

Iranian protestors have based this revolution on three principles: women, life, and freedom, all of which America has rightfully championed.

With a considerable population of Iranian Americans in New York's Third Congressional District, let America serve as a Democratic beacon of light for the Iranian men and women who are fighting abroad.

I acknowledge Representative TENNEY, who introduced a House concurrent resolution commending the bravery of the men and women of Iran.

I declare, with every bullet and with every act of violence imposed by the Iranian government, comes a call for us to condemn their actions and urge the Biden administration to take far greater actions than mere sanctions to address the countless murders and examples of senseless brutality.

RECOGNIZING RANDY SAWYER

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a good friend and a wonderful professional, Randy Sawyer.

Randy has been a dedicated public servant in the county I represent in San Francisco Bay Area, Contra Costa. Contra Costa is home to a heavily industrialized part of the bay area with refineries and chemical plants.

Randy has served important roles at the Contra Costa Health Services, beginning as a specialist engineer in the Hazardous Materials Division, then becoming the Chief Environmental Health and Hazardous Materials Officer, and ultimately ending as the Deputy Director.

Among Randy's efforts to promote public health, he helped to champion the county's community warning system, one of the best response teams in the State and the country, to alert county residents and businesses when they are impacted or in danger of being impacted by an emergency.

He also helped Contra Costa lead the county in refinery safety with his work on the industrial safety ordinance, which I am proud to be an author of.

The legacy of Randy's work will continue to protect residents in the bay area for years to come. Please join me in congratulating Randy on his retirement and honoring him for his 30 years of public service.

□ 1700

LET'S PREPARE FOR DISASTER

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, recently, my home State of California has suffered from a series of devastating storms on the flood side of the

equation. We received at least 11 inches of rainfall and were hit by extreme flooding as a result.

Now, in California, unlike any other places, we have a simultaneous flood emergency and drought emergency; only in modern California. Many people were forced to evacuate. Twenty people lost their lives.

The damage was extensive, but the real disaster is that we already know how to reduce the fallout from flood events. If we built more water storage, such as Sites Reservoir, raising Shasta Dam, et cetera, we could store more of this rainfall that would not become floodwater, rather than also allowing it to flush out to the ocean where we will need that water in a regular drought period for agriculture, et cetera.

Storing water from these storms also allows us to weather our periodic droughts, such as in San Luis Reservoir. If we could run the pumps hard enough, we could be filling that facility.

So, again, that removes water from a flood zone and puts it into a good place where we can use the water.

We get fatalities from these disasters; they flood out roads; they do destructive damage to infrastructure.

We need better evacuation routes for people. We need to think ahead and plan for storage and for flood infrastructure, instead of letting climate change and environmental issues stop it.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE

(Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mark the 50th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the historic Supreme Court decision that gave women legal access to abortion.

Now, 50 years later, an extreme MAGA Supreme Court has reversed Roe, taking us to a new dark place in history; and now Republicans are racing full steam ahead toward a nationwide abortion ban, creating hardship and even death for pregnant women, and prison for their doctors.

To that, I say, my, my, my.

People, not politicians, should have the freedom to control their own reproductive destinies. On the 50th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, I rise to say that the American people want more freedom, not less; and that means the ability of each person to make the personal decision about their health, their lives, and their future.

INTRODUCING FRESHMAN REPUBLICAN MEMBERS

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. 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 gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I would like to kick off our first Wednesday Special Order Hour of the year by extending my congratulations and warm wishes to all of our colleagues, all the new Members, all the Members who are returning here. We have very, very important work to do in the 118th Congress.

I want to thank our House Democrat counterparts, as well, for working with us to ensure a smooth transition from the minority to the majority. It is an important part of our institution, and we are grateful for how this has gone so far.

We should all be rooting for the success of this Congress, obviously, because when Congress succeeds, everyone in our country benefits; and so we have an important responsibility before us.

We are under no illusion that the governing in such a closely divided body over these divided times is going to be any easy task. We know that. We know what the challenges are.

But we are also under no illusion that Congress has been operating as it should be. We think this can be done better, and our endeavor here is to show everyone how.

This problem that we faced here has been around for a long time. Look at just what happened in the last Congress. We had trillions upon trillions of dollars in government spending, which sent inflation soaring.

We had votes on immensely consequential, complex, 1,000-plus page bills sent to us just hours before we were called to vote upon them.

