

Wouldn't you think it is a priority to arrest or put in prison those people who are selling these drugs? No.

The major concern is to leave the border open and not put any more people in prison.

By the way, as far as the ability to prevent people from selling the drugs and putting them in prison, how many people died of fentanyl last year in China? None. Why? Because the minute they try to sell it, they would be in prison.

In any event, I call upon President Biden to finally address the fentanyl crisis.

SUPPORTING OUR KUPUNA

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

Ms. TOKUDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the Keep Kupuna Fed Act.

According to the most current data from the USDA, 1 in 10 kupuna, or senior citizens, are experiencing hunger and food insecurity.

SNAP has played a critical role in preventing millions of Americans, including our kupuna, from going hungry in the face of a public health crisis, supply chain disruptions, and rising inflation.

While the historic 8.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment was welcome news to more than 65 million Social Security beneficiaries, for many kupuna, this has resulted in a net loss.

Seniors in every one of our districts across the country have lost or will lose access to SNAP entirely, while others will see a significant decrease in benefits because of this bump in Social Security.

That is why I introduced the Keep Kupuna Fed Act, which would exempt title II Social Security benefits from the SNAP program's income eligibility requirements. This ensures more kupuna stay on SNAP and don't go hungry.

I invite my colleagues to join me in helping end senior hunger and keep our kupuna fed by supporting this important measure.

HONORING MICHAEL R. MASONE

(Mr. D'ESPOSITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to pay tribute to Michael R. Masone, an ex-chief of the Island Park Fire Department, the same department that I proudly served for the last 23 years.

This weekend back home in Island Park, we are going to rededicate our beloved local beach in his honor. The ex-Chief Michael R. Masone Beach was named for a man who back in 1942, when he served as chief of our great department, resigned. He resigned as chief to do something far greater, and

that was to serve this Nation in World War II. He returned home and married the love of his life, Sue, and they lived in Island Park for decades.

He was the senior member of our department when he passed away, serving over 70 years.

His nickname in Island Park was "The Hawk," and we called him "The Hawk" because he always kept a watchful eye on our beloved community.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward this weekend to joining neighbors, loved ones, family, friends, and fellow Island Parkers in, once again, paying tribute to a true American hero, someone whom we all aspire to be back in Island Park, ex-Chief Michael R. Masone.

RECOGNIZING ANN BERRY

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

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I recognize Ann Berry, who, for the past 44 years, affected the lives of students, teachers, and families in the Carmel Unified School District.

This month, Ms. Berry is retiring as Carmel High School's attendance secretary, where she ensured that students not only attended school but enjoyed school.

She started in 1979 as a parent who showed up to ensure that her daughter wasn't skipping class. She did such a good job in that role that Carmel High School hired her to keep other students in school.

It was a vocation for Ms. Berry that affected thousands of other Padres, including my two older brothers, myself, and now my two daughters, who attend Carmel High School.

Through her work, our community relied on Ms. Berry as a cop for keeping kids in class, as a comedian for keeping kids happy, as a counselor well aware of teen mental health concerns, as a coach for common sense, and as a supporter of Padre athletic and academic success.

For four decades, Ms. Berry was that dependable school administrator. She was that voice of reason for parents, and she is that trusted adult for teenagers.

As one of her students and now as her Congressman, I thank and congratulate Ms. Ann Berry for her service, for her support, and for being that solid cornerstone of the Carmel High community.

INVESTING IN OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I represent nearly 50,000 veterans across North Carolina's First Congressional District. North Carolina ranks 10th in the Nation for veteran-owned small businesses.

During Small Business Week, I introduced a bipartisan package of veterans' legislation to repay our veterans for their sacrifice and selfless service.

The first, the Veterans Jobs Opportunity Act, introduced with Congressman ZACH NUNN of Iowa, provides veterans starting small businesses with a 15 percent tax credit on the first \$50,000 of startup costs.

The second, the Coast Guard Combat-Injured Tax Fairness Act, introduced with Congressman DON BACON of Nebraska, closes a loophole in an existing law that failed to provide Coast Guard servicemembers with the same tax benefits afforded to others.

Investing in our brave veterans while helping the communities that need it most should be our highest priority.

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CUTS TO CRITICAL SPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OWENS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. RAMIREZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. RAMIREZ. 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 subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I know that many of our folks back home have been seeing or hearing the news nonstop about the debt ceiling and how much the health of our economy is counting on getting to a resolution.

Well, it is May 24 at 6:59 p.m., and because of Republicans, we don't have a deal because they refuse to put people over politics.

