

all of which are squandered if we continue to allow our mental slavery to bind our true freedom.

We may have the scars of countless injustices, but Virgin Islanders also have the blood of our ancestors that organized and were willing to give up all for freedom of self-definition and their own determination of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, 175 years ago, our ancestors abandoned their sense of “I” and adopted “we.” Through ingenuity, bravery, and unity, they rejected the brutal reality forced upon them and re-claimed the power to manifest a present and future of their will and their creation.

We are the heroes of our own story. This is from which we are born. It is in our blood to rise.

CONGRATULATING CAPTAIN MIKE LAWHORN

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

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of Campbell County, Virginia’s, finest: Captain Mike Lawhorn.

On May 30, Rustburg High School’s faculty and staff named Captain Lawhorn the winner of this year’s Hugh D. Pendleton Award of Leadership, which recognizes exceptional community leadership.

As a graduate of Rustburg High School, a lifelong resident of Campbell County, and a veteran of the United States Air Force, Captain Lawhorn has dedicated his life to bravely serving his Nation and his community.

Captain Lawhorn has climbed the ranks in the Campbell County Sheriff’s Office, beginning as a school resource officer at Rustburg High School in 1998, and now serving as captain of the administrative services division where he has been dedicated to ensuring school and court safety since 2018.

Captain Lawhorn participated in the FBI National Academy in 2022, becoming the first only Campbell County Sheriff’s employee to complete this distinguished and challenging program.

I am honored to represent such an outstanding member of the Campbell County community, and I thank and congratulate Captain Lawhorn for his lifetime of service.

NCAA DIII MEN’S BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP WINNER—UNIVERSITY OF LYNCHBURG

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary accomplishment of the University of Lynchburg’s men’s baseball team.

On June 8, the Lynchburg Hornets earned a 7–6 victory over Johns Hopkins University to win the NCAA Division III National Baseball Championship, representing the program’s first national title.

In the third and final game of the championship series, the University of Lynchburg fell behind by four runs in the top of the first inning, but they

clawed their way back with two runs in the bottom of the first and second innings, and three in the fifth, to claim the lead for good and clinch the title.

The Hornets’ 48 wins this season set an Old Dominion Athletic Conference record for victories and reflects the countless hours of discipline and dedication required to reach this pinnacle of success.

I congratulate the Lynchburg Hornets for their victory in the NCAA Division III National Championship, and I am honored to represent this championship team from my hometown and the Fifth Congressional District of Virginia.

A PATH TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Speaker, the number one responsibility of the House of Representatives is to secure and protect the fiscal stability of the United States of America. What that means is we are protecting and ensuring our ability to meet our obligations, to fund our government, and when necessary, to borrow to meet those needs in extenuating circumstances.

We just came through a debt ceiling battle where the debt ceiling was raised unconditionally through January of 2025, and there was the scary narrative that was used that we were facing some kind of a national default if we didn’t raise the debt ceiling.

However, there was not going to be any default because there is more than enough revenue coming in to meet the approximately \$70 billion a month that it takes to pay the interest on the Nation’s debt, to service our debts, and to prevent an actual default.

However, if we do not make true reforms and cuts in spending, we will surely have a national default in the near future.

Madam Speaker, it is incumbent upon us that we use the upcoming budgetary process, the appropriations process, to cut our spending and put us on a path to fiscal responsibility.

As the new Republican majority, we must ensure that the appropriations process reflects the priorities of our majority: that we secure our border; that we strengthen our military; that we defund climate extremism; that we restore American energy, reliable and affordable energy; that we defund DEI; that we defund CRT; that we defund LGBTQ programs; that we defund abortion; and that we defund indoctrination in our education systems.

This will have the result, as we restore fiscal responsibility, of reducing inflation that is crushing the purchasing power of the American people; that we reduce the interest rates, we allow the Federal Reserve to stop raising interest rates because we are reducing inflation, and those interest rates that are crushing the cost of housing and mortgages for Americans across the country; that we reduce gas prices that are crushing middle-income, lower income, and fixed-income Americans; that we help our farmers to reduce the

grocery prices that are making it so hard for Americans to put food on the table; and that, again, we restore fiscal responsibility to ensure the fiscal future for our children and our grandchildren.

