

Forty-one percent of Arkansans live in rural counties, and of those, only 60 percent have access to standard broadband internet. Many of these individuals have long and often hazardous commutes to work. Along many of the beautiful back roads of my district, cell service is oftentimes nonexistent or spotty at best.

I was glad to cosponsor, along with my friend Representative JOSH GOTTHEIMER, bipartisan legislation, the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act of 2023, that will require all new motor vehicles to have access to AM radio in an attempt to put the safety of Americans first.

This access has and will continue to save lives during emergencies, improve lives during travel, and support hard-working Americans all over the Nation.

REMEMBERING MARY MAE FISHER

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Mrs. Mary Mae Fisher, who passed away on Saturday.

Mary was an active member of the Dardanelle Rotary Club and Dardanelle Chamber of Commerce, and she was a dedicated community leader in both Dardanelle and Danville, Arkansas.

For over 50 years, Mary was the editor and publisher of the Yell County RECORD and the Dardanelle Post Dispatch. Mary had a heart for community service, and her mark on the Fourth District will not be soon forgotten.

My prayers go out to her husband, David Fisher, and all Arkansans mourning this loss.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MARK LOWERY

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I now invite two of my colleagues from Arkansas, Mr. CRAWFORD and Mr. WOMACK, to join me.

We are here today and rise to honor the life of former State legislator and Arkansas Treasurer Mark Lowery. A Maumelle native, Mark was a devoted public servant. He served as editor of the Maumelle Monitor and the Sherwood Voice and taught communications at the University of Central Arkansas and Henderson State University.

In 2013, Mark began his nearly 10-year career as a State legislator, serving Arkansas's 39th District, where I had the pleasure of serving alongside him. Although his time as State treasurer was short, he was passionate about serving our State.

On behalf of the Arkansas delegation, I want to express our deepest condolences to his family, friends, and staff during this time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WOMACK).

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of an incredible leader and a dedicated public servant, who we lost yesterday.

Mark Lowery committed much of his life to serving Arkansans as an elected official, educator, and journalist.

During his time as State representative for 10 years, he had Arkansas youth and families top of mind. He brought significant reforms to the education system and fought hard for fairness in elections. Most recently, he was elected the Arkansas State treasurer. Although Mark will be deeply missed, his legacy lives on.

My prayers are with Mark's family and friends as they navigate this incredibly sad and difficult time. I offer them my sincere condolences.

My hope is that we can all find solace in knowing Arkansas is better off because of Mark Lowery's dedicated work for the people of Arkansas.

CELEBRATING 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 9981

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STRONG). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Executive Order No. 9981, which desegregated the U.S. Armed Forces.

It was in my home State of Alabama—I should say, “our home State of Alabama”—in 1941 that 1,000 brave Black men trained at the great Tuskegee University to become the first Black pilots in U.S. history. They challenged the status quo by showing White pilots and U.S. military leadership that they were more than qualified to defend the United States in a combat role.

Segregation in the military finally ended on July 26, 1948, with President Truman's Executive Order No. 9981, but progress has been slow, Mr. Speaker. It took another 40 years before Colin Powell made history and became the first Black Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Furthermore, it was just 2 years ago when Lloyd Austin was confirmed as the very first Black Secretary of Defense in our Nation's history.

The battle to end discrimination in the military is one that we are still fighting today. Just this month, House Republicans voted to strip diversity, equity, and inclusion programs from the Armed Forces, undermining decades of strides toward racial equality.

That is why, yesterday, I joined Congresswoman MARILYN STRICKLAND in introducing a bill to finally codify non-discrimination in the military. As our servicemembers risk their lives daily to protect our country, the least we can do is to protect them from discrimination.

I am immensely proud to honor the enormous contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen today. We must never forget the precious gift of freedom that is preserved because of their dedication and courage.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MONSIGNOR DINO LORENZETTI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and celebrate the extraordinary life of Monsignor Dino Lorenzetti.