Republicans have made this all about political games. Quite frankly, it seems like they are happier to play under the guise of bipartisan negotiating to cut government spending, but there are real-life repercussions to the theater.

Let me be absolutely clear. Speaker KEVIN MCCARTHY and his extreme MAGA Republicans aren't going to be the ones who aren't able to afford housing or keep food on the table if they get their way on massive cuts to essential domestic programs.

It is actually going to be everyday people across the country, including in the Third Congressional District of Illinois, which sent me to Congress to protect them from these cruel Republican cuts and an attack on our economy with bad deals.

It is going to be everyday people like Estela, a constituent of mine. Estela arrived in Chicago 13 years ago from

Guatemala, fleeing life-threatening violence and seeking security.

Since then, she has called Chicago home and has dedicated her time to ensure that others can also call it home, providing key information to protect renters' rights.

Like many of the families that she helps and like many of our constituents on both sides of the aisle, Estela's family depended on Federal housing funding to keep her home during the pandemic.

Now, as the cost of living keeps rising, she finds herself confronting the same exact problem as many other families: How do we pay rent? How to keep a place to live?

She says, "It is very difficult to see so many people be displaced from their homes because of the rising costs of rent. The cost of living is a problem that is affecting many families like mine. I have four children, and it is very difficult to afford extremely high rent and also afford our other necessities."

Now, you see, part of what makes Estela's experience so powerful is that this is the experience of so many everyday people.

People are already struggling. They are already trying to spread their paycheck for enough to cover the mortgage, the rent, feeding their children, utilities, the essential basics we all need and deserve.

Estela's story of struggling with housing costs while still working to help others in her community keeps me rooted in why we do everything in our power to protect our constituents from the Republican-made debt limit crisis.

What Republicans are doing right now is reckless, and it is irresponsible, and it is all to guarantee their ability to try to win politically in 2024.

They are willing to gamble with working people's livelihoods and the global economy. Republicans would rather default on the debt than come to an agreement that protects critical investments in our community across Social Security, SNAP benefits, veteran healthcare, housing, Medicaid, and more.

Republicans want to stick it to working people to bear the burden of terrible cuts instead of making billionaires and big corporations pay their fair share.

The question for me continues to be why?

Why is it that they are far more interested in protecting billionaires and corporations than the constituents they represent?

The Republican Party has a Republican-made problem, and Progressives are clear. We are not going to sell out our communities for a bad deal.

Tonight, I will be joined by fellow Progressive colleagues who will share stories from their own constituents because we have too much at stake to give in to cruel Republican demands.

I am pleased to yield to my colleagues who will share their personal

testimonies from their own constituents and why we need to protect our communities from Republican cuts and bad deals.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. DELUZZIO).

Mr. DELUZZIO. Mr. Speaker, the bill our Republican colleagues forced through the House, the default on America act, is rubbish.

They are threatening to push our economy off a cliff unless we slash the basic functions of government by massive amounts, but they are protecting tax cuts for billionaires.

It is the very definition of fiscal irresponsibility and recklessness. In the bill forced through several weeks ago with no Democratic votes, with four Republicans voting against it, House Republicans voted for massive cuts with zero protections for veterans' healthcare, for rail safety, for Meals on Wheels for seniors, and so much more.

They voted to pull back \$2 billion from the VA. That is a cut. Now, their appropriations bill underfunds the Cost of War Toxic Exposure Fund by nearly \$15 million. If they didn't want to fund veterans' care, they shouldn't have sent Americans off to 20 years of war.

Do you know why Republicans are taking these extreme positions, these unpopular positions the American people do not want?

Because what matters most to them is protecting tax cuts for the uber wealthy and for the largest and most powerful corporations in this country.

Former President Obama once said, there could be an asteroid coming to Earth, and the Republican plan and response would be tax cuts for the ultra-wealthy.

It is true. They are for the big corporations and the rich and powerful. That is who they are. That is their core value.

This approach is fiscally irresponsible. What is more, their economic plan is not working for the people. Their tired, trickle-down fairy tale has been ripping us all off, starving the government of revenue, and has led to massive gaps in equality.

Wall Street, big corporations, CEOs, they have done just fine. The American people, not so much. This Republican economic vision is killing the American Dream.

It is driving up huge deficits in our government. It guts the core things our government does but makes sure that the richest people and companies in this country can still avoid paying their fair share in taxes.

Every Member of this body pays the same amount in taxes toward Social Security as Elon Musk. You can look it up. He is one of the richest men in the history of the world.

