

programs are well funded so that the United States has the resources it needs to lead the world in ending global hunger.

#### CARING FOR OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in President Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, he called on our Nation to care for those "who shall have borne the battle."

As we debate legislation this week to support our Nation's 16.5 million veterans, we must remember that charge that was given to us by President Lincoln to care for those who have given so much of themselves, of their time, in order to keep our Nation free and our Nation safe.

It is essential that we honor our commitment to those men and women and fully fund veterans benefits and VA programs. We owe an incredible debt of gratitude to those who have worn a uniform in service of the United States.

From inpatient hospitalizations to outpatient primary care and addiction services, our veterans hospitals provide the essential services that our veterans can rely on.

While working as a doctor, I was proud to treat veterans at the James E. Van Zandt Veterans' Administration Medical Center in Blair County, Pennsylvania. These men and women have served in conflicts including World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Having the opportunity to provide care to these veterans is one of the proudest moments of my medical career.

Moving forward, we must ensure that our veterans hospitals are equipped with the latest tools, technologies, and treatments to ensure that our veterans are receiving the highest and utmost care.

#### UNBEARABLE CONDITIONS FOR FARMERS

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this summer, farmers across Pennsylvania will grow produce, milk dairy cows, till their fields, and tend to their orchards that help to feed our entire Nation.

Recently, I spent time at Richards Farm in Fulton County, Pennsylvania, and met with the owner, Ryan Richards, to talk about the challenges that are faced by dairy producers who work to provide the nutritional products that Pennsylvanians and all Americans rely on.

Sadly, the failed policies of the Biden administration have made conditions unbearable for family farmers. It is time to stop the handouts to liberal special interests and reinvest in the policies and programs that enable our American farmers to succeed. It is time to rescind the \$1 billion allocated for Green New Deal programs in President Biden's so-called Inflation Reduction

Act. It is time to put an end to runaway spending and finally support our great American farmers.

#### DEADLINE FOR BACKDATED HONORING OUR PACT ACT BENEFITS

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, almost exactly a year ago, on August 10, 2022, President Joe Biden signed into law the Honoring our PACT Act, which has been correctly described as the largest healthcare and benefits expansion in the history of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

This was the result of a 5-year effort by veterans service organizations, from The American Legion to the Iraq and Afghan Veterans of America, and many others, to bring external pressure on Congress to pass a measure which will knock down barriers so that people who are suffering the ill effects of toxic exposure will actually have the care they earned by wearing the uniform of this country and serving in some of the most difficult parts of the world.

After that measure was signed and had to overcome a last-minute filibuster by Senate Republicans, which resulted in a 5-day sleep-in on the steps of the Capitol when they finally relented and allowed a bipartisan vote to move forward and the bill to the President's desk, there was a lot of concern as to whether or not the VA would actually move quickly to enact and implement these measures.

A year into the law, I am happy to report that over 300,000 PACT Act claims have been approved; over 100,000 new veterans have been enrolled in VA healthcare from the PACT Act planning population; and over 4 million toxic exposure screenings have been provided.

The toxic exposure screening is a quick 10- to 15-minute review to find people who may be eligible for PACT Act benefits. It is open to all veterans, if anyone is listening, not just veterans who are enrolled in the VA. All veterans are entitled to have a toxic exposure screening.

The questions asked are whether or not you were exposed to open burn pits in the Middle East, Gulf war-related exposures, Agent Orange during the Vietnam war, radiation, contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, or other exposures.

In my district, the Second Congressional District, over 1,000 veterans have filed PACT Act claims, and many have been successful in terms of getting their claims approved.

One gentleman who served during the Vietnam war was in Thailand and had Agent Orange illnesses, but because the law prior to the Honoring our PACT Act only covered people who were actually in-country in Vietnam, he was denied coverage. He was successful in getting a 100 percent disability approved.

Another gentleman who served in Guam, another new country that was added to the law because of the Honoring our PACT Act, was also able to get a 100 percent disability with a backpay award.

This is real. It is happening in real time. Ten days ago, we held a PACT Act claims clinic where staff from the local veterans department showed up to screen and also present claims. It was supposed to be only 3 hours. It went way over time. Two hundred veterans were screened, and 75 claims were submitted right there on the spot.

I will end, Mr. Speaker, by saying people should be aware of the fact that, on August 9, which is just days away, if someone files an intent for a claim or a claim, you are going to be entitled to a backpay award to the date that President Biden signed this measure into law. Any claims filed after August 9 will not be entitled to that backpay award.

Claims will still be open and can be approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs, but in terms of getting that backpay award from the date of enactment, it is critical that people file either an intent to file a claim or a claim itself to be eligible for those benefits.

If people have questions, they can go to VA.gov/PACT to answer any of those questions.

This was a great effort that was the result of a grassroots push by veterans all across our country. We must make sure that every single veteran gets the benefits that the law opened the door to.

#### FUNDING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, this week, House Republicans will introduce H.R. 4366, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024, to fully fund our Department of Veterans Affairs.

As a 24-year Army veteran and chairwoman of the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, I understand how crucial it is to have a fully funded VA Department. These appropriations bills will ensure that the VA has the resources needed to continue their vital operations.

Current armed services members will also see a more than \$17 billion investment that will go entirely toward improving the quality of life in their barracks and family housing.

These commonsense policies will help improve the VA and the military as a whole, and I urge all of my colleagues to support them.

#### LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, Iowans are experiencing one of the hottest summers in history. In weather

like this, ensuring your home stays cool and comfortable is top of mind for many, but it is also lifesaving.

Unfortunately for us, the Biden administration is telling Americans that their thermostats should be at 78 degrees when they are home during the day and even higher when sleeping. How can anyone be comfortable in their home with the thermostat set so high?

