

“The mental health problems facing our country are the problems of all citizens.”

After leaving the White House, she founded the mental health policy initiative and mental health journalism fellowship at the Carter Center.

Alongside Betty Ford, she advocated for the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, which ensures that reimbursements for mental health are the same as for physical health; mental or physical health, no distinction. Patrick Kennedy in our House was such an important leader on this.

The same boundless compassion also fueled the First Lady’s fervent commitment to our Nation’s caregivers. She has devoted herself to bringing support and attention to tens of millions of families and professional caregivers across the country.

For 36 years, the Georgia Southwestern State University Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving has advocated for policies to support their work. She even wrote a handbook for caregivers: “Helping Yourself Help Others.”

At the same time, First Lady Carter has lent her voice to so many causes: From childhood immunization, especially among vulnerable communities, to gender justice, as she fought to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

Beloved at home, First Lady Carter was also deeply respected abroad. All are in awe of her historic visit to Latin America in 1977, where she championed human rights, democracy, and a new chapter of engagement in the region.

With her characteristic grace and grit, she embraced this high-stakes diplomatic mission: Meeting with heads of state and speaking with authority as an emissary for our Nation.

With her characteristic grace and grit, again, 2 years later, Rosalynn Carter made history as the first sitting First Lady to address the World Health Organization, when she shared her mental health findings. In her memorable remarks, she argued that mental health was an aspect of physical health, and that healthcare is a human right.

Since, through the Carter Center, she has helped strengthen mental health care in Liberia: Caring for people exposed to the stress of conflict, while training community workers to identify signs of mental illness.

Personally, it was my special privilege 2 years ago to travel to Plains to join in celebrating the Carter’s 75th wedding anniversary, a marvelous celebration of their eternal love and limitless partnership.

Rosalynn has long been Jimmy’s closest friend and confidant, and the Carter Center will forever stand as a testament to the true partnership in service that the Carters share.

God has truly blessed America with the leadership of the Carters, and our grateful Nation salutes them for their lives well-lived.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF MARGARET THATCHER

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

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the contributions to western civilization by the Iron Lady of the U.K., Margaret Thatcher.

In an era characterized by rapid social and economic change, America finds itself at a crossroads. The principles that once made our Nation a beacon of freedom and prosperity are under attack on multiple fronts.

In the midst of these consequential times, our attention should turn to one of history’s most influential leaders, Great Britain’s Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Her unwavering commitment to fiscally responsible principles and resolute leadership skills provide invaluable lessons for an America pushing back against a growing tide of socialism.

Margaret Thatcher understood that the engine of a thriving economy lies in the power of free markets. Her resolute vision of limiting the size and scope of government, disassembling monopolies, and lowering taxes revitalized the British economy.

Similarly, America needs a decisive leader, steadfast and determined to thwart the death spiral of out-of-control spending and woke cultural influences that have migrated from academia to boardrooms, and now into public policy.

While President Ronald Reagan’s policies helped subdue the threat of communism abroad, different qualities are needed to decapitate the snake emerging from within our current culture. Prime Minister Thatcher inherited a kingdom in decay, struggling with much of what ails America today. From her lonely perch at number 10 Downing Street, through what seemed to be sheer will and determination, from the ash heap of history, a United Kingdom rose on her shoulders.

Thatcher’s unapologetic patriotism and emphasis on national sovereignty resonated with people from all walks of life all over the world. In an era of globalization, America must safeguard its financial interests, values, and identity. A leader cut from the same cloth as Margaret Thatcher would prioritize secure borders, promote American jobs, and ensure that our national interests are not compromised by supranational organizations.

By reaffirming our commitment to sovereignty, we can forge a future where America’s interests are always at the forefront of our decisionmaking process.

Prime Minister Thatcher’s vision of a free society extended beyond economics. She was a staunch defender of individual liberty, recognizing that government should serve as a protector, not as a nanny state. She understood the immorality of socialism. She trusted individuals to make their own choices, championed personal responsibility, and promoted self-reliance.

