

California (Mr. CÁRDENAS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Bert Boeckmann, one of the San Fernando Valley's most treasured community members. We lost Bert last month at 92 years of age.

A catalyst in the prosperity of the San Fernando Valley, Bert was a beloved friend, husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, and my friend.

Bert's impact began as a Galpin Motors salesman in 1953, when he was only 22 years old. Determined to succeed, he was the general manager by 1957. Bert was named president by 1964 and became sole owner in 1968.

As a salesman, Bert's desire to put the customer first by demonstrating his honesty and integrity was seen as an unusual practice, but it soon became the trait he and Galpin Motors were known for. Even as the company continued to grow, Bert always said that his, along with every employee's of Galpin Motors, goal was to serve the customer first. Employees who did not agree with this message were told: "Go work for the competition."

Galpin Motors expanded from a tiny, three-car dealership to an automotive enterprise with a large showroom, retail store, restaurant, and other amenities.

Since 1989, Galpin Motors became the number one Ford auto dealership in the world for both cars and trucks. Dedication to customer service helped the company grow, eventually expanding to include 12 brands. Today, Galpin Motors has more than 1,000 employees and earns more than \$1 billion in annual revenue.

Bert has always been on the cutting edge of customizing cars at the dealership level for his customers. He called it Galpinizing, which included custom paint jobs and bodywork, interiors, and van conversions.

Bert would push for innovative concepts, such as the introduction of European sunroof technology to America, which was hugely popular in sunny southern California.

Innovation and customization are central concepts of Galpin Auto Sports, which designed and built custom vehicles for enthusiasts and celebrities alike. Galpin Auto Sports would go on to be the home of the famous MTV show "Pimp My Ride," hosted by hip-hop artist Xzibit, which was viewed by millions of people across the globe.

Bert served on various national and regional boards, such as the Ford Motor Company's Performance Advisory Committee, National Dealer Council, Dealers Advertising Association, along with the California and the Greater Los Angeles New Car Dealers Associations.

His efforts to innovate the business culminated in his induction into the Ford Hall of Fame.

Bert was equally renowned for his work as a devoted civic leader, having

worked with nearly every organization in the San Fernando Valley. Bert and his wife, Jane, received the Fernando Award, recognizing them as citizens who have contributed enormously to the San Fernando Valley.

Bert served on the Los Angeles Police Commission for over 16 years, for three mayors and six police chiefs.

He was a fierce advocate for the valley and worked to help us receive our fair share of resources.

Bert was known for his dedication to his company and his community. However, Bert's greatest commitment was to his relationship with his family, especially his wife, Jane. The two were married for 50 years, sharing their passion for spreading kindness to everyone who surrounded them.

While we greatly miss Bert, he is reunited with his wife, Jane, on the second anniversary of her passing. Jane was an amazing businesswoman and civic leader in her own right. She had many talents. She was a gifted interior designer, skilled golfer, licensed airplane pilot who flew across the country, and a driver for the Galpin Motors 24-hour endurance land race. Jane was the longtime publisher of Valley Magazine and was involved in various community groups.

Bert and Jane inspired us to practice kindness at all times.

Bert and Jane are survived by his daughters, LaVerne and Denise; his sons, Brett, Brad, and Beau; their 12 grandchildren, Dascha, Jacob, Amie, Brandon, Blake, Brooke, Amelia, Logan, Bliss, Brielle, Beau, and Blair; as well as 11 great-grandchildren, Phillip, Dennis, Brody, Violet, Anna Bell, Brayson, Brynlee, Bailee, Bronson, Pate, and Thatcher; and three great-great-grandchildren, Natalie, Mia, and Alice.

For all of this and more, we miss and honor the incredible life of our friend, Bert Boeckmann.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF ALBERT SHELANDER

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mr. Albert Shelander, a courageous veteran and dedicated community developer.

At just 18, he served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, spending 2 years on the USS *Janssen* destroyer escort in the Philippines. Upon coming home, he attended Emory University, where he served as the captain of the college's golf team.

