

surrounding counties. They leave in the early morning hours for a whirlwind tour of the monuments for our servicemembers all day before returning that very same night.

The trip includes stops at Arlington National Cemetery, the United States Marine Corps War Memorial, and the Korean War Veterans Memorial, just to name a few.

Matt, who travels a lot for work, saw other regions' honor flight shirts in the airport and decided to look further into volunteering. After learning of his community's honor flight, he asked his two friends, Patrick and Buck, to join him. It did not take much convincing.

Reflecting on his trip, Patrick said: "Having the opportunity to experience our Nation's Capital with the multiple generations of men and women who put themselves in harm's way to protect it was something that I will cherish forever."

I thank all our veterans who have served our country, and I thank the great volunteers who make these special experiences happen.

MARKING UVALDE AND BUFFALO ANNIVERSARY

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago today, the American people were reeling from a white supremacist terror attack in Buffalo, New York.

Families were grieving 10 Black Americans who had been targeted by an ethno-nationalist and murdered for the color of their skin.

Loved ones were still organizing funerals for the victims of America's latest mass shooting, and then we saw the breaking news from Uvalde, Texas—another active mass murder; another crowd of desperate, panicked parents surrounding a school under siege; another statistic, 21 shot and killed.

□ 1015

One year later, I rise in mourning. I mourn the souls taken from their families in Buffalo. I mourn the children and teachers murdered in Uvalde. I mourn the thousands of Americans who have been shot to death in the year since.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to share the stories of just a few of those Americans stolen away in the last year—stories from all walks of life, from every corner of this country, stories that were all cut short by weapons of war.

Uziyah Garcia's friends said he was the fastest kid in fourth grade. He was obsessed with Fortnite. When he grew up, he wanted to be a police officer so he could help people.

At 10 years old, he was shot to death in his classroom with an AR-15.

Pearl Young was a substitute teacher for the Buffalo Public Schools. She ran

her church's food pantry. She was the grandmother of 10 and the great-grandmother of seven.

She was murdered while shopping for groceries with an AR-15.

Aiden McCarthy's parents had planned a fun Fourth of July, taking him to the annual parade at Highland Park, Illinois.

At 2 years old, both of Aiden's parents were murdered in front of him with an AR-15.

Juliana Farmer had just moved to Louisville to start a new job. On Easter Sunday, she found out that she was about to become a grandmother of a baby girl.

The next day, she went to work where she was shot to death with an AR-15.

Daniela Mendoza was on the cusp of finishing fourth grade. She loved math, and her goal was to go to Texas A&M.

Meanwhile, her sister Sofia was busy memorizing lines because she had the lead role in her class play. She wanted to go to college, too, and then her dream was to go on and win an Oscar.

Daniela and Sophia were both murdered in front of their mother while shopping in a mall with an AR-15.

This bloodshed is a choice. To my colleagues, have mercy on this country. If you care about public safety, let's vote to get these tools of carnage out of dangerous hands.

Let's turn our thoughts and prayers into actions and solutions. If you really care, let's put an end to this daily calamity.

RECOGNIZING THE PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER OF THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an organization near and dear to my heart, Special Olympics.

In April, I attended the Paterno Family Beaver Stadium Run in State College, Centre County. The 5K run/walk raises money for the Pennsylvania chapter of the Special Olympics organization.

I fueled up at a pre-race breakfast and kicked off the opening ceremonies before cheering on the participants and meeting with the Centre County Special Olympics chapter.

Mr. Speaker, Special Olympics is a global organization that unleashes the human spirit and human potential through the transformative power and joy of sport every day around the world.

Through programming in sports, health, education, and community building, they change the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics began in 1962 as a day camp in the back yard of Eunice and Sargent Shriver with the first international games taking place in

1968. Today, the movement thrives in more than 172 countries throughout the world.

Pennsylvania formed their own State chapter in May of 1970 when 135 brave athletes participated in a small track and field competition at West Chester University.