We had Congress steadily outsourcing its authority over to unelected bureaucrats in the executive agencies.

We had Members dial into congressional hearing, literally, from their bedrooms and their basements. We had Members voting by proxy while they were on vacation abroad.

With the 118th Congress, we are here to declare that those days are over. The House is getting back to work. We are ending remote voting and remote committee work in the House. That is going to restore greater transparency and accountability in the legislative process.

I actually believe that when we restore in-person work, as this was designed to be done, as the Founders intended, as they drew it up, it is going to have an added benefit because I believe it will help us rebuild comity and foster more civility in the House.

I am not going to belabor this point, but I would just say, at the end of last

year, Congress passed a 4,155-page bill. We spent \$1.7 trillion on that omni; and I think it was one of the worst government funding bills in the history of Congress.

Instead of individual bills to fund each Federal agency one by one, with a roll call vote and amendments and deliberation process, we didn't have any of that. We had all the agencies lumped together right before the end-of-the-year deadline with dozens of unrelated policies attached to it. I mean, everything from electoral college changes to retirement changes, cosmetics regulation, healthcare policies, salmon fishing, and horse racing regulations, all crammed in there together, under the guise of a government funding bill.

The process for passing this bill was almost as ugly as the substance. It was written behind closed doors, I mean, literally, behind closed doors by a handful of people. It was brought to the House for a vote before anybody could possibly read it, much less debate or amend it.

Is there a single Member, is there a single Member of this body who thinks that is the way we should conduct the people's business? I don't think so.

So this should go without saying, but if we are going to fund each government agency and make changes to those unregulated policies, we should do it in regular order. We should do it in the regular process.

It should require a full, open debate in committee and on the floor, with the opportunity to make amendments. Republicans are committed to do this. We are back in charge, and that status quo that we have had here, where there is no transparency, no accountability, outright disregard for regular order, those days are over.

Campaign season is over. The House has elected our Speaker, and now it is time to get to work.

Madam Speaker, tonight, with the remaining time that we have in our hour, we reserved the time because we want to introduce the American people to some of the bright, new Republican Members that have joined the body here. They are going to discuss some of the problems that are currently facing our country.

They bring a fresh, new perspective to this, and their voices are very, very important. And we are also going to talk a little bit about the Republican vision for how we are going to address all of these crises.

We are in charge. We are here ready to work, and I am delighted to introduce a few of these key Members.

I would start first, Madam Speaker, by yielding to the gentleman from east Texas, Congressman NATHANIEL MORAN. I will say just a moment before I yield him the time, that we are neighboring districts. I represent Northwest Louisiana, and then right over the Texas border is my friend there. He is replacing the great LOUIE GOHMERT who has finally retired from Congress.

I will tell you just a quick bit about Nathaniel. He is formerly a West Point

student, a graduate of Texas Tech University. He has a B.A. in Russian language and area studies, an MBA, and a law degree. He had a civil practice in the east Texas area, focused primarily on business and commercial litigation and transaction work.

He served on the City Council in the city of Tyler, Texas. He was mayor pro tem and, ultimately, he was appointed the Smith County judge, and he served in that capacity from 2016 until he was elected to Congress in 2022.

The thing about a county judge in Texas is they are, effectively, the boss in that area. They hold all the power. They do all kinds of stuff. They are not just a judge in a court; they are like an administrator over the whole area; and he did it so well.

What I love about him most is he is a family man who is dedicated to his faith, and he is a patriot. They have four children, just like we do. He represents a great area, and we are delighted to have him.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN. I thank the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON) for this opportunity to speak.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce myself and to re-introduce the First District of Texas to this distinguished body, the people's House.

For those of you that do not know, the First District of Texas is made up of 17 counties in east and northeast Texas. The people there are faith-based, they are family-loving, they are hardworking, they are tough-minded, and they are service-oriented individuals.

They use their independent spirits, their patriotic hearts, and their rugged hands to build a future centered around faith, family, and freedom.

There are simply no better people in this world than those who reside in Congressional District 1 in Texas, and there are none more dedicated to seeing this world be a better place for our children and our grandchildren than my constituents.

The First District of Texas boasts a landscape of pine trees, dogwoods, roses, azaleas, pecan and peach orchards, lakes, and beauty beyond imagination.