America needs a leader who upholds these timeless virtues, resists the encroachment of woke ideologies, and recognizes the pitfalls of out-of-control spending that bloats the bureaucracy that seems to dictate every aspect of our lives.

As socialism gains traction in America’s political discourse, it is crucial to remember the destructive consequences of such policies in the past. Thatcher recognized the pitfalls of collectivism, firmly rejecting the notion of big government’s corrosive effect on individual liberty and economic growth.

She recognized the critical aspect that socialism is not only economically inefficient, but is immoral. By advocating for free-market principles and resisting the deceptive allure of socialism, America can maintain its foundation as the land of opportunity and avoid the pitfalls that led to the demise of other republics such as the Greek and Roman Empires.

Margaret Thatcher’s leadership provides an inspiring template for America to follow. Her legacy reminds us that the preservation of individual freedom and fiduciary trust are paramount for the survival of prosperous economies.

As our challenges mount, we need a leader who embraces the principles of economic freedom, national sovereignty, individual liberty, and personal responsibility. Thatcher’s unwavering resolve, steadfast values, and commitment to commonsense policies serve as a powerful reminder of the transformative impact a leader can make.

America needs a bold leader whose focus is riveted on reviving our Nation’s spirit, restoring our economy, and defending the principles that have made us exceptional. Adhering to Maggie Thatcher’s legacy will guide us toward a brighter future that ensures America remains a shining example of freedom, prosperity, and opportunity for generations to come.

UNENDING EPIDEMIC OF MASS SHOOTINGS

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

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, last week, we celebrated our Nation’s birthday, a day that conjures up images of flags and fireworks, family barbecues and patriotic parades.

But in my district, the dominant image on July 4 was a mint green child’s bicycle. That little green bike lay untouched in the street in the Kingessing neighborhood for days after it was abandoned by its innocent owner when a man wearing combat gear and a mask stalked his neighbors, shooting randomly, killing five and injuring four others. One of the victims was 13. Another was on his dinner break from work. Two-year old twins

and their mother were injured when their family car came under fire.

My district was not the only one that was the scene of such horrors during the holiday week. There were mass shootings in Baltimore, Fort Worth, and Wichita.

From sea to shining sea, on a day when we should have been celebrating the greatness of our Nation and the blessings of liberty, we saw senseless, needless death and destruction.

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With the memory of the Highland Park shooting last July Fourth reinforced by more recent shootings, people across the country decided to skip parades and public celebrations because they were afraid of being shot.

Today is the 175th day of 2023, and so far this year, there have been over 370 mass shootings.

The bloodshed is daily. American families are scared and traumatized.

Americans are tired of living in fear at the grocery store, church, school, community celebrations, and parades. It does not have to be like this.

There are commonsense laws that can stem the bloodshed of gun violence, and House Democrats are committed to passing them.

On June 13, House Democrats introduced three discharge petitions that would ban assault weapons like the one used by the Kingsessing shooter last week; require universal background checks, which have been proven to prevent shooters from obtaining weapons; and close the Charleston loophole.

Those bills should get a vote, and Members of this House should be willing to put on the record where they stand.

We have other bills that would ban ghost guns, which the shooter also carried, and implement red flag laws, which have been proven to save lives by preventing suicides and allowing law enforcement to remove weapons from troubled individuals—again, like the Kingsessing shooter—before they kill someone.

These are bills that we know have the power to save lives, and they are popular, too.

Republicans in Congress just need the courage, the guts, to act. Anyone without the guts to act allows this unending epidemic of mass shootings to continue.

Americans do not and should not have to live like this. We don't need more neighborhoods with devastated families, abandoned children's bicycles, and people afraid to leave their homes.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue fighting to protect your families and mine, and I urge every Member of this body to join me.