Monsignor Dino Lorenzetti, the eldest priest of the Buffalo Catholic Diocese, whose priesthood spanned 70 years and at least a dozen parishes and who headed the Office of Family Life for 20 years, died July 12, 2023, just 11 days short of his 102nd birthday.

In the monsignor's powerful voice, he would famously start each Mass he celebrated with: “Good morning, all you beautiful people of faith. You are loved.”

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Dino served an incredible 70-year priesthood and undoubtedly impacted the lives of thousands of people across western New York with his warmth, his enthusiasm, and his upbeat personality.

When you met him, you immediately realized you had just been in the presence of a very special and holy person.

Monsignor Lorenzetti co-officiated my wife, Erin, and my wedding, as well as officiating my mother-in-law and father-in-law's wedding, and he baptized all their children. Many, many western New York families can say the same thing across multiple generations.

Dino Lorenzetti served as a priest under 9 different Popes and 10 Bishops of Buffalo during his lifetime. He was born in Buffalo to Italian immigrants.

Dino Lorenzetti's life of service and faith began with courage and dedication. As a young man he answered the call of duty during World War II, serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps in Africa and Italy from 1941 to 1945. His bravery and commitment during those challenging times foreshadowed the depth of character that would define his entire life.

Monsignor Lorenzetti was a longtime pastor of Our Lady of Sacred Heart church in Orchard Park. He led efforts to purchase a former West Seneca school building to establish the parish school. It thrived to rank among the largest grade schools in the entire diocese.

His influence extended globally when Pope Paul VI appointed him as a spiritual adviser to the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds. In 1978, he was honored to address the World Conference of Physicians in India alongside Mother Teresa where they both received prestigious awards.

Until shortly before his passing, he faithfully celebrated weekly masses at St. John the Baptist Church in Kenmore and St. Martha's in Depew.

In memory of Monsignor Lorenzetti, we celebrate a life well-lived, a life of profound service, and a life that will forever shine as an example of God's love.

May he rest in eternal peace knowing that his impact will continue to touch hearts and transform lives for generations to come.

KEEP FLAVORED MILK IN SCHOOLS

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my colleagues' bipartisan amendment to prevent the funds made available by our agricultural appropriations bill to go toward funding a rule that will ban flavored milk, like chocolate milk in our schools.

School nutrition programs play a vital role in providing our students with healthy meals that contribute to their growth and well-being. Flavored and unflavored milk options have been an essential part of these programs, and research has consistently shown that flavored milk is a powerful tool for successfully delivering essential nutrients to our school-aged children.

Dairy products are the cornerstone of a balanced diet and are an unparalleled source of calcium, protein, potassium, phosphorus, and vitamin D for kids of all ages. These nutrients are crucial for bone growth, immune health, and optimal brain development during their school years.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that removing flavored milk from schools leads to a decrease in overall milk consumption. Our children are more likely to enjoy and consume milk when they have flavorful options available to them. By preserving the allowance of nonfat and low-fat flavored milks at all grade levels, we encourage higher milk consumption and promote healthier habits among our youth.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and by doing so we show our commitment to the well-being of our Nation's children and their access to nutrition options in our schools.

INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE VA STATE HOME CONSTRUCTION GRANT PROGRAM

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

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I am so incredibly grateful that the House passed my amendment to the Military Construction and VA appropriations bill.

Earlier this year, I was proud to lead 64 of our colleagues in calling for a significant increase to address the funding gap in our State Veterans Homes system. My amendment increases the funding for the VA State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program by \$5 million.

As many in the Michigan delegation know, southeast Michigan is home to the largest concentration of veterans in the Midwest, however, we don't have a VA home in the Detroit area. State Veterans Homes are a critical counterpart for our VA system in providing long-term care and services for our veterans.