Its economy is as diverse and strong as its people. It is not just home to some of the best oil and gas operations in the world, but it is home to innovative manufacturing, world-class healthcare, top-notch educational institutions, farming and ranching operations, food processing plants, steel and pipe companies, and so much more. You name it, our folks do it, and they do it with a spirit of excellence, innovation, and service toward one another.

The people in east Texas know that liberty gives rise to prosperity, but prosperity should always give rise to generosity.

In east Texas, the people love their God, their families, and their Nation, and they are willing to sacrifice all for

those things. That is why we have so many veterans in our community.

East Texas is filled with individuals who, out of reverence and respect for the most important things in life, still stand for the national anthem and bow at their church altar. They know how to stand firm for their principles and to ask for forgiveness when they make mistakes.

To be sure, they know that strength and humility are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are values that support and build on one another.

I am so proud and humbled to represent Texas' First Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives.

When I was just shy of 2 years old, my parents moved me and my three older brothers from Arizona to east Texas in Southern Smith County, and they worked with other families in that area to start a Bible college. For almost a decade, I lived on that Bible college campus and spent most of my time either going to church or exploring the woods and the county roads that surrounded our little single-wide trailer.

From climbing trees, to shooting snakes, drinking the nectar of honeysuckles along the roadside, playing football with the neighborhood kids, or recovering from multiple broken bones from all the adventures we had living in the country, several things became clear to me from my upbringing.

Among them, I learned, first: that Almighty God has a call for each of us in this life; that we were created for a divine purpose.

I learned that each of us have equal and eternal value.

I learned also that the great commandment in Matthew 22, of loving God and loving others, should guide our every decision and action in life.

I learned simply that we are all sinners in need of a savior; and I learned that these United States form the greatest Nation that has ever existed; and our Republic is great because of the breadth of the freedoms offered here, which come only from heaven above.

I am proud to be the first graduate of Whitehouse High School to serve as a Member of Congress, and I am deeply thankful that my calling in life has led me to this place, to this floor, where I hope to fan the flames of liberty, and to create more opportunities for my children, my four children, and for the children of every family in east Texas and beyond.

As a city councilmember in Tyler, I learned quickly that sound policy is so much more important than soundbites. Those 4 years on the city council solidified my desire to serve my community in whatever way possible.

Whether as a Sunday school teacher, a church deacon, a trombone player in the worship band, Cub Scout den leader, assistant Scoutmaster for the Boy

Scouts, or coach for my daughters' basketball teams, or simply just a volunteer for nonprofits across the community. I discovered that giving is so much better than receiving.

I am blessed with a loving wife and four children, two boys and two girls, from high school down to kindergarten, and they are a primary motivator for me to fix what is so wrong with this country.

I want my kids to grow and to know a country where freedom reigns supreme; where government is limited; and where their good decisions can lead to good consequences but, equally as important, where their bad decisions can lead to bad consequences so they can learn from their mistakes.

The road ahead for America will not be easy. As a country, we must make tough decisions to reverse our current trajectory. If we make these good decisions, we will see good consequences. But if we fail in that task, in that mission, the consequences will get more dire and the future will become more bleak.

□ 1715

In fulfilling our mission, we should never compromise our principles, but we can be both principled conservatives and pragmatic policymakers.

As a county judge in one of the most conservative counties in the State of Texas, I was proud to maintain one of the lowest tax rates in the State while still addressing critical areas of county government like improving roads and bridges, supporting law enforcement, working to improve election integrity, and addressing longstanding facility needs.

It is possible to do both, to keep the burden of taxes low while still addressing the critical needs of this country, but it takes the wisdom to see the right path forward and the courage to take it. In short, it means channeling the greatness of the character of this country, the type of bold and strong character evident in the people of the First Congressional District in east Texas and in so many other places in this great country.

I thank my constituents for this opportunity to serve; to be strong and courageous for them and for this country; and to work with all my might to preserve, protect, and defend this Constitution and the United States of America. I pledge to do just that and to do all that I can to make that happen.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas. Texas is well represented, and the First District certainly is.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to introduce next for his first Special Order hour speech one of the bright lights in the new incoming class in the 118th Congress, Representative MIKE LAWLER from New York. He represents the 17th Congressional District there, which includes Rockland County, Putnam County, and portions of Westchester and Dutchess Counties.

