

#### CONGRATULATING FRANK THOMAS ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the exceptional career of Frank Thomas, who retired in March from Stephens, Inc., a financial services firm headquartered in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Frank graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1976 and was the first news director at KUAF, the local Razorback radio station.

He quickly rose from local radio to national politics, working for former U.S. Senator David Pryor as his chief of staff.

After Frank's time in public service, he felt drawn home to Arkansas and has worked for Stephens for the past 27 years.

Stephens has long believed that Arkansas is truly the land of opportunity, and Stephens has invested in and benefited from its long association with our State. In fact, Stephens helped a little-known company called Walmart launch their initial public offering and become the largest retailer in the world.

I thank Frank for his service and his lifelong commitment to Arkansas and the Second Congressional District and our Nation. I wish Frank, his wife, and his family many, many happy years ahead.

#### CONGRATULATING CATHY OWEN ON HER INDUCTION INTO ARKANSAS WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate my dear friend of some five decades, Cathy Owen, on her induction into the Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame.

Cathy is a trailblazer and role model for women in banking in Arkansas, having served the banking community for over 50 years. She has been with Eagle Bank for over 40 of those years in various roles, most recently as chairwoman since 2012.

During her time at Eagle Bank, she has worked tirelessly to build the bank into a large, respected community bank. Over the years, she and her team have been dedicated to customer service and developing outstanding products and services.

Outside of her achievements in the banking industry, she remains an active leader in our community. She is a generous volunteer and supporter of Baptist Health Foundation, Fifty for the Future, and the North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, among many other endeavors.

I have had the privilege of working with Cathy in the industry for decades during my time in banking. I am proud to call Cathy a friend. I thank her for her many years of outstanding service in the community and congratulate her on this well-deserved induction into the Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame.

#### COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR STEVEN VEAZEY RETIRING FROM ARKANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my friend and a true example of a leader, Command Sergeant Major Steven Veazey. I wish him a happy and healthy retirement.

Command Sergeant Major Veazey, an Arkansas native, has been serving in the Arkansas Army National Guard since 1979, and has retired after 44 years of service.

The positive impact he has made in the Arkansas Army National Guard is undeniable, and he has set the standard for what it means to be a noncommissioned officer.

Over the years, the command sergeant major deployed to Bosnia and Iraq. His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal with one oak-leaf cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal with two oak-leaf clusters.

Steven exemplifies leadership, not only as a command sergeant major, but as a leader in our community, serving as a member of the East Union Missionary Baptist Church, The American Legion, and as past president of the Sheridan Rotary Club.

His wife, Leanna, has been his steadfast partner for the past 43 years and the cornerstone of support. Together they have raised two children, Tasha and Steven.

Over the past 9 years, I have been so grateful for his friendship and leadership. I treasure our time together since my service in Congress, from paying tribute to a young soldier or an airman for a job well done or saluting those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

My best wishes, Steven, for your well-deserved retirement.

#### ARKANSAS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS REOPENING

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the reopening of our magnificent Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. The museum, located in downtown Little Rock, reopened on April 22 after almost 4 years since closing for renovation and expansion.

After years of planning, the museum has been reimaged into a beautiful work of art itself. The architecture firm Studio Gang led the design which preserves historic elements of the building but includes other critical interesting and tasteful elements, making it into one of the most influential museums in the country.

□ 1145

The museum has much to offer from the visual and performing arts to full art educational experiences. The goal is to create a cultural space where our community can engage with a diverse portfolio of artistic perspectives and come together to see the beautiful temporary exhibitions and participate in the wonderful array of educational courses.

I thank all involved for their efforts in making this renovation possible and congratulate the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts for this new chapter in their history in our State.

#### CONGRATULATING JIM KEET

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my friend Jim Keet on being named Arkansan of the Year.

Throughout his life, Jim has been an outstanding and active member of our

State civic affairs, and particularly in central Arkansas.