That is why I, along with my good friend Senator ERNST, introduced the Lead by Example Act. This bill would require the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency office buildings to be set to the Department of Energy's recommendation of at least 78 degrees, to set their thermostat where they are recommending it be set for you.

Currently, with so many DOE officials working from home, taxpayers are paying to cool empty office buildings. Once again, do as I say, not as I do.

It is outrageous that Biden's executive agencies are the exception to the rule, yet the Department of Energy is urging hardworking Americans to change their lifestyles without any consideration for varying climates or health concerns. That is why I am proud to join Senator ERNST on the Lead by Example Act, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support it.

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HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF FORMER  
HAWKEYE FOOTBALL PLAYER CODY INCE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of former Hawkeye football player Cody Ince, who passed away unexpectedly at the age of 23.

Before Cody became a Hawkeye, he grew up in Wisconsin playing football and he graduated from Unity High School in Balsam Lake. In 2018, Cody came to Iowa City to be an offensive lineman for Hawkeye football and helped the team earn a winning record all three seasons he played.

Cody also received the All-Big Ten honorable mention in 2020, an honor given to standout players for their accomplishments on the field. After graduating in 2022, Cody moved back to Wisconsin and got engaged to his fiancée, Olivia, where they were preparing to start their life together before his sudden passing.

My prayers go out to Olivia and his parents Tammy and Marty. I cannot imagine the pain of losing a child. I will continue to pray for their family in this time of mourning.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ANNELISE BELL

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I will take a moment to congratulate Annelise Bell, a student at Pella Christian High School on her recent Team USA placement at the world championships. She placed second among the Female Solo Junior 1 Division at the International Dance Organization's World Acrobatic Dance Championships in Mexico this past week.

The International Dance Organization is a nonprofit dance federation with over 90 member nations representing dancers from all continents. Annelise is such a talented young lady. I thank her for representing the United States and Iowa well.

Mr. Speaker, I wish a happy anniversary to my district representative John Kaufmann and his wife Rachel on their second wedding anniversary on July 31. Happy anniversary, John and Rachel.

Happy 40th wedding anniversary to my very good friends Kurt and Kathy Haller on August 13.

Happy 44th wedding anniversary to Mary and Kirk Ferentz this August.

I especially wish a very happy 40th anniversary on September 4 to my husband, Curt. Happy anniversary, honey.

CODEL TO BRAZIL, COLOMBIA,  
AND PANAMA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I recently had the chance to travel with a bipartisan group of Members of the House of Representatives to Brazil, Colombia, and Panama.

During our trip, we discussed important issues like immigration, counterterrorism, trade, and national security.

In Brazil, I learned about the increasing presence of the Chinese Communist Party from local law enforcement officials.

In Colombia, we discussed efforts to combat illegal drug trafficking. We met with leading officials on the longstanding, bilateral relationship between the United States and Colombia.

In Panama, I saw firsthand the challenging conditions faced by migrants attempting to travel to the United States and live their American Dream here. I have empathy for the people I met, and this experience reinforced the importance of addressing immigration with compassion and respect.

Mr. Speaker, the United States is a shining beacon of democracy, and I am not surprised that people from all over the world want to come here. We need to ensure that our borders are secure, that the American people are safe, and migrants are treated with dignity and fairness.

This was an eye-opening experience that affirmed the need for strong, smart, and strategic policies that advance our national interests, our values abroad, and protect our homeland and democracy.

We also must diligently combat the Chinese Communist Party's increasing presence in the region.

I will continue to closely monitor developments in this area and work toward a pragmatic approach to foreign policy that puts America's security first.

Finally, we must take up and pass comprehensive immigration reform. I am eternally optimistic that we can get something done in this Congress.

At the end of the day, addressing the situation at the border and taking up comprehensive immigration reform should not be a Democrat or Republican issue. The American people deserve more than politics as usual, and the time for action is now.

Let's work together, not as Democrats or Republicans, but as Americans to secure our border and advance comprehensive immigration reform.

MIFEPRISTONE IS A DEADLY  
DRUG

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, as a Christian, a father, and conservative Member of Congress, I make no secret about it. I am absolutely 100 percent, unapologetically pro-life. I believe life begins at conception, and I believe that we must do everything we can to protect the innocent children living in their mother's wombs who are unable to protect themselves.

This week, House Republicans and the House will be considering H.R. 4368, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill for fiscal year 2024. This bill not only funds many valuable programs on which our farmers and families rely to get food and fiber to our tables, but it also funds the Food and Drug Administration which plays a vital role in the food and drug safety of our country.

Recently, under President Joe Biden, the Food and Drug Administration, or FDA, has done the unthinkable: It has approved and expanded the use of mifepristone—a drug that induces a chemical abortion—for delivery by mail.

This is wrong on so many levels. For starters, let me be clear: this is a deadly drug not only for the baby in the womb, but it can also be deadly for the expectant mother taking it.

According to a scholarly article in "Issues in Law and Medicine" titled: "Deaths and Severe Adverse Events after the use of Mifepristone as an Abortifacient from September 2000 to February 2019," out of 2,660 codable adverse reactions, 20 resulted in deaths, 529 were life-threatening to the mother, and 1,957 were severe adverse reactions.

Given the potentially deadly side effects, what possible justification does the FDA have to approve such a dangerous drug for distribution through the mail, allowing patients to self-administer it without close medical supervision given the potentially dangerous side effects?

Giving a political payback to the abortion industrial complex is not a justification. In fact, there is no justification whatsoever, in my view. Regardless of where you stand on the debate about abortion, this is truly abhorrent.

I don't believe anyone in their right mind would say that this drug is safe