RESTORING NATION'S SAFETY AND SECURITY

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, one of the key tenets of House Republicans' Commitment to America was restoring our Nation's safety and security. That means passing a strong and fiscally responsible National Defense Authorization Act, otherwise known as the NDAA, which is our country's primary legislation authorizing spending levels and providing substantive policy directives for the United States Armed Forces and the Department of Defense.

Thankfully, that is exactly what House Republicans will be doing this week when we consider and pass the fiscal year 2024 NDAA. The NDAA for the coming year being considered by the House this week includes many priorities and provisions that middle Tennesseans can be proud to support.

For starters, it ends the radical woke ideologies being forced on our servicemembers by prohibiting funding for teaching critical race theory. It repeals the authorization for the Department of Defense's unnecessary chief diversity officer and eliminates funding for drag shows and similar events.

Along with these commonsense measures that passed the House Armed Services Committee by a 48-1 vote, the National Defense Authorization Act gives our military the tools they need to counter the Chinese Communist Party's aggression, increases oversight of the Biden administration after their disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, and saves taxpayers \$40 billion by cutting inefficient defense programs, obsolete weapons systems, and unnecessary Pentagon bureaucracy.

All in all, I believe this bill contains good provisions that return our military's focus back on readiness and the defense of our Nation, not wokeness and progressive posturing.

LET'S GET SERIOUS ABOUT SPENDING LEVELS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I couldn't disagree more with my distinguished colleague who just spoke.

Even with 1,500 proposed amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act, it remains a disgrace. The majority talks big about cutting money, but they fail on some of the most fundamental opportunities.

They reject commonsense solutions and have failed to support meaningful cost-saving reforms. They have held the global economy hostage over spending levels, but I hope they will take advantage yet to make some adjustments, including my amendment with Representatives MCGOVERN and GARAMENDI to end the wasteful funding of the outdated, ineffective B83-1 bomber that the 2022 defense posture laid out. It was unnecessary and wasteful.

If they wanted to get serious about addressing spending levels, we should

stop wasting taxpayer dollars on weapons that don't work, on ships the Navy doesn't want, and nuclear weapons that are outdated and increasingly costly to maintain.

Adding even more money to an all-time record defense spending regime does nothing to improve American security or strengthen our allies, including the valiant Ukrainians in a fight for their very survival.

At a time of renewed security threats to the United States, a war raging in Ukraine, tensions in Asia and the Pacific, so much controversy over government spending, this legislation falls so painfully short of the mark.

It is funding battleships that don't work after spending billions to develop the Freedom-class littoral combat ships that marked their initial run with engine failures. The Navy doesn't want them. Retiring them would save \$4.3 billion over the next 5 years, but Republicans continue to protect it to have jobs in Florida.

This bill leaves unfinished business in the work of protecting our troops, their families, and their neighborhoods from military toxins and explosives. Congress has long failed to make UXO and toxin cleanup a priority, and our servicemen and civilians continue to pay the price.

The United States is the largest energy consumer in the world. We should be focusing on ways to make them even more energy efficient.

The Department of Defense has appropriately been a leader in clean energy, water protection, and disaster preparation. These are not arts and crafts projects. It is all about readiness. Improving efficiency and energy resilience makes our troops safer and saves critical money.

The newly empowered Republican majority has decided to throw money at mismanaged priorities in terms of taking the culture wars to the Department of Defense, stripping away protections and programs that deal with the diversity of our military.

Social issues are defense issues, and the continued onslaught of restrictions against people of color, those who are LGBTQ, or those whose healthcare is under attack causes America to lose potential servicemembers we need most.

We are not meeting our recruitment objectives now, and taking the culture wars against the Department of Defense, fighting against diversity, makes us less ready.

Recruitment and retention are serious challenges plaguing our military, and the Republican attacks on those they don't like make us more vulnerable. These are honorable people, and the military needs them.

The good news is that most of the sideshow we will be dealing with today and into the night will never be enacted into law, but making these attacks and forcing these votes on readiness is not harmless. Even though they are ineffective does not mean that damage is not being done.