With more than 30,000 beds nationwide, the State Veterans Home program is the largest provider of long-term care for our Nation's veterans with services that include nursing care and adult daycare.

The program enables States to construct, renovate, or repair these State-owned facilities with the VA providing up to 65 percent of the cost of construction.

Currently, there are more than \$600 million in unfulfilled Priority 1 grant requests by the States, demonstrating that the States are eager, willing, and prepared to take on an important responsibility, as well as a share of the cost, of caring for our Nation's veterans.

Unfortunately, only \$150 million was appropriated in the fiscal year 2023, and this bill only allocates \$164 million, leaving many grant requests unfulfilled and an inability for States to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, if we cannot take care of our Nation's veterans, we shouldn't be sending them to war. My amendment, with the support of all of you, is a small step toward addressing that funding gap.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the committee for their support in this effort, and I am grateful to my colleagues for supporting this amendment. I look forward to continuing this fight to ensure that our veterans get the care they deserve.

CREDIT IS AN OBSTACLE FOR MEETING BASIC NEEDS

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, credit and consumer reports that often contain errors are increasingly an obstacle for many of our residents from meeting their basic needs.

Victims of financial abuse and fraud, or those strapped with medical debt, are regularly denied access to employment, housing, and transportation because of their credit history.

Our neighbors should not have to go without basic necessities because they fell victim to fraudulent activity or predatory lenders.

Survivors of domestic abuse, for instance, do not deserve to have debt resulting from the abuse of their credit report.

Medical debt should not prevent someone from securing shelter or an education.

That is why I am reintroducing the Restoring Unfairly Impaired Credit and Protecting Consumers Act to provide credit restoration for victims of predatory lending, fraud, and other financial abuse; prohibiting the reporting of medical debt; and to reduce the length of time that adverse information appears on credit reports from 7 down to 4 years.

Economists say 7 years is not a good indicator. Many of the residents, especially in our districts, will tell you that reducing it down to 4 years can be transformative for their families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to please support this bill.

RECOGNIZING THE 1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAMAS' CAUCUS

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, it is the 1-year anniversary of the Congressional Mamas' Caucus that I founded with Congresswomen Jayapal, Bush, Meng, and Williams.

The Mamas' Caucus is not only committed to advocating for mothers of color and working families, but committed to making sure that all mothers have a seat at the table where policy decisions are made.

We can't be talking about mothers without mothers at the table. For instance, the cost of raising a child in our country is among the highest in the world, and our policies and social safety nets too often leave many behind.

We must build childcare policies that support every family, and ones that ensure providers are paid a living wage.

Whether on Black maternal health, reproduction justice, paid leave, and so many other issues, mothers must be centered in the policies that we advance here in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues who have joined us in this fight and know that we have many efforts in store in the year to come.

THREATENING AMERICAN BUSINESSES

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

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the bullying and threatening of American businesses being conducted by the United States Department of Commerce.

This was brought to my attention by a small business owner just this week.

In the Census Bureau's Annual Business Survey, businessowners are now asked if they invest in a list of so-called "green" initiatives to fight climate change.

If your local baker, dry cleaner, or peanut farmer hasn't been able to invest in geothermal energy or a renewable purchase power agreement or extra battery storage, they are asked these threatening questions:

Are you afraid of lost sales?

Do you foresee getting a bad reputation?

Do you think it might be harder to raise capital or secure lines of credit?

Do you think you might be fined by the government?

Do you think your business will suffer if we implement a carbon tax?

The bottom line from the radical leftists in charge of our executive branch: That's a nice business you have there, it would be a shame if something happened to it.

Surveys with leading questions are often called push polls. This is more like a shove poll. This is the Federal Government threatening American businesses to engage in government-pushed policy, or else.

Here is a warning of my own. If you work at the Department of Commerce and you are responsible for this disgusting language, you will be hearing from Congress very soon. Be prepared to explain yourselves. The time for bureaucratic overreach must come to an end.