Before serving in the U.S. House, he represented New York's 97th District in the State Assembly and served on really important committees there—banks, education, housing. He has a broad range of experience.

In the New York State Assembly—this is a neat statistic—he passed more bills than any other member of his conference. It really is a testament to his ability to work in a bipartisan, pragmatic fashion to approach the problems that we face. That is a skill that is going to come in handy here.

He previously served as a deputy town supervisor and as a senior adviser to a county executive. He was also the executive director of the State Republican Party in New York—that is no small task—and did a great job there.

He graduated from Manhattan College with degrees in accounting and finance. He was the valedictorian there, I would note, but his greatest accomplishment, of course, is his wife and daughter. They live in Pearl River.

We are delighted to have Congressman MIKE LAWLER here. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER).

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend from Louisiana for the kind words and gracious introduction.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk with respect to School Choice Week here in the United States and to address the dire need for education reform across our country.

As a child, I attended public schools. In New York, we have some truly phenomenal public schools. When I was in second grade, I was among the youngest people in my class with a September birthday, and my teacher, an immigrant from Russia, said to my parents that she felt it was important for me to be left back because I needed time to mature and grow.

My parents were open to the idea so long as she was my teacher again, and at the time, that was not the program. They would give you another teacher within the grade.

So, my parents pushed until the school acquiesced and allowed her to teach me a second time. It was the best thing that ever happened to me because it gave me the opportunity to grow, to mature, to develop. I went from being one of the youngest in my class to the oldest in my class, and that had a profound impact on me.

As my colleague pointed out, when I graduated college, I graduated as the valedictorian of my class. I don't say that as a bragging point; I say it as the result, the direct impact, that that moment had on my life from an education standpoint.

As I think about education and the impact that it has on our communities and our children, I believe in school choice. I believe not only in the right of parents to choose what education is best for their child but in the right of a child to get the education that will put them on a path to success in their

careers, an education that will accentuate their skills and their talents.

Whether that is a public school education or a private school education, a charter school or a vocational school, those options must be available to every child. No child should ever be victim to a poor education because of their parent's wealth or their ZIP Code.

Too often, we see that children are left in substandard schools because of politics, and it is wrong. As I mentioned, I am a product of public schools. My sister-in-law is a special education teacher in the very district that I graduated from. She is part of the teachers union. I respect and admire our teachers across America who provide a valuable education to our children, but we must ensure, number one, that every child has access to a quality education and, number two, that parents, not bureaucrats, certainly not the teachers union, have a say over their child's education.

As we recognize School Choice Week, I think it is important to recognize the quality education that is provided in our public schools, yes, but also in our private schools, our religious schools, our parochial schools, and yeshivas. They provide an important education, not just with respect to the basics of math, science, English, and history, but a religious foundation that plays such a pivotal role in a child's life.

We must recognize the role vocational schools play. At a young age, we should be helping children identify what their skills are, what their talents are, what their interests are so that they have a path to success.

Not everyone is meant to go to college. College is a great thing. As somebody who graduated at the top of my class, I believe in a college education, but it is not necessary for everyone.

In this country, some of our most successful people don't have college degrees. They went the route of a vocational school. They own and operate their own business within the trades. They employ hundreds, if not thousands, of people. They contribute greatly to our economy and communities.

For me, as we move forward, we need to continue to invest critical resources in education at the Federal level, at the State level, and at the local level. We need to protect local control of schools, and we need to protect the rights of parents when it comes to their child's education.

All of this is so critical as we move forward to ensure that our children have a bright future and that they are productive and contributing members of our society.

Education is the civil rights issue of our generation. It is so critical to ensure that every child receives the quality education they are entitled to.

When we look at what has happened over the last few years, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, where so many schools were shut down and children were forced to learn remotely, we

saw devastating impacts and irreparable harm put upon our children. Nine-year-olds lost ground in math for the first time since the 1970s. Scores in reading fell by the largest margin in more than 30 years.

The damage was not felt equally across all demographics. Schools that remained open, or were closed for a shorter duration, did not see the same decline in student performance. Unfortunately, high-poverty districts that went remote for a majority of the pandemic will need to spend nearly all of their Federal education aid just to recover from these losses.

Such disparities are not new, and the COVID-19 pandemic has shone new light on issues that have been plaguing many communities for a long time.

