

In 1987, Gloria ran for the Los Angeles City Council seat that had been redistricted, becoming the first woman councilmember of Mexican ancestry to serve on the Los Angeles City Council.

In 1991, she was elected and became the first Latina member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. She was known as a fiscal watchdog committed to governance reforms, protecting public healthcare, and fighting for quality-of-life issues for millions of residents.

Throughout more than 30 years as an elected official, Gloria changed the landscape of Los Angeles, putting an end to a 100-year pattern of dumping negative land-use developments on the east side of Los Angeles. Her work in East LA resulted in the Los Angeles Metro Board of Directors naming a train station in her honor.

Gloria worked with Mothers of East Los Angeles, a group that organized against and successfully defeated the proposal to build a prison in East Los Angeles.

Gloria valued the power of storytelling through art. She founded the historical LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes and the Eastside Arts Initiative, which provides financial support to community-based organizations.

□ 1015

Thanks to her love of quilting, Gloria founded the quilting group the East L.A. Stitchers, so that others could express themselves through this art form.

Gloria successfully advocated for increased access to parks and green spaces, as well as culturally engaging recreational areas. The motion to rename Grand Park to the Gloria Molina Grand Park was approved and will allow Gloria's legacy and impact to live on in projects that she fought so hard to create.

On top of green and recreational spaces, Gloria constantly fought for the improvement of women's rights and representation. She would regularly fight against the construction of projects that would disrupt predominantly Chicano and Mexican neighborhoods.

On top of her work in politics in the mid-2000s, she would drive around through Skid Row in her free time looking for children living in unsafe conditions so that she could call the Department of Family and Children Services to find them a home.

She led a program that was later named the Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program, with the sole purpose of being able to increase the high school graduation rates of students in foster care systems.

As its leader, she and the program did just that and elevated graduation rates from the national average of 58 percent to an amazing 80 percent. One of her final statements as she retired was that she only regretted not being able to raise the average even more.

Gloria stood as a constant beacon of hard work, perseverance, and

strength—a role model to Latinas looking to succeed in politics, and a role model to everyone.

Gloria taught us all to fight for those without a voice and to let our passion drive our success. Her impact will be felt for generations to come.

Gloria is survived by her daughter, Valentina; son-in-law, Brendan; grandchildren, Santiago and Ximena; nine siblings; nieces; nephews; Ron Martinez; and many die-hard Molinistas.

#### FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR COUNTRY'S VETERANS

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, House Republicans are fulfilling our commitment to our country's veterans by fully funding veterans' healthcare programs, veterans' benefits, and Veterans Affairs programs in the fiscal year 2024 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Not only are we fulfilling our promise to those veterans who have served our country, but we are taking our efforts up a notch to go above and beyond what the VA is already doing by increasing funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical and Prosthetic Research Program.

I am a proud supporter of this program, and I requested that the Appropriations Committee fully fund this program to the level included in the bill, which is \$938 million. That is a \$22 million or 2.5 percent increase as compared to fiscal year 2023 and is in line with the President's budgetary request.

The VA's Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service is the largest and most comprehensive provider of prosthetic devices and sensory aids in the world. This funding will go a long way in making sure the VA has the necessary funds to research ways to restore veterans' abilities to function within their families, communities, and workplaces.

This increased funding will also help the researchers within the VA research program recover from slowed research because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sustained and predictable funding growth for VA research is imperative to help ensure the best return on spending to improve the health of veterans and all Americans.

Although the VA's Medical and Prosthetic Research Program is specifically dedicated to improving the health and well-being of those who have served the United States in uniformed services, it has had a tremendous impact on the care of all Americans.

The research conducted within this program has led the way in many different healthcare fields, including the treatment of digestive diseases. There is no better way to utilize our tax dollars than by contributing to a cause that will help restore veterans' functionality and also lead to advancements in medical care for all Americans.