□ 1030

REMOVING THREATS TO SALMON

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

Ms. PEREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on a huge threat facing salmon and other fish in Washington State.

Salmon are not just a fish for us. They are a cultural touchstone, an economic bedrock, and also a huge part of meeting our Tribal obligations.

In Washington State, we have a long series of dams along the Columbia River and others, and that slows the speed of salmon as they travel up to spawn.

Sea lions have figured this out. There is an all-you-can-eat buffet waiting for them at the dams, and they are exploiting that. These are not cute, Disney-level sea lions. These are about the weight of a Volkswagen Bug, about the size of a bear. These are serious creatures, and they are not just a small predation risk.

Almost one out of two fish at Merwin Dam on the Lewis River is returning with sea lion bites out of it. Sea lions come up the river, chunk up on the salmon, and then go back out to the ocean to breed. Other sea lions see this, these glossy guys, and they say, “Hey, where did you get that?” and they follow them back up.

There is a massive amount of recruitment. There was actually a really interesting natural experiment on the Willamette River, where there was a smaller number of sea lions. They were able to effectively remove all of them at once and end this cycle of recruitment.

Right now, our Federal policies don’t allow the effective removal of these sea lions, so the recruitment continues.

As a result of the actions at Willamette, fewer sea lions died, and more fish were saved. We have to act faster, in a more rational way, to end this cycle of recruitment.

CELEBRATING TENINO’S 150TH JUBILEE

Ms. PEREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 150th Jubilee of Tenino, Washington.

Jubilee is not the kind of word you are going to hear a lot if you visit Tenino, Washington. It is one of those words my grandpa would say costs a quarter when a nickel will do.

Folks in Tenino are really proud of our working-class heritage. It is originally a town based on logging and quarrying, and it is actually where my great-grandparents are buried. It was built on the determination of people who believe in hard work.

They are creative thinkers. When the traditional currency collapsed during

the Great Depression, they invented their own wooden currency. It worked because this is a community where people trust each other, where they believe in each other. That kind of independent thinking is exactly what has brought the town resiliency today.

I am so excited to honor the legacy and future of this great city. I sincerely thank all the folks who put their shoulder behind the wheel of making it a great town.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF CHRIS RUST

Ms. PEREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank retiring Superintendent Chris Rust for his 8 years of service to the Toledo School District.

During his tenure as superintendent, Chris demonstrated a passionate commitment to his students, staff, parents, and the community of Toledo. Throughout his career, Chris always sought to learn and improve, and he approached each new challenge with creativity and humility.

The construction of the Toledo High School is a testament to this. Under his direction, the school came in \$2 million under budget, and as a result, people in the town had lower taxes for 4 years.

Rust's dedication to our community is further demonstrated by his use of pandemic funding to bolster the district's mental health staff, proactively addressing this growing crisis and ensuring access in schools to a safe and supportive environment.

Leaders like Chris do not come around very often, but we are lucky to have them when they do.

I thank Chris. I wish him all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

THANKING RURAL FIREFIGHTERS

Ms. PEREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise to tell you about rural firefighters.

Rural fire districts are 100 percent volunteer staffed and can have annual budgets under \$100,000. That has to pay for medical supplies, fuel, vehicle maintenance, training, insurance, and administrative costs.

Because of these financial limitations, rural departments can offer training but not permanent paid positions. The result is effectively a farm system for more urban districts. Rural departments expend resources to train the firefighters who end up leaving for bigger towns, causing perpetual staffing shortages.

One emergency manager was telling me about their son, who started out his firefighting career in one of these rural districts. He was scheduled for a one-off, one-on for 6 days, but because of staffing shortages, he was on for 6 days nonstop, responding to life-critical emergencies while barely able to keep his eyes open, all without getting paid.

This type of schedule is not sustainable for any job, much less a volunteer gig, let alone one with the physical, mental, and emotional challenges of a firefighter.