Students in poor communities, whether they are urban or rural, tend to have lower test scores, literacy rates, and graduation rates than their peers. Meanwhile, the presence of alternatives to underperforming schools has been able to improve student outcomes substantially, slashing the achievement gap.

In the two decades since school choice programs were enacted in Florida, fourth grade reading performance rose 26 percent among African-American students, 27 percent among Hispanic students, and 29 percent among students from low-income households. Similarly, math performance rose 27 points among African-American students, 19 points among Hispanic students, and 21 points among low-income students.

In my State of New York, charter schools have made a big difference in some of the same students that struggle. According to 2019 test scores, 63 percent of charter school students in grades three through eight passed the State math exam compared to 46 percent for traditional public school students. Additionally, 57 percent of charter school students in the same grade levels were proficient in English language arts while the percentage for traditional public school students was 47 percent.

Any discussion on education reform must include school choice and support for it and support for our vocational schools, parochial schools, traditional private schools, and charter schools. We have to have an all-of-the-above approach. We need to empower communities, parents, and students, as well as our educators, to ensure that every child gets the education they deserve.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from New York.

School choice is such an important issue. I love what he said: Education is the civil rights issue of our time. So well said.

Madam Speaker, there is a theme here tonight. We brought in incoming Members of the freshman class of the 118th Congress from the largest States, I think. It is not just a coincidence that we chose them for that duty to-

night. We have had Texas and New York, and we will go to Florida next.

I am delighted to introduce a new Member from there, Representative CORY MILLS. I will tell you just a little bit about him.

He is a decorated U.S. Army combat veteran and recipient of the Bronze Star. He left his home State of Florida to serve his country in uniform and then served further our U.S. State Department and other government agencies in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

In fact, he served with the 82nd Airborne Division and was a member of the Joint Special Operations Command, Combined Joint Task Force 20 in Iraq. He spent significant time there, 7 years of service in Iraq and approximately 2 years in Afghanistan. He served in the Kosovo campaign in 2000. He has traveled to the front lines of Ukraine during the Russian invasion to provide information for USAID and Department of State officials.

He is a busy guy. President Trump appointed him to the Pentagon as a Department of Defense adviser and foreign policy expert.

With his wife, I love that he, in the private sector, cofounded PACEM Solutions International LLC and PACEM Defense LLC.

We love that he is here with us because he is a husband and a father, a patriot and a combat veteran, an entrepreneur, a foreign policy expert, and a true American conservative. We are going to have a lot of work for him to do.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLS).

Mr. MILLS. Madam Speaker, today, I want to introduce myself not just to the great people of Florida's Seventh District but to the rest of America.

While I may not be in your district and your exact Representative, if you believe in our constitutionality, if you believe in the rights, liberties, and freedoms in which American exceptionalism once excelled in, then I will be your Representative.

□ 1730

I came from a very humble upbringing. I grew up in a small town called Auburndale, Florida, in central Florida.

My mother and father both suffered from drug and substance issues. They were in and out of prison nearly all of my life—my father spent nearly 30 years, my mother spent nearly 7 years. I bounced house to house until I was finally adopted and taken in by my grandparents.

That is a very humbling experience for me, not just because so many Americans today are suffering from these things, but to also understand that I can hear your plight. Also, I understand the significant importance of being a nuclear family member.

My grandparents didn't have much. My grandfather was a welder, my grandmother used to do hair on the back patio for women in the commu-

nity. We lived on very little after my grandfather's disability. But the one thing that we always had was our love, our faith, and this Nation.

I went on to serve in the 82nd Airborne and as a member of the Joint Special Operations Command, to serve honorably in our Armed Forces, and to be a Bronze Star recipient.

My socioeconomic status and how I was born into what family did not define who I am. That is something very rare in this world. That is something that only exists here in America.

I have been honored and blessed to create tremendous businesses with my wife, where we have gone on to serve over 200 of our law enforcement departments: SRT, HRT, the FDLE, the Department of Corrections, as well as for our members of the Armed Forces. In my family, we truly believe in the ideas of defend, not defund our men and women in blue, and that matters to us.

I would just add that as I stand here, willing to serve yet again in a new uniform, I want you to know that accountability, transparency, and accessibility to your Members should be a top priority. That also means accountability for the wrongdoings of our Federal Government, whether it is the overstepping of State's rights and individual rights and the violations of the 10th amendment, or whether it is getting accountability for the wrongdoings of open borders, a failed Afghan withdrawal, and the America-last policies that have threatened our energy independence.