Additionally, the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, which has direct ties to my district and constituents, has a proud, longstanding, and multifaceted partnership with the Veterans Administration in Nashville and the mid-South across clinical care, medical training, and research activities. They are proud to join me in supporting increased funding for this medical research program within the VA healthcare system.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that medical research at the VA not only helps those that have put it all on the line in service to this country—some sacrificing pieces of their body that they will never get back—it helps all Americans, as I have already mentioned. This is a great use of taxpayer funds, and I couldn't be prouder to support this initiative to fund this program at the level I have already mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members on both sides of the aisle to support this provision in the fiscal year 2024 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

#### STORIES OF SERVICEMEMBERS

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

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I stand here to recognize some of Virginia's many proud veterans and military families. One of my most powerful memories of my late grandfather was when I took him to the World War II Memorial and had the opportunity to stand with him on the side marked Pacific and hear some of his stories from his time in service. These are stories that he, throughout my childhood, never shared, but at that memorial chose to share with me.

As a Representative for Virginia's Seventh District and as a Representative of many military families and veterans, I ensure that I am giving a voice and putting into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD some of the extraordinary stories of service that we have throughout our district.

Earlier this year, I reached out to Virginians across the Seventh District asking them to share stories of service to recognize their loved ones who answered the call or share their own experiences. I heard from people across the Seventh District, and I was proud to share some of those stories in May during Military Appreciation Month, and I will continue to do so into the future.

Kenneth J. Schmidt from Prince William County shared the long record of service in his family, writing "My family is a proud military one. Our father served during World War I. Seven brothers-in-law, two cousins, and my oldest brother served during World War II. My other brother and I served during the Korean war. Army, Navy, Air Force, we were there."

I thank Mr. Schmidt for his family's sacrifices on behalf of our country.

We received a story from James Willess who lives in Fredericksburg. Mr. Willess wrote, "My father, Homer Leroy Willess, served in the U.S. Navy from July 1937 to September 1945, mostly in the Pacific theater. Four of his brothers also served in the Navy, and his eldest sister served as an Army nurse during World War II. Three of his younger brothers served in the Navy during the Korean war, and their youngest sister served as a Navy nurse during the Vietnam war. I am extremely proud of my father and siblings for serving their country in uniform during three major wars."

Neil Hornung from Spotsylvania, a veteran himself, shared with us, "I served in the Marine Corps from 1982 until 2008. Served in Operation Desert Storm, Operation Desert Shield, and Operation Uphold Democracy. My last tour was as the Marine Corps lead for critical infrastructure."

I thank Mr. Hornung for his service.

Mr. Hornung wanted to recognize a member of his family who followed in his footsteps. He wrote, "My oldest son is First Lieutenant Brandon Hornung, United States Marine Corps, currently stationed on Okinawa."

I thank Brandon for his service. Please stay safe.

Paul from Spotsylvania shared his father's story of service in the United States Marine Corps. He wrote, "My dad, Ed Czartosieski, was at the Battle of Chosin Reservoir in Korea as a marine pilot flying Corsair aircraft. He flew out of Hagaru and was surrounded by Chinese forces. He assisted in saving many lives with the 'advance to the rear' as the Marine Corps. He retired as a test pilot for Grumman Aerospace on Long Island. Dad is doing well in Greenport, New York, and soon to be age 100." Paul wrote, "I hope to get to the United States Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, Virginia."

Harry Dolph from Stafford sent us the story of his mother, a patriot who stepped into service on behalf of our country when it needed her the most. Mr. Dolph wrote, "My mother, Caroline Alva Bush, was one of the first dozen women to enlist in the U.S. Navy during World War I, and served in personnel in Washington, D.C."

George Wratney from Orange County shared a story highlighting the sacrifices and contributions of military families.

Mr. Wratney shared with us, "I was a Marine in Vietnam from April 1968 to May 1969, but this is about my bride of 22 months when I left home, and the thousands of military brides like her, who had no one 'in their boat' back home to share stories, fears, anxieties. No email then. No social media. Only prayers. We owe them, all of them, much gratitude as they stood by."