I stand with my community in thanking our rural firefighters for their efforts and service. I will always

be an advocate for programs that support rural firefighters.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO DON BONKER

Ms. PEREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to my distinguished predecessor, Don Bonker, a dear friend. I had the honor of knowing Don personally before he passed. His loss will be felt deeply by all of our community members.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PAUL NELSON

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

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Paul Nelson, a longtime Erie, Pennsylvania, businessman who passed away on Sunday, May 21.

Mr. Nelson was 89 years old, but I don't think you could ever say that Mr. Nelson was old. Oftentimes, people compared him to a cross between Willy Wonka and Peter Pan. Why was that? Well, Mr. Nelson ran Waldameer Park & Water World.

Mr. Nelson started working there when he was 11 years old. He married the love of his life, Lane, and together, they ran Waldameer.

You can say many things about Mr. Nelson, but what you can't say is that he ever had a bad day because he never had a bad day.

I think when we talk about people at their passing, oftentimes, we are very sad, and we say it is horrible that we have lost him. I am different. I am just happy that we had him.

What if Paul Nelson had never been born? What if Paul Nelson had never been in Erie, Pennsylvania? What if Paul Nelson had never married Lane? What if Paul Nelson had never taken Waldameer and made it an iconic place for people to take their children?

When he was 83 years old, Madam Speaker, I was visiting with Mr. Nelson up at Waldameer, and he goes: Mike, how much time do you have?

I said: Mr. Nelson, as much time as you need.

He says: Come with me.

We went to his office. He looked around to see who else was there and pulled out a set of plans. He unfolded them.

I said: What are you going to show me?

He said: This is my 10-year plan for Waldameer Park.

I said: Mr. Nelson, I don't think you could define optimist other than an 83-year-old man with a 10-year plan.

His passing, yes, we grieve. We don't want to lose him, but what if we never had him? Where would the tragedy have been? The tragedy would not have been that he was here and died. The tragedy would have been if Mr. Nelson had never lived.

I think when we go through moments like this and have a chance to reflect on the people who we represent, we un-

derstand that we represent more than a person. We represent an attitude. We represent a legacy. We represent people who rely on us to come here and represent them.

Look, you can't say enough about Mr. Nelson. I told you, he is a cross between Willy Wonka and Peter Pan. I always found him to be so charming. We awarded him as a Community Champion of the district when I was able to see him.

I think people need to take time every once in a while to look not just at the birth date and passing date but look at the time in between. What did they do with that time? Was it time well spent? At the end of that time, can we look back and smile and say how blessed was I to have had something that made saying good-bye so hard to do?

This guy was incredible.

Madam Speaker, I will never yield this man's memory and what he did for Erie, Pennsylvania, and for childhood devotees who just couldn't wait to go to Waldameer in the summer.

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO GUN VIOLENCE VICTIMS

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

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, America is experiencing a gun violence epidemic, both in mass shootings and everyday gun violence.

More and more of our fellow Americans have to deal with mental health and physical injury in the aftermath of shootings. In many cases, they come out of the hospital with long-lasting disabilities.

The residents in my hometown of Philadelphia have become much too familiar with gun violence. In a poll taken 6 months ago, two-thirds of residents reported having heard gunshots in their neighborhoods.

Over Memorial Day weekend alone, 32 people were shot in Philadelphia. Seven of them died, including a 16-year-old boy. Those 32 families are changed forever.

The toll of gun violence on the victims is enormous. It is emotional, mental, and financial. It is not just borne by those who are shot but also by family and friends, as well as witnesses, first responders, and countless others.

I believe in prevention. That is why I signed the discharge petitions for the three gun safety bills. I also believe in helping those who have already been affected.

We are becoming a nation of victims and survivors. As a country, we must not forget those who are struggling in the aftermath of gun violence. That is why I, along with Senator CASEY, introduced the Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Act, H.R. 3962. This bill would create a council to assess the resources that are available and determine how we can ensure victims are getting the assistance they need.