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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 9, 2023, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

ENCOURAGING COLLEAGUES TO JOIN BIPARTISAN CAUCUSES

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to join the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus, the Congressional Service Caucus, the German-American Caucus, and the Congressional Scouting Caucus.

As the proud co-chair of all four of these bipartisan caucuses, these organizations are a great way for members to get involved and share interests. As a senior member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, I have always supported and will continue to support career and technical education programs that provide learners of all ages with career-ready skills, restoring rungs on the ladder of opportunity.

Along with my co-chair, Congresswoman SUZANNE BONAMICI of Oregon, the bipartisan CTE Caucus highlights the importance of preparing a well-educated and skilled workforce.

Through this caucus, we have made tremendous strides in providing learn-

ers of all ages the skills necessary to obtain high-quality, family-sustaining jobs. One of those successes includes the passing and enactment of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education 21st Century Act.

Through these programs, we give individuals the ability to restore the rungs on the ladder of opportunity. CTE programs exist in every State and congressional district; therefore, I cordially invite you to join the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus. Together, we can improve America's competitiveness and help facilitate job opportunities for our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join the bipartisan Congressional Service Caucus, co-chaired by my colleague, Congressman JIM PANNETTA of California.

This caucus recognizes the many nonprofit service organizations across the country and their long history of promoting community service and humanitarian assistance.

These volunteer service organizations have extensive member clubs in towns across America and in nearly every country around the world, and notable examples include the distinguished organizations such as Kiwanis International, Lions Clubs International, Optimist International, and Rotary Clubs International.

The caucus will serve as a platform for educating Members, staff, and the public on policy issues relating to our service organizations. It will also share positive stories from clubs across the country in hopes of fostering the future viability and continued growth of local service clubs and the work of their volunteers.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join the bipartisan German-American Caucus. I co-chair the German-American caucus with my colleague, Congressman BILL KEATING of Massachusetts.

Today, there are more than 40 million Americans of German descent living in the United States, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania boasts one of the largest German populations in the country.

Our caucus seeks to bring together members dedicated to strengthening the German-American friendship and economic partnership, discuss joint priorities, and work through differences in opinion, as well as maintain the historical and cultural connection between our two nations.

The partnership between Germany and the United States is central to the transatlantic alliance and the US-EU relations. Through networking, supporting educational and exchange programs, and discussing recent updates and events around global foreign affairs, the caucus will focus on advancing the German-American partnership to better support security, safety, and prosperity within our own countries and on a global stage.

Madam Speaker, lastly, I encourage my colleagues to join the bipartisan Scouting Caucus. I co-chair this caucus alongside my colleague, Congressman SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR., from Georgia. The Congressional Scouting Caucus is a bipartisan group that aims to promote the values of scouting and support it in all forms at the highest levels of our government.

As a caucus, we will serve as an informal group of members dedicated to issues related to scouting and educating other members on this subject.

Scouting has been an important part of each of our lives and gives us the tools at an early age to develop personal and leadership skills that have helped make us successful.

As adults, we have been involved in promoting scouting and believe strongly in its ability to positively impact millions of American youths. I would encourage any member interested in supporting scouting of any kind to join the caucus.

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to consider joining these caucuses as we start the 118th Congress.

ACKNOWLEDGING STORM DAMAGE ACROSS ALABAMA'S SEVENTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the storm damage impacting Alabama's Seventh Congressional District following the devastating tornadoes that struck our State earlier this month.

On January 12, severe storms, including multiple tornadoes, tore through the Southeast, ravaging communities in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and destroying over 16,000 homes. In my district alone, 6,000 properties sustained damage, many to the point of irreversible repair.

Across Alabama's Black Belt, rural communities that were still recovering from financial ruin of COVID-19 were once again devastated.

Hale County, with less than 15,000 residents, lost over 92 homes with an estimated \$2 million worth of damage. Greene County and Sumter County, also in my district, sustained damage.

Just outside of my district, in Autauga County, seven precious lives were lost that day. In my beloved hometown of Selma, Alabama, an EF-3 tornado tore through the town center, leveling homes, businesses, churches, and community centers in the Queen City.

I spent much of last week in Selma, boots on the ground, to survey the damage and to assist with the recovery effort. I will never ever forget the scene as I entered Selma that evening. It was pitch black as I crossed the bridge; no lights, just street after street of complete devastation.

The following morning, I was joined by Governor Ivey, Senator BRITT, Selma Mayor James Perkins, and State and local officials to tour the wreckage. My heart broke to see the depth of destruction in the light; trees uprooted from the ground, homes destroyed, lives destroyed.

It is not lost on me that this devastation struck our community on MLK weekend. But despite the debris and the horrific scenes that we saw, I did see a vision of what Dr. King meant by a beloved community. I saw neighbors helping neighbor and community members lending a hand to take care of the place that we call home.