Elon Musk and all of his billionaire pals should be paying their fair share. They are not because Republicans want them to use the Federal Government to subsidize extreme wealth and corporate power.

Let me be clear. This is not about punishing success and demonizing the

wealthy. It is about fairness and fiscal responsibility.

Many of my House Republican colleagues don't want to admit the path to longer-term fiscal health in the budget is to actually tax the ultra-rich at historically normal rates.

Let's consider Republican President Dwight Eisenhower; hardly a radical. I don't think anyone here would call him a socialist.

Under his administration, the wealthiest Americans paid a top marginal tax rate of over 90 percent. Today, it is 37 percent.

We are at historically low tax rates for the most powerful, the wealthiest people in this country, and for the biggest and most powerful corporations. It is not an accident. It is by Republican design.

Let's look back at the 2017 Trump tax cuts that I am seeing handed out to the richest Americans and biggest corporations.

The bill was a massive wealth transfer to billionaires but also raised the deficit by almost 2 trillion—with a t—dollars. It gave so many of the benefits to the top 1 percent. Everyone knows the American people are being ripped off by this.

We can feel the dark reality, that the American Dream keeps getting pulled away while Republicans help billionaires and huge corporations cash out on the public's dime.

It is far past time for a change to real fiscal responsibility. Instead, Republicans are now proposing slash-and-burn cuts, defunding the government while urging the public to not look behind the curtain at their priorities for revenue.

Our colleagues know they are holding the economy hostage to protect these massive tax cuts and handouts to the most powerful, the richest people who have ever walked the planet Earth.

They are holding America's full faith and credit hostage to cut things that make your life better: programs like rail safety inspections, air traffic control towers, IRS auditors charged with tracking down tax cheats.

Republicans are literally threatening to blow up the American economy unless we agree to slash nearly everything in government, but they want to protect tax cuts for billionaires.

They still expect us to buy into this utterly discredited nonsense known as trickle-down economics. It is a fairy tale. It has never worked. It doesn't work.

We should be creating an economy that rewards hard work, not just wealth. That means taking on corporate power and putting people first.

We should be fighting for the common good and investing in our shared prosperity, not just the rich and powerful.

That means instead of slashing the heart of government, we should make the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GOLDMAN).

Mr. GOLDMAN of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the Republican efforts to extort President Biden and the American people.

As a former prosecutor who prosecuted the Italian mob for extortion, I do not use that term lightly, but that is exactly what the Republicans are doing to hold America hostage to their extreme views.

Make no mistake about it: House Republicans would never pass the draconian spending cuts that they are pushing if they had to go through the regular budget and appropriations process with a Democratic-controlled Senate and a Democrat in the White House, and they know that. That is why they are using the threat of default on our debts, which would devastate our economy, to extract concessions that they would otherwise never get.

You don't have to take my word for it. One Republican Member said just yesterday, "Why would we negotiate with our hostage?"

To understand how unreasonable and how twisted their rationale is, consider the Speaker's response when asked by a reporter what concessions he has offered Democrats.

He stated one thing in response: Raising the debt ceiling.

That is not a concession. That is their constitutional duty to maintain the full faith and credit of the United States.

Our deficit is where it is today largely because of the excessive spending and serious, severe tax cuts that the Trump administration implemented.

These same Republicans had no problem raising the debt limit three times without demanding any spending cuts.

Republicans have a responsibility to ensure that we pay our debts, created on their watch, so we don't default and so the global economy does not crater, which would cause millions of Americans to lose their jobs, their benefits, their healthcare, their food, and their education.

We could raise the debt ceiling today if any five Republicans had the courage to stand up to the most extreme voices in their party who view the default on our debts and the catastrophic effect it would have on the global economy as an objective in and of itself.

Our Constitution states that the validity of the public debt authorized by law shall not be questioned. Yet, Republicans insist that this constitutional obligation does not apply to them.

We must stop playing politics with our global economy, and we must stand strong because we cannot and will not negotiate with extortionists.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressmen GOLDMAN and DELUZIO for the work they are doing in their districts, the work that they do here in Congress, and for their commitment to our country, to our communities before the politics that we are seeing before us today.

I keep hearing Speaker MCCARTHY say in one of his many interviews he

does a day—he spends a lot more time, I think, on interviews than actually negotiating or working with us. I hear: We don't want an increase to the debt limit.

Well, let me break down what Republicans want. Republicans insist that we spend less, but that actually equates into spending less on public housing, on food assistance, on Medicaid, on other fundamental programs like veterans' healthcare, like supporting our kids, our families, our communities.