Madam Speaker, I know something about these failed withdrawals. When Congressman RONNY JACKSON from Texas reached out to me, he had a mother, Miriam, with three children, a 15-year-old boy, an 11-year-old little girl, and a 2-year-old little girl. They were left behind in Afghanistan after the Biden administration chose to abandon Bagram Air Base to hand over to the Chinese, that enabled over 40,000 Taliban, Haqqani, and ISIS Khorasan to be released from their detention centers, but it also shut down the commercial flights that many Americans had planned on using to return home.

This mother and her three children only wanted to do one thing, return back home to America. When RONNY JACKSON called the Department of Defense and the Department of State under this Biden administration, they failed to answer the call.

That is why when he called me, we put together a great team that went over, and after 11 days and three failed attempts, the Biden administration not only threatened to shoot down an aircraft of Americans, which was a November aircraft that was there to save other Americans, but he thwarted us in three other efforts.

The great thing about America is that we are not defined by the minority, which is our Federal Government. We are defined by the voice of the American people, which is the majority that cannot be silenced. That is why

after 11 days, multiple attempts, and crossing into impermissible environments, we were able to rescue and conduct the very first successful overland rescue of Americans out of Afghanistan and return that mother and her three children back and they finished out their school year.

Madam Speaker, the one thing I believe in is action. While I take this time to speak before you today, I want you to know that that is not what the American people are about—politicians speaking, but acting.

When it came to the 2020 riots, we didn't sit back and ask to defend and dismantle our law enforcement. My wife and I, we stood strong as we donated hundreds of thousands of dollars and less lethal goods to defend our law enforcement, our communities, their businesses, and their homes.

If I have learned nothing in my time in the military as a combat veteran, as a businessowner, as a foreign policy expert, and as an American, it is that it is time for action.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend and I thank him for his service to our country. We are glad he is here.

Madam Speaker, we have many bright lights from Florida. Another one that I would like to introduce next is Congresswoman ANNA PAULINA LUNA, who is here to serve her first term. She represents Florida's 13th Congressional District.

She is a member of the House Freedom Caucus and the Second Amendment Caucus, and is already very busy here on the grounds.

She is the first Mexican-American woman elected to the United States Congress to represent the big State of Florida. She was raised by a single mother in one of southern California's low-income neighborhoods. She tells the story often that she experienced firsthand the devastating consequences of radical, Big Government policies in cities like the one she grew up in. It was a tough childhood.

She joined the military at a young age and she went on to graduate from the University of West Florida with a bachelor's degree in biology. She served in the U.S. Air Force, and that is where she met her husband Andy, who is a Bronze Star recipient who earned a Purple Heart when enemy combatants shot at him in Afghanistan.

She brings an extraordinary work ethic and an inspiring life story and her fresh perspective to our Republican Conference. We are so happy to have her join our group here and our conservative cause.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. LUNA).

Mrs. LUNA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the politicization of what is happening at our southern border against the American people.

Several years ago, before politics was even a factor or thought for me, I got

involved as a counter-trafficking activist. During that time, I had the honor and privilege of working next to some very brave people who were working to expose what was happening with the whole immigration debate.

One of the more alarming things that I found is the more that I addressed this issue, the more that I got involved to really shed light on it to the American people, the more that I was called a "coconut," the more the color of my skin became a topic of discussion, and the more that the left sought to, if anything, underestimate and undermine my capability to address this topic because of the fact that I am a conservative.

Yes, I am Hispanic. Yes, I am a veteran. Yes, I grew up and saw things that a lot of people, probably in this very body, haven't had to experience.

But what I am standing here today to say is: What I have realized over that journey—what I have realized over the past couple of years—is that I thought that in politics some people would be here to do the right things, and I found that it is actually the exact opposite.

I found that within this body people will lie to the American people about what is happening at our southern border, not because they want to help people, not because they actually care about these issues, but because they simply seek power. I think that we are seeing that today.

Only several years ago you could see some Members of the Democrat Party, some people like former-President Barack Obama say: Don't come here, you will get hurt in the process. Yet, the media seems to forget about that.