Today, our State chapter has nearly 13,000 athletes competing across nine local regions in more than 300 annual competitions in 22 different Olympic-type sports.

Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, providing continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills, and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

Mr. Speaker, the Special Olympics program is more than an athletic competition. The program, when offered in schools known as Unified Champion Schools, reduces bullying, teasing, and the use of offensive language to those with intellectual disabilities.

Graduation rates of high schools that implemented USC increased 1.1 percent for students without disabilities and increased 1.4 percent for students living with disabilities.

The work Special Olympics is doing results in an average of four and a half more inclusive experiences for each student who participates.

In Pennsylvania alone, there are more than 720 USC partnered schools in more than 50 counties. In fact, at St. Mary's Area High School in Elk County, Pennsylvania, PA-15, the Flying Dutchmen unified sports teams completed an undefeated inaugural season and became the 2023 Interscholastic Unified Bocce PIAA State champs at the Giant Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

The unified program truly changes lives. One of the families participating summed up the program best in saying, "Unified sports really does unify a school, a community, and most of all, gives families like myself a lot of joy and for a moment to forget about a diagnosis."

Special Olympics also focuses on the long-term health of their athletes. People with intellectual disabilities lack equitable access to health services and die, on average, 20 years earlier than the general population in the United States.

Special Olympics creates a healthier world for individuals with intellectual disabilities through initiatives that reduce health disparities and instead, works toward equitable access to quality health service for people living with intellectual disabilities.

To date, Special Olympics Health has provided more than 1 million health screenings to Special Olympic athletes to identify unmet health needs, refer them to appropriate care, and allow

them to succeed on the field and in their communities.

In fact, from 2011–2012, Special Olympics of Pennsylvania conducted more than 9,000 screenings. For some, these screenings are the first time they have seen a doctor.

The programs build on the success of the PATH program to further improve the health status and increase access to community health resources.

Mr. Speaker, Special Olympics and the Special Olympics Pennsylvania chapter wouldn't be possible without community volunteers.

The PA chapter has more than 30,000 coaches and volunteers assisting athletes during all levels of competition.

This program touches countless people in numerous ways, and its impact reaches far beyond the sphere of sports.

It was a privilege to work with the State College chapter, and I am proud to share the 2023 Paterno Family Beaver Stadium Run was the most successful run ever, that day raising more than \$448,000 for Special Olympics of Pennsylvania athletes.

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, in 1 week, on June 1, the country and the world is going to witness something that we have never seen before.

There will be an office in the United States Treasury, less than a mile from here, in which a group of people will decide: Are we going to pay the soldier deployed in Syria to combat ISIS, or are we going to send out Social Security checks?

Are we going to pay air traffic controllers, or are we going to support the Medicare program that provides healthcare for retirees?

That is tragedy in and of itself, but the world is going to see something it has never seen before. It is going to see that the United States is no longer trustworthy; that we don't pay our bills; that we don't abide by the obligations that we freely took in this Chamber.

Even worse, Putin and Xi and the leadership of North Korea and Iran are going to say, look, democracy does not work. The supposedly greatest country in the world won't pay its bills.

Now, are we in this place because we don't have the money? Of course we are not. We have the money. We are the richest, most powerful country in the world.

We are in this place because my Republican colleagues have figured out that they have a perfect hostage situation; that if this Congress—and make no mistake—it is the Congress' obligation to raise the debt ceiling.

It is not the President's obligation under the law. It is the Congress' obligation to raise the debt ceiling. They understand that if we don't raise the debt ceiling, catastrophe ensues.

They have a list of ransom demands, and we saw it because it passed in this House 2 weeks ago. It would require veterans with mental illness to work in order to receive food stamps.

It would reverse the historic measures that the Congress took to turn around the tragedy of climate change.

We know what the ransom demands are. Now, I happen to disagree with those ransom demands, and we have a mechanism by which the Republican majority could pass those.