After graduating, Albert dedicated his life to making good things happen in Glynn County. For 25 years, he served as director of the American National Bank of Brunswick and helped develop hundreds of acres of real estate throughout Brunswick and St. Simons Island.

As a member of the Salvation Army, he rang the bell regularly at Christmas

and also served as senior warden at his local church for 6 years.

Albert founded a 150-unit retirement home in Brunswick and directed its growth for 40 years.

He was also an active leader in the Museum of Coastal History, Glynn County Chamber of Commerce, Brunswick Rotary Club, and Brunswick Country Club.

There is no doubt that Albert's involvement in our community helped shape thousands of lives for the better, and I mourn his passing greatly.

#### CONGRATULATING SAVANNAH CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' GOLF TEAM

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Savannah Christian High School girls' golf team on their 2023 AAA State championship win.

As a team, the girls had a combined final score of 488, winning the tournament by a very impressive 52-stroke margin. Not only was this a very decisive victory, but it also marked their second State title in a row.

This impressive athletic achievement was a team effort led by golfers such as Mary Miller, who had a score of 64 in one round followed by a score of 73, and sophomore Ava Cottis, who scored an also impressive 81 and 74.

I also recognize Coach Annie Keller, who was recently named the Savannah Morning News Girls Golf Coach of the Year. I know her coaching was essential for this victory.

I am so proud of these young women, and I know they will continue to represent their school well on and off the golf course.

□ 1030

#### CONGRATULATING TERRY TOLBERT

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Terry Tolbert on his 50th anniversary working at The Economic Opportunity Authority of Savannah-Chatham County.

Mr. Tolbert has truly been promoting positive change his entire life. He grew up in Savannah near Crawford Square, where he began his career with EOA as a teenager, eventually becoming the youngest member on their board of directors.

He also served on the Region IV Youth Council, covering eight southern states.

With each year that passed, Mr. Tolbert's impact grew as he implemented programs to help the disenfranchised, such as the homeless, veterans, foster grandparents, and low-income families.

He has an infectious can-do attitude and always emphasizes the importance of never giving up.

Mr. Tolbert now serves as the executive director of the EOA, and after 50 years, he is still working tirelessly to help people climb out of poverty.

His expertise speaks for itself, and I thank him for touching the lives of so many in the Savannah area.

## BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Black women and girls everywhere.

While Black women play one of the most active and essential roles in our economy, we continue to be left behind and are the ones who are hit the hardest by economic downturns.

Every day, Black women face seemingly insurmountable challenges ranging from structural barriers to systemic inequities that can hinder us from achieving full and meaningful lives.

According to "An Economy for All: Building a 'Black Women Best' Legislative Agenda," a comprehensive report that provides compelling and concrete legislative policy proposals to improve the lives of Black women, when we center and uplift Black women, we are, in fact, uplifting everyone.

At its core, Black Women Best serves as a blueprint for economic, racial, and gender prosperity. Today, the Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls, which I cofounded and co-chair, released an updated report outlining a legislative agenda informed by the Black Women Best framework.

The report's policy proposals include everything from maternal health to criminal justice reform to food injustice and breastfeeding injustice, all of which demonstrate just how vital it is to craft legislation that benefits all communities.

Soon, I will reintroduce the Black Women Best resolution to address the systemic injustices Black women and girls face and to encourage Congress to craft legislation that benefits every American as laid out by the Black Women Best framework, which was developed by former Labor Department chief economist Janelle Jones.

These policies all have two things in common: They bring Black women from peril to prosperity; and they benefit the economy, as well.

Black Women Best is about giving Black women the freedom to thrive, the freedom to stay employed, and the freedom to continue driving our Nation's economic growth. Equity-focused legislation uplifts not just Black women but our entire economy.

If we are going to change anything, we need to start giving Black women and girls the very tools that they need to thrive. Black women and girls are the missing piece to securing our Nation's future, and I hope that every single one of my colleagues, Democrat and Republican alike, support the Black Women Best resolution. Every action we take towards bettering the quality of life for Black women and girls everywhere is a step in the right direction.