They say now that if you are a Republican, if you embrace border security, if you want to stand up for people that are being trafficked that you are a racist, that you are xenophobic, and they seek to label us. It is simply not true.

I have been down to the border three times, and I can tell you that on my last experience down there I went with a member of the Border Patrol Union, his name is Art Del Cueto. We went down to a portion of the border that was completely open. It was on an Indian reservation. What I saw and heard down there was alarming. It was alarming for several reasons, one mainly being that the media wasn't discussing it. But also, too, one of the most horrifying stories that I heard was actually from him saying that on just regular walkie-talkies that you could purchase at Walmart, you could pick up the radio frequency of some of the "coyotes" working with the cartels to actually scout out women that were crossing illegally and they would be brought up to the top of these mountains and raped. That was their right of passage they would say; they would joke about it.

That is something that we should all be talking about. We pride ourselves in this country—being that we are a free country, free of slavery. Yet, that is

happening every single day. We have the opportunity to fix it and we don't.

Why?

It is not because we can't fix it, we can.

It is because of partisan politics. That has to end. In 2021 alone, 147,000 unaccompanied minors were crossing along the U.S.-Mexico border. There is no question in my mind that these young people are absolutely exploited for entry and abuse of the asylum process that has been actively happening over the last couple of years, especially under this administration.

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women estimated that 60 percent of Latin-American children caught by cartels are actually exploited for child pornography or drug trafficking purposes.

If we, as a country, cannot come together and address the simple issue of trafficking, of modern-day slavery, of the exploitation of children—minority children at that—then are we any better than a Third World country or a place like China that engages in human rights abuses every single day?

I am tired of this. I am sitting here willing to work with Members across the aisle, but I don't see that olive branch because of the fact that I am a conservative Republican. That is wrong, and that is why I am standing here today.

I hope that we, as a country, can come together. That this administration can accept responsibility for the absolutely inappropriate abuse of the media saying that they want to legalize everyone, that is encouraging people to come here and people are hurt on both sides because of it.

Madam Speaker, if there are people willing to work with me, I hope to work with them. I hope to end this awful slavery that we are seeing every single day.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend. That is such an important issue and we can't talk about it enough. Thank you for drawing the Nation's attention to it tonight.

Madam Speaker, our final new Member that we wanted to introduce tonight comes from another big State, and that is California.

I want to tell you a little bit about Representative KEVIN KILEY. He serves the people of California's Third District in the House. He is from that district. He was born there. He attended the local public high school there. His mom was a special education teacher. I guess that inspired him because he began his career as a 10th grade English teacher at Manual Arts High School in inner city LA.

He chaired the English Department there. He led his students to significant academic gains and he founded an award-winning speech and debate team.

After graduating law school, he helped prosecute the civil case against China's Huawei Technologies for intellectual property theft. He defended the

Constitution in California courts—we have that in common. We did a lot of that work in the courts before we came to Congress. He became a prosecutor and he represented the people of the State of California against violent felons as a deputy attorney general.

He was first elected to the California State Assembly in 2016, and he did some significant work there in his tenure. He introduced significant school choice legislation. He authored groundbreaking new laws and protections for sexual assault victims, and privacy and criminal justice reform, and freedom of speech. In fact, in 2020, he was named the National Legislator of the Year for that work for advancing economic freedom.

I could go on about his bio, but I do want to mention this one little minor note. He has a bachelor's degree from Harvard, a law degree from Yale, and a master's in secondary education from Loyola Marymount. Clearly, he is overqualified to serve in the U.S. Congress, but we are glad he is here. I think he brings a lot to this body and will be an extraordinary Member.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY).

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that kind introduction. It is an honor to represent California's Third District.

Madam Speaker, I would like to raise an important issue regarding aid for my constituents harmed in the Caldor fire, which I had the chance to discuss with President Biden yesterday.

The Caldor fire tore through El Dorado, Alpine, and Amador Counties in August of 2021. The community of Grizzly Flats was leveled and 800 homes were destroyed. With 20,000 residents under mandatory evacuation orders, further devastation was only narrowly avoided.

Americans may remember the surreal images of ski slopes set aflame, smoke billowing from the foothills, and ash raining down on cities across the Sacramento Valley. Entire communities in the Lake Tahoe area had their survival hanging on a razor's edge and could well have been consumed by the flames if not for the heroics of our first responders.