Jim served both in the Arkansas House of Representatives and in the Arkansas State Senate in the 1990s.

In addition to his years of public service, he is one of our State's most successful entrepreneurs. He is president of the Keet Management Company and chairman of JTJ Restaurants, where he has operated 155 restaurants over the past five decades.

Beyond his success in business and politics, he has served on the board of directors for 20 years at Easterseals Arkansas. Easterseals is an organization that seeks to empower those with disabilities to have fulfilling lives and to become active members of their communities.

As the founder of the Arkansans of the Year award while with Easterseals Arkansas, this honor comes full circle now for Jim.

His tremendous work ethic and dedication to improving the lives of Arkansans deserves this recognition. I am proud to call Jim a friend and congratulate him on this exceptional honor.

#### ARMY NATIONAL GUARD INTERNATIONAL SNIPER COMPETITION

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Staff Sergeant Benjamin Cotten and Staff Sergeant Allen Smith of the Arkansas Army National Guard for winning this year's International Sniper Competition.

This competition allows soldiers to display their abilities in a rigorous environment designed to put their extensive training to the test against 35 international teams.

The team, including New Mexico Army National Guard member Erik Vargas, competed three days straight testing their shooting skills, physical endurance, and problem solving as they took on a variety of scenarios with multiple weapon systems.

Staff Sergeant Smith enlisted in 2003 and Staff Sergeant Cotten in 2006. Both have deployed to Iraq, and they have served as sniper team leaders and marksmanship instructors with Army National Guard.

In addition to serving their country, they serve our communities as firefighters. Their leadership abilities and mental fortitude earned them this competition, and I am honored to add these men to my recognition for this outstanding accomplishment across 35 very competitive international teams.

#### CONGRATULATING MACK McLARTY

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my friend Mack McLarty for receiving the Legacy of Leadership Award at the 35th annual Arkansas Business of the Year ceremony.

Mr. McLarty is chairman of The McLarty Companies and was White House chief of staff under President Bill Clinton. Mack also served on the National Petroleum Council and the Council on Environmental Quality at the request of President George H.W. Bush.

While chief to President Clinton, Mack advised on a wide range of international and domestic issues, such as the 1993 deficit reduction package, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and multiple trips as it relates to attending the G7 economic summits.

Today, Mack is a respected senior adviser in both the public and private sectors and a prominent public speaker who shares his thoughts and experiences in the realm of U.S. trade and foreign policy.

Along with this recognition for his public service, Mr. McLarty was awarded the Secretary of State's Distinguished Service Medal and the Center for the Study of the Presidency Distinguished Service Award.

I congratulate Mr. McLarty on this recognition and thank him for his lifetime of public service at the national level and at home in Arkansas.

#### ARKANSAS STATE CODING COMPETITION

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts, Conway High School, eStem Charter High School, Little Rock Central High School, and North Little Rock Center for Excellence for advancing to the State coding competition.

Out of more than 160 teams, these five are part of the 16 teams that were selected to advance to the State competition.

The top three finishing teams will receive monetary awards of \$2,000 for first place, \$1,000 for second place, and \$500 for third place for each member of the team.

The money will be placed in a 529 college savings plan account to help those students with their journey toward earning a college degree.

I thank ARCodeKids for providing the grant money for the winning teams, and I congratulate the students for qualifying for the State competition. I wish them the best of luck.

#### CONGRATULATING STEVEN HELMICK

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Steven Helmick of Donald R. Roberts Elementary in Little Rock for being named the 2023 Arkansas Elementary School Principal of the Year.

Mr. Helmick is known for his outgoing personality and willingness to do whatever it takes to inspire his students, including running a mile for each of the 168 fifth graders at his elementary school and camping out on the school's roof.

Steven Helmick has turned Roberts elementary into one of the highest achieving elementary schools in Arkansas receiving a grade of A from the State education leadership.

I congratulate Mr. Helmick on his well-deserved award and the outstanding work as principal of Roberts Elementary.