Anybody who ever watched "Schoolhouse Rock" knows what that mechanism is. You pass it in the House, you pass it in the Senate, the President signs it, and you get your way.

Of course, they can't get their way because they understand that that list of ransom demands is deeply, deeply unpopular with the American people.

Instead, they are saying, unless you do this stuff, Mr. President, Mr. SCHUMER in the Senate, we are going to destroy the global economy and the reputation of the United States of America.

Now, am I being unfair and saying that it is a hostage situation? My colleague from Florida said yesterday: "I think my conservative colleagues for the most part support Limit, Save, Grow"—that is, by the way, the ransom list—"and they don't feel like we should negotiate with our hostage." A Republican Member of Florida: "They don't feel we should negotiate with our hostage."

Now, Democrats, because we feel some sense of obligation and responsibility to the full faith and credit and the dignity of the United States, didn't do this under Donald Trump.

Three times Democrats acceded without a ransom list to a raise in the debt ceiling when Donald Trump was President.

Donald Trump, when he was President, said this about the debt ceiling. "That is a very, very sacred thing in our country, the debt ceiling. We can never play with it."

Let me quote the Speaker of the House yesterday. The Speaker of the House says, when he is asked, What do the Democrats get in this negotiation?

You get reversing climate change. You get work requirements for Medicaid and food stamps. What do the Democrats get?

The Speaker said, "We are going to raise the debt ceiling." The quiet part is being spoken out loud. This is a hostage situation.

The implications here, and I try to make this case to my Republican friends, eventually we Democrats will learn from this level of irresponsibility.

The next time there is a Republican President, we will have a ransom list. Is this the way we want to legislate in the greatest country in the world? I don't think so.

To illustrate how corrupt this enterprise is, how corrupt the reasoning is, here is what is happening. The Repub-

licans passed the Trump tax cuts, \$2 trillion in deficit addition.

By the way, a quarter, a full quarter of the national debt was accrued under one President, Donald Trump. A quarter.

This country has a 245-year history. One quarter of the debt was accrued in the 4 years of Donald Trump. Here is what is happening.

We have a big old dinner. We order the appetizers. We order the hors d'oeuvres. We order expensive wine. We order four courses.

This is the spending and the tax cuts that this institution likes, and then we say, we are not paying the bill. My friends, that doesn't work. Let's get past this debt ceiling insanity.

□ 1030

BRONZE STAR AWARDED TO DANIEL HOLIHAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize one of my constituents, 100-year-old World War II veteran Daniel Lawrence Holihan of Staten Island, New York, who tomorrow will be awarded the Bronze Star from Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro for his heroic achievement.

In January, the members of the VFW Post 7172 on Staten Island, led by Captain Timothy Forsyth, contacted my office about a veteran who they believed should be recognized for his achievements on Iwo Jima in February of 1945 as a member of the Underwater Demolition Team Thirteen.

Five days before the historic battle of Iwo Jima, the USS *Barr* was ordered to the eastern side of the island where Team Thirteen was ordered to erect a navigational light on Higashi Iwa, an islet about 4,000 yards offshore.

Despite the heavy artillery fire of the enemy, 3 officers and 15 men assigned to the task, including Petty Officer Daniel Holihan, were miraculously successful in carrying out their mission without a single casualty. These men worked tirelessly for 5 days to clear the water's edge and make way for the historic battle of Iwo Jima.

Petty Officer Holihan, along with several other enlisted members of his team, was initially recommended for the award of the Bronze Star Medal; however, because Mr. Holihan was transferred to the East Coast at the end of the war, he was not able to participate in the presentation of this prestigious award.

Earlier this year, I wrote to the Secretary of the Navy highlighting Mr. Holihan's contributions and asked that his service receive the honor it deserves from our grateful nation. In response to my request, tomorrow, Secretary of the Navy Del Toro will award Mr. Holihan the Bronze Star for Valor for his heroic actions and his selflessness.