I am thankful that President Biden heard our cries and expedited a major disaster declaration for the State of Alabama. This designation will provide critical Federal resources.

I am endlessly grateful to our partners at FEMA who are on the ground right now helping my constituents. Today, the Alabama congressional delegation is sending a letter to President

Biden requesting an increase in disaster assistance to Alabama, increasing the Federal share to 100 percent of the total eligible costs. We need this. We need this desperately.

I also thank the many mayors and residents of surrounding communities who offered a helping hand. We are indeed resilient people in Alabama's Seventh Congressional District, and nothing about that will change. Out of this destruction, I know that we have a unique opportunity to reimagine Selma and surrounding areas and to build back better and stronger than before.

We will do all we can, working together at all levels of government to bring every resource at our disposal to those who have been affected.

This evening, at 6:30 Central Time, I will be hosting a live telephone town-hall about disaster assistance to answer questions, and for my constituents to hear directly from FEMA and the Alabama EMA on disaster assistance.

I am asking my colleagues to keep Alabama's Seventh Congressional District and all of Alabama that was affected in your thoughts and prayers as we recover and rebuild. But for the grace of God go all of us.

We do need to make sure that our Federal resources are adequate to help those who have been impacted by disasters. We are, indeed, Selma Strong.

COMBATING CRIME IN NATION'S CAPITAL

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

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, right here in our Nation's Capital, crime continues to soar at an alarming rate. Yet, the D.C. Council is determined to advance a severely misguided bill to reduce penalties for violent criminal offenses.

In fact, some of the very crimes that the D.C. Council included in their radical legislation are on the rise. For example, last year, robberies were up, vehicle theft increased by 8 percent, and carjackings skyrocketed by 14 percent. Yet, the D.C. Council is fighting to reduce—yes, reduce—penalties for these offenses. You just can't make this stuff up.

Now, to her credit, D.C. Mayor Bowser opposes this dangerous effort, correctly claiming: "This bill does not make us safer."

For once, I agree with Mayor Bowser because combating crime and protecting citizens is not a conservative issue, it is a commonsense issue; it is an American issue.

In the face of D.C.'s failed leadership, Congress must take immediate action to prevent this disastrous bill from emboldening criminals and threatening the safety of residents and visitors.

In the coming weeks, I will introduce a joint resolution of disapproval to stop this insanity in its tracks. I look

forward to leading this fight, and I urge all of my colleagues, Republican and Democrat, to join me so we can ensure that no American faces fear and violence in our Nation's Capital.

DEFENSE OF AMERICANS' SECOND AMENDMENT FREEDOMS

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in the defense of Americans' Second Amendment freedoms.

The Biden administration is moving forward with yet another gun-grabbing tactic in order to register and ban millions of firearms, moving one step closer to the left's ultimate goal of disarming our Nation and dismantling our Second Amendment freedoms.

Earlier this month, the ATF finalized an unconstitutional rule pertaining to firearms with stabilizing braces. Under the ATF's new rule, any pistol-braced firearm would be considered an illegal short-barreled rifle, making these guns subject to the draconian regulations under the National Firearms Act of 1934.

Let me be clear: Unelected, anti-gun bureaucrats at the ATF do not have the authority to make laws. That authority rests right here in Congress.

Congress cannot continue turning a blind eye to the Biden administration's weaponization of the National Firearms Act and ongoing assault on Americans' Second Amendment freedoms. The time to act is now, and I am proud to lead this fight.

Next week, I will re-introduce the Stop Harassing Owners of Rifles Today Act, or the SHORT Act, to repeal elements of the National Firearms Act, thereby prohibiting the ATF from registering and banning pistols with stabilizing braces.

Additionally, as soon as the ATF's unlawful rule is published to the Federal Register, I will introduce a Resolution of Disapproval under the Congressional Review Act to override the Biden administration's unlawful overreach.

I have always done my utmost in the defense of our constitutional right to keep and bear arms. It is now time, now that the House is under the Republican majority, to go on offense.

Madam Speaker, I want gun owners to hear me loud and clear: We are fighting for you and your Second Amendment freedoms, and we will never give up.

LAWLESSNESS AT THE SOUTHERN BORDER

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight the lawlessness happening at our southern border.

To no one's surprise, President Biden attempted to conceal the ongoing chaos, chaos created by his disastrous policies at the southern border, by releasing the latest CBP report on a Friday night news dump. But these tactics can't hide the truth.

Last month, over a quarter of a million, over 251,000 illegal aliens were apprehended at the southern border, making December the highest monthly total on record.

More than a quarter of a million in a single month. If that doesn't pressure