There are no cuts to the multibillion-dollar defense weapons contractors, though. However, everyday constituents that sent us here, they should get those cuts.

The Republicans' framework imposes drastic cuts that would result in a 33 percent cut in 2024 to what I said, like housing, healthcare, education, and so much more. They would put 780,000 people out of work and cost more than 1 million jobs.

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It would strip up to 21 million Americans of Medicaid coverage.

It would deny access to affordable college to 60,000 people.

It would kick 200,000 children off of Head Start.

It would force 100,000 families to lose access to childcare.

It would rob 1.2 million women, infants, and children of nutrition assistance.

It would remove rental assistance from 640,000 families and evict 430,000 more from public housing.

Republicans are willing to put the lives and livelihoods of the American people at risk. This is not just counterproductive; it is cruel.

This plan would pull hundreds of billions of dollars out of the economy, and it could contribute to a recession, increasing the deficit that they so desperately want to address—or it is what they say.

These are the choices that they are presenting: Default on America or a debt ceiling increase under their terms. That is it.

Here is the thing: The American people know that those are not the only options. Those two are not the only two choices. There are other choices, from making the wealthy pay their fair share to getting a discharge petition to the floor with the help of just one, two, three, four, five sensible, reasonable Republicans. That is it. Five Republicans. They could be from New York; they could be from California; they could be from Texas. Five people from the other side of the aisle could end this hostage experience of the American people and stop punishing their own constituents by signing onto the discharge petition or we can utilize the 14th Amendment.

From day one, progressives have been the most responsible and loudest voices in defending working families from Republican extreme behavior. That is why the CPC publicly called for raising

the debt ceiling last fall. That is why CPC members were the first to sign the discharge petition to force a vote on the clean debt ceiling, and it is why we will continue to call out Republican games and hostage-taking.

That is why we convened this Special Order hour for the Congressional Progressive Caucus, and I thank my colleagues who have joined me today and many others who are wrapped up in picking up calls from constituents who are calling and asking, what does this mean for my healthcare come June 1? What does this mean for my ability to get nutritional benefits come June 2?

In conclusion, the looming debt ceiling crisis has been significantly exacerbated by the Republicans' approach and their steadfast commitment to place party politics above the well-being of everyday people across our Nation.

As the June 1 deadline rapidly approaches, we all must recognize the gravity of the situation, and we have to demand immediate action that protects people over politics. The Republicans are holding the livelihood of Americans as prisoners.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Republicans' default on America act would cost States and local communities an astonishing \$1.3 trillion. This would be disastrous for food access, for housing support, and for the overall well-being of our society.

I am profoundly grateful and humbled by the courage of constituents of mine, such as Rachel from Mount Prospect, Illinois, who took the time to reach out and express her concerns, reaffirming my commitment to effectively representing their best interests in this negotiation.

Rachel shared: "I am really worried about the debt ceiling increase not being passed, or if it is passed that Democrats will have to give in to extortion and agree to cut Medicaid, veteran programs, and climate provisions."

"Congresswoman, please do not let Democrats and President Biden cave to House Republican extortion on the debt limit."

"If Democrats betray us by doing so, Republicans will simply do this every single time. Don't give in. Please vote only for a clean debt ceiling."

I say thank you to Rachel. Our shared call to action is clear. It is about 7:20 p.m. For my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, if they are watching, hearing, complaining about me talking about essential programs that might be cut, if you are hearing from your constituents who are just saying to you: We are tired of Washington politics, do your job.

Well, I invite you to do your job, to join us, to actually negotiate and compromise to make sure that the American people are our priority, and not just politics of who can get over the other or a Congressman from Florida talking about you don't negotiate with a hostage.

The American people refuse to be hostages of politics in this country anymore, and this is why I call every one of my colleagues: Have the courage, have the ability, and put your constituents above the politics. Join us. All we need is five of you.

Let's be reasonable. Let's refuse to play into extremism. Let's put people over politics. Sign the discharge petition. All we need is five more patriots. Who will these courageous patriots be? Who will these servants be? That is the question.

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

FENTANYL EPIDEMIC WREAKS HAVOC

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

GENERAL LEAVE

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURLISON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

Mr. STRONG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because fentanyl is an epidemic in America. In counties and cities across America, families are being destroyed by fentanyl overdoses. Doctors and nurses in emergency departments throughout our country see it every day. Paramedics, emergency medical technicians, police officers, and deputy sheriffs see it on the front line.

China provides precursors to Mexico, who, in turn, produces this deadly drug. We have seen what happens next. Every day mules illegally cross the U.S. border by the thousands, bringing fentanyl to communities across our country. It is killing 300 people every day.