I thank Mr. Wratney for his service and recognizing the service and the sacrifice of military families like his bride.

Veterans, servicemembers, and Virginia's proud military family members are our neighbors, friends, and community members—their stories are woven into the fabric of our Nation and certainly Virginia's Seventh District. We owe them a debt of gratitude, and we must thank every American who answered the call and every American that will do so in the future.

We are undoubtedly freer thanks to the service and sacrifice of Virginians that answered the call.

#### DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

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

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the direction of our country. In America right now, we are facing a lot of problems. House Republicans have done our part to pass commonsense solutions, but we still have a lot of work to do to get this country back on track.

In January, I released my commitment to the Big First, which is a legislative roadmap to create an economy that is strong, a Nation that is safe, a future that is built on freedom, and a government that is accountable.

Most of the glaring problems in America today fall into one of these four categories, and the reality is that House Republicans have commonsense solutions to all of them, but the Biden administration is refusing to listen.

We need to create an economy that is strong. Washington has a spending addiction. America is \$32 trillion in debt, and the Federal Government is deficit spending to the tune of \$1 trillion every year. The Biden administration has canceled the Keystone XL pipeline and pushed Green New Deal regulations on small businesses, while attempting at the same time to do away with stepped-up basis and impose a new farm killer capital gains tax on agriculture producers.

Here is the commonsense solution: When you stop the wasteful spending, you don't have to tax people to death. When President Biden took office, inflation was at just 1.4 percent. Inflation hit 6.4 percent in 2022. That is a tax on all Americans.

In the House of Representatives, we passed the Lower Energy Costs Act and the REIN IN Inflation Act to unleash American energy production and revitalize our economy, but the White House still isn't listening. America's position in the global marketplace is degrading, the value of the dollar has been plummeting for a year, and it is time to get our economy back on track before it is too late.

We also need to create a Nation that is safe. Violent crime is on the rise, the suicide rate is climbing, drug addiction and mental illness are spiking, and many parts of our country are basically in chaos. Meanwhile, we are still hearing calls from Washington Democrats to defund the police, and the

Biden administration refuses to address the humanitarian crisis at our southern border where fentanyl, criminals, and victims of human trafficking come across every day, unfortunately, into our country.

Here is the commonsense solution: House Republicans passed legislation to secure the border, finish the wall, criminalize all forms of illicit fentanyl, and support the training and hiring of more State and local law enforcement officers. Today, we don't live in a Nation that is safe, but House Republicans have already passed bills that would stop the chaos and usher in safety and order.

We also need to create a future that is built on freedom. Each year I host at least one townhall in every one of the 60 counties in the Big First District. As I travel across the State and meet with Kansans, I listen to their concerns about Big Government, sweeping executive order, and infringement on basic rights, like the Second Amendment and the right to life.

House Republicans are standing for freedom in the face of Big Government overreach. We passed the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act that would defend the lives of innocent children following a botched abortion attempt.

We also passed the Parents Bill of Rights that states that parents have the right to know what their children are being taught. These are no-brainers. It is sad that we even need to pass bills like this because the rights to life and freedom are supposed to be foundational to America in the first place.

On the American farm we also see freedom under attack. The Biden administration vetoed legislation that would have revoked President Biden's Waters of the U.S. rule because his administration prefers to regulate every puddle and drainage ditch from sea to shining sea.

□ 1030

On top of that, the Biden administration hamstringed producers by adding the lesser prairie-chicken to the endangered species list, and I am looking forward to my colleagues' and my voting to disapprove of that rule.

Our message is this: Whether you are a parent, a child—born or unborn—a student, a farmer, or a small business owner, you don't need the Federal Government trying to control your life.

Finally, we need to create a government that is accountable. According to recent IRS whistleblower testimony made public by the Ways and Means Committee, it appears that President Biden was not only aware of his son, Hunter Biden's, corrupt foreign business deals, but was also in the room for them. We need to conduct rigorous oversight to root out corruption in the executive branch. We also need to hold the Federal Government accountable and rein in the White House's abuse of power.