By the time the blaze was extinguished, it ranked among the most destructive fires in California's recorded history.

I had the chance to walk through the hollowed out streets and roads of Grizzly Flats just days after the fire. To his credit, President Biden visited the following month as well. President Biden traveled to California in September of 2021 to survey the damage. After landing at Mather Airport, President Biden joined Governor Newsom, California Office of Emergency Service Director Mark Ghilarducci, and other State and Federal officials for an aerial tour of the smoldering remains of Grizzly Flats, and the surrounding area.

After landing, CAL OES Director Ghilarducci thanked President Biden

for the relief that had been provided to victims of the recent Dixie and River fires, and the relief that would soon be provided for victims of the Caldor fire.

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At that point, President Biden interjected. He said: "We are going to take care of them." "... there's a lot we can do, and it starts off being a Federal responsibility, in my view."

These are President Biden's words as he was present shortly after the fire: "We are going to take care of them." "... there's a lot we can do, and it starts off being a Federal responsibility, in my view."

Yet, well over 1 year later, President Biden has yet to fulfill that promise and provide individual assistance through FEMA to hundreds of people—hundreds of my constituents—who lost everything. In fact, FEMA has twice denied individual assistance, even though this same Federal aid was provided in similarly destructive wildfires such as the 2021 River fire.

Yesterday, I spoke with President Biden. I reminded him of his visit to Grizzly Flats and of the promise that he made. The President was receptive and seemed genuinely troubled that the residents of Grizzly Flats have not received relief. He said that he would get to the bottom of it, and I thank him for that.

The reality is that the President has the power with the stroke of a pen to grant this aid to the residents of Grizzly Flats. In fact, just a few years ago, President Trump did precisely that, providing individual assistance to victims of another California fire, the Creek fire. So I am calling on President Biden to keep his word and to give victims of the Caldor fire the relief that they deserve.

Now, while we must remember the debt that is owed to the community of Grizzly Flats, we also need to reflect on how we got here. The fact is that these catastrophic wildfires that ravage California year after year are not inevitable. They are a direct result of failed policies and of neglect, and Grizzly Flats is a perfect example.

The United States Forest Service actually had a fire mitigation plan that was announced in 2013 that would create a 15,000-acre fuel reduction buffer east and south of Grizzly Flats. Now, although that project began in 2014 and was scheduled to be completed by 2020 before the fire, it became mired in delays, and by the time of the fire in 2021, only 14 percent of the work had been done.

By the way, the Forest Service exaggerated this. They overstated the amount of work that had been done. They claimed that it was twice that, and it took an investigation by Capital Public Radio to reveal the truth.

Wildfire experts believe that if the project had been completed on schedule, it could well have saved Grizzly Flats.

A key architect of the mitigation project, former El Dorado National

Forest District Director Duane Nelson, said that if the project had been completed, then there would have been a high probability that Grizzly Flats would not have burned in the Caldor fire. He continued that it could have meant survival.

So even though the damage was caused in part by Federal negligence, we still have not gotten Federal aid. That is what makes this such a bitter pill to swallow for my constituents, that it was neglect on the part of the Federal Government that led to the fire, and then after the fire, the promises of the Federal Government for relief have gone unfulfilled.

More broadly, as we do everything we can to get assistance to the community of Grizzly Flats, we need to do everything we can to assure that other communities don't suffer the same fate. This means taking the simple and scientifically backed steps that we know reduce the risk of wildfires: actively and responsibly managing Federal forests, clearing underbrush and dead trees that serve as ladder fuels, conducting controlled burns, and selectively harvesting mature trees for logging to ensure healthy forest density.

Those are just the beginning of the steps that we can take to make sure that this doesn't keep happening again and again. I am calling on all of us to work together across the aisle to take the steps to do the work that needs to be done.

In the meantime, I am calling on the President to please, today, tomorrow, as soon as he possibly can, with the stroke of a pen make good on his promise and give the residents of Grizzly Flats the relief they deserve.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend. California's Third District is well-represented as everyone can see.

Madam Speaker, as is also obvious by the sample of new Members that we presented here tonight from New York, Florida, California, and Texas, this is an extraordinary class of Republican Members who have joined our conference here in the Congress. We look forward to serving with them. These will be fateful days for our country, and there is much hard work ahead in the 118th Congress.

Madam Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.