## HONORING BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BITNER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. SPARTZ) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SPARTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our heroes who risk their lives for our freedoms and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

I share with you and the American people a memorial service note that my friend Lieutenant Colonel in Special Operations David Stryzko wrote for his fallen brother, Master Sergeant Benjamin Franklin Bitner, who was killed in action in Afghanistan in April of 2011:

What does it mean to honor the fallen? In a word: Rise.

Rise to the occasion:

It is easy for us to conflate remembrance with honor, because we all want to honor the ultimate sacrifices made by our brothers, and the easiest way to do that is by remembering them. Undoubtedly, the greatest travesty of a free nation is when it forgets the sacrifices that keep them free. But remembering is only the passive aspect of honor. It is only when our suitable actions accompany our remembrances that we truly honor their sacrifice.

But what actions truly honor? Laying wreaths, rendering salutes, and pausing for moments of silence are all commendable, but they fall short of true honor when compared to the immense gravity of the ultimate sacrifice they recognize.

The actions that speak true honor are those that pick up where the sacrifice of our fallen brothers left off. And it is often a rare and fleeting occasion that we get an opportunity to honor our fallen through our own deliberate actions.

It is to these occasions that we rise to honor.

When faced with difficult decisions, withering opposition, physical and psychological peril, certain defeat, reprisal, hopelessness, chaos, and terror, we rise to honor the fallen.

When the occasion calls for sacrifice, we rise to honor the fallen.

Sacrifice can only be truly honored by sacrifice. Courage can only be truly honored by courage.

When it is our turn to honor those who have mortally proven their resolve, we must rise with courage to sacrifice.

It is in these moments, where courage and resolve are tested, that we can with conviction rise to honor the fallen.

And in doing so, we will stand as living testaments to those sacred words: "... that these dead shall not have died in vain."

Today, we remember Benjamin Franklin Bitner, but only our actions will honor him.

May God bless our heroes and our great Republic.

## CLIMATE CHANGE IS NOT A HOAX

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

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I wear my mask in solidarity and support for the families, the children, the seniors being impacted by the Canadian wildfires. I rise today to call attention to the climate crisis, which we are all witnessing before our very own eyes.

Air pollution is spiking across the country from wildfires that have been raging in the Canadian provinces of Quebec and Nova Scotia.

To be clear, Mr. Speaker, this is just the start of the Canadian wildfire season, and it is evident that due to the human and societal impacts on climate, there is an increase in wildfire season, length, frequency, and burn area.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is not a hoax.

We are not only seeing the haze from these fires, we are also feeling it in our very own lungs. The environmental and public health impacts are very real, and we must do more to hold polluters accountable.

Thirty-seven percent of the total area of forest burned in the western U.S. and Canada since 1986 can be linked to emissions released by the world's 88 biggest fossil fuel producers and cement manufacturers.

Air pollution from wildfire smoke has become a significant health risk in the United States, and it is growing.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is not a hoax.

In my city of New York, we are being severely impacted, and we are taking extreme precautions, especially for children, older adults, and asthmatics.

Last night, the city's air quality index was 215, a score considered very unhealthy by the Environmental Protection Agency. This was deemed the second worst level of air pollution in the world.

The situation is so grave that Mayor Eric Adams forced schools to cancel all outdoor activities today.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is not a hoax.

Is this the future for our children? Let me remind you that millions of Americans die each year from air pollution-related health issues.

In 2016, around 4.2 million premature deaths were associated with fine particulate matter, according to the World Health Organization.

That is why I am insisting on passing my bill, the Green Climate Fund Authorization Act, which will authorize appropriations to the Green Climate Fund, ensuring that the U.S. is a leader in global solutions to combat climate change.

Again, Mr. Speaker, climate change is not a hoax.

Moreover, we know where the money goes. It matters. Join me in this fight in cosponsoring the Green Climate Fund Reauthorization Act.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is not a hoax.

## HONORING ERNEST SICKEY

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

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ernest