The Secretary of Homeland Security has testified before Members of this body that we have operational control of the southern border. Americans know the truth. At this rate, fentanyl is on track to steal an entire generation from our country.

As a first responder, licensed emergency medical technician for more than 34 years, I have seen it up close. I have personally had to shoot Narcan up the noses of children in an effort to save their lives. That is something that no child should have to experience and no parent should have to witness.

According to the CDC, fentanyl is 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. So far in fiscal year 2023, Customs and Border Patrol have seized over 17,000 pounds of fentanyl coming across the southern

border. Again, in 2023, Customs and Border Patrol have seized 17,000 pounds of fentanyl coming across the southern border.

This year Madison County, Alabama, which I represent, is reporting 25 confirmed fentanyl overdoses through the coroner's office with 35 suspected overdose cases pending.

The devastation this drug is leaving as it infects the United States is something to be mourned. I can say this gruesome nature of fentanyl is destroying lives, families, and communities. It does not discriminate.

More and more often we see other dangerous drugs such as methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, and even marijuana, being laced with fentanyl without the knowledge of the user.

In the wake of surge in illegal immigration and drug smuggling at the southern border, we are at risk to witness unprecedented spikes in fentanyl overdoses. Fentanyl is already running rampant in our country, and we must take action. My concerns reflect those of my own constituents and countless others around the United States, especially those who live and have been forever changed by fentanyl.

To solve problems, you must first admit you have one. We have gotten here because of this administration's reckless border policies. I am proud of the legislation that we have come together to advance in the House this Congress. We must continue to look for ways to equip law enforcement with essential tools to stop the spread of fentanyl and give us the support we need on more research of this vicious drug.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. OWENS).

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join my friend, Representative DALE STRONG, and many of my Republican colleagues today in full support of the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Last year, the Drug Enforcement Administration seized 379 million deadly doses of fentanyl. This week 30,000 fentanyl pills, enough to kill 1.8 million people, were recovered in Utah during a routine traffic stop.

This deadly drug is pouring across our southern border and wreaking havoc in communities across the country.

Fentanyl is now the number one cause of death for young people aged 18 to 45 and poses more danger to young Americans than COVID, car accidents, and suicide combined.

The Biden administration and open-border Democrats have for 2 years ignored the border security crisis and the surge in drug trafficking. America's misery has become the Democrats' political strategy.

The HALT Fentanyl Act delivers on one of the House Republicans' pledges under our Commitment to America, a Nation that is safe.

The HALT Fentanyl Act will permanently classify fentanyl-related substances into schedule I of the Con-

trolled Substances Act and close the criminal code loophole to apply the current minimum sentencing for illicit drugs to fentanyl.

It also empowers law enforcement with the tools needed to keep these dangerous drugs off our streets.

It will support research efforts to understand the effects of fentanyl-related substances on the health of Americans.

The House GOP recently passed Secure the Border Act—the strongest border security legislative package in America's history—to address the border security crisis, increase Border Patrol agents, and to end the flow of deadly fentanyl.

These two landmark pieces of legislation will finally tackle the ever-worsening catastrophe at the border, save American lives from deadly drugs, and support our law enforcement officers who risk their lives to protect and serve our communities.

I urge the Biden administration and my colleagues across the aisle to support these commonsense, innovative solutions to our Nation's most pressing challenges.

Mr. STRONG. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CLOUD).

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Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Alabama for putting this Special Order hour together and for the great work he is doing to represent Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that our government spending is completely out of control and that Congress has too often prioritized wants over needs while American families continue to struggle. It needs to stop now.

House Republicans are prioritizing good governance and are actively working to put this country back on the path of fiscal responsibility.

We did our job when we passed the Limit, Save, Grow Act weeks ago to responsibly raise the debt ceiling and, far more importantly, to cut out-of-control spending and burdensome regulations on American workers, industries, and the creative industry that this Nation has.

We are fighting for policies that put more money back in the pockets of hardworking Americans. We want to save the American people money by cutting funding for woke, weaponized spending and cutting inflationary spending by \$1 trillion in the first year and almost \$5 trillion over the next 10 years.

We want to protect the American people from being the target of 87,000 new agents hired by the IRS.

We want to ensure that the American people have reliable energy.

Just a couple of years ago, we were energy dominant. We do not want to enter the world where because of the green new delusion that benefits China, the leftist elite, and big corporations—we do not want to live in that world where the American people have to wonder if they have a reliable source of energy.