#### RECOGNIZING MARGARET GAINES

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Margaret Gaines who celebrated her 100th birthday on February 19 of this year.

Margaret Gaines has been a resident of central Arkansas her entire life. She grew up in Griffithville, Arkansas, and currently resides in Searcy where she has lived for the past 62 years.

Throughout her life, Margaret has seen and remembers many historic events, including President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal and President John F. Kennedy's visit to Arkansas to dedicate the Greers Ferry Dam in Heber Springs.

Mrs. Gaines believes the secret to her long life is plenty of exercise from gardening, which she learned to do during the Great Depression. She still grows a garden every year.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Margaret Gaines a very happy 100th birthday.

#### RECOGNIZING JAMES CHANCE

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the fire chief from the Enola Area Fire Department, James Chance, who is preparing to retire.

James is no ordinary fire chief. He is a volunteer who has been with the Faulkner County department since 1973 and became chief in 1983.

When James first started at the Enola Area Fire Department, they had a single brush truck to use as an engine, tanker, and rescue, and the department did not have an ISO rating. Now, the department has three stations, 11 fire trucks, and has an ISO rating of five.

According to his peers, James responded to every emergency, despite how urgent or not it was. He spent two nights at 2 a.m. putting up barricades on flooded roads during bad storms or responding to the tenth false medical alert alarm in the middle of the night.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. Chance for over 50 years of selfless service to the citizens of Faulkner County, and I congratulate him on his retirement.

#### INTERNATIONAL PAPER COMPANY

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate 125 years of the International Paper Company.

International Paper, IP, was founded in January 1898, and they celebrated their 125th anniversary in January—an incredible milestone in our Nation.

Their company is committed to providing essential products that people depend on, including being one of the world's largest producers of fiber-based products.

Essential paper and paper products are important in our everyday lives, ensuring goods are protected and keeping consumers safe. They are a driver of local economic development in our great State. There are over 550 IP employees and 6 facilities throughout Arkansas, 150 of which work at the Conway Graphics Plant.

I congratulate International Paper for their 125 years of service, and I look forward to their continued impact on Arkansas and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

SANTA FE SHOOTING  
ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arkansas for his service to the people of Arkansas and the people up here in this very humble institution.

Mr. Speaker, today marks the 5-year anniversary of the shooting in Santa Fe High School where 10 innocent lives were lost at the hands of evil. We will never forget that. We will never forget that tragic day that has forever changed Santa Fe, Texas.

My heart and my prayers still go out to the family and friends of those we lost, and I remain immensely grateful to the law enforcement officers who responded to that scene at their own peril.

Mr. Speaker, it is often a good guy with a gun that stops the bad guy with a gun. In Santa Fe, Texas, it was a brave law enforcement officer. Let me tell you that disarming legal gun owners will never, ever make us safer. There are, however, Mr. Speaker, steps that we can take to secure our schools without infringing on our citizens' Second Amendment rights.

There is no reason why our schools should be soft targets. We clearly have the resources and the means to protect the most precious amongst us, and that is going to be our children and their teachers.

Mr. Speaker, we should do everything we can to help school districts. We can hire armed professional police officers to help protect our schools, the kids, protect their teachers, and the staff.

Following the shooting in Santa Fe, I participated in roundtable meetings to discuss that very thing; namely, enhanced security for our schools. I heard about the need to emphasize safety in school architecture and design. We heard about ways to encourage gun owners to responsibly lock away their weapons, and the ways school marshal programs can ensure that armed and trained personnel are present on those campuses.

In response, I introduced a school safety package, Mr. Speaker. The first bill in that package is the Protect Our Children's Schools Act, which would allow the Secretary of Education to use unspent COVID-19 funds designated for schools and localities to reprogram those funds to make our schools safer against those kinds of attacks. This money would be used to strengthen and enhance security systems already in place at those schools.

The second bill, Mr. Speaker, the Protect Against School Shootings, or the PASS Act, would allow qualified law enforcement officers, retired law enforcement officers, and those permitted by State law to carry a firearm in an otherwise gun-free school zone.

Then there is the School Resource Officer Compensation Act, which would incentivize school districts to hire retired law enforcement officers to serve as school resource officers, or SROs, by exempting the respective school districts from the additional expense of having to pay matching Social Security contributions to anyone desiring to serve in this critical safety role.

Mr. Speaker, it is a win-win-win. Schools get armed and trained by professionals. The schools can hire those professionals at a reduced rate and enjoy the additional savings. The law enforcement officer professionals can continue to serve their communities by protecting those very kids in their communities without financial penalty.

The last bill in the package is the Securing Our Schools Act, which would enhance school security, including doubling school resource officers, hiring more school-based mental health counselors, and expanding the nonprofit security grant program.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that we need to secure our schools to ensure another senseless crime doesn't happen in our communities.

Today, I pray for Santa Fe High School and the families who lost their loved ones. May 18, 2018, will forever be ingrained in me and etched on my heart.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1200

DESTROYING AMERICA FROM  
WITHIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is the time for authorizations, and one of the topics of discussion today, of course, is our armed services authorizations, military bills, as we get briefings on what is necessary to defend our country from our external enemies.

However, let us not forget that when Nikita Khrushchev spoke to the American public in the 1960s, he said:

We will take America without firing a shot. We will bury you. We can't expect the American people to jump from capitalism to communism, but we can assist their elected leaders in giving them small doses of socialism until, one final day, they wake up and find they are living in a communist government.

Now, how could our great country, the strongest country in the world, be destroyed from within?

I also point out that when the KGB was active in this country in the seventies and eighties, the majority of agents were not spies. They were not engaged in looking for our military secrets. They were, apparently, out in the open, trying to corrupt Americans into how they understood our country should be operating. They were taking

advantage of our freedoms in what is supposed to be a constitution made for a moral and religious people.

How would you go about destroying America from within? First of all, briefly, we would try to destroy the currency. We know there has been wild and reckless spending recently, to the degree that our debt-to-GDP ratio is the highest it has been since the end of World War II. Our debt to gross national product is almost 100 percent.

We were there at the end of World War II, but we knew at the end of World War II, millions of people were going to be laid off from the military. We were going to stop building ships, planes, and tanks that we needed. Sure enough, we dropped from about 100 percent of GDP to a little over 20 percent during Nixon until we began to slowly creep up again.

More recently, in part because of irresponsible legislation like the American Rescue Plan or the successor to Build Back Better, which were able to pass because the Democrats had the House, the Senate, and the Presidency and were able to use something called reconciliation to get it done, we have now shot back up near 100 percent, near an all-time high.

This time, we don't see an area in the future in which hundreds of thousands of soldiers and sailors are going to be laid off or that we are going to stop building weaponry. Contrary to that, we do see an aging population in which the amount we spend on Social Security and Medicare is going to continue to go up.

I think you could say getting ahold of these people in this House and persuading way too many of them that spending doesn't work, we have approached an area, a crisis area, which could result in the end of the United States.

Secondly, I think if I were going to destroy America, I would try to destroy the family. Beginning in the 1960s, we had a welfare program that was largely conditioned upon keeping one parent, usually the father, out of the house.

This goal was made more apparent when Black Lives Matter, which played such a big role in the 2020 elections, outright came out and said they were opposed to the Western-prescribed nuclear family. Of course, there was a tight alliance between Black Lives Matter and the Democratic Party.

Within a few years of the Great Society in the sixties, it was apparent that the welfare system was destroying families. Patrick Moynihan, who eventually became a Senator up here, made it clear, by 1970, we were destroying families with this welfare program.

Apparently, because some people wanted to destroy families, his warnings went unheeded. We worked our way toward a higher and higher percentage of children being raised without a father in the home.

We also worked our way toward too many men not having families and not