

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.

The Federal Government exists to serve and protect Americans and their livelihoods, not to pick winners or losers, not to destroy industries, and not to impose climate change ideology on hundreds of thousands of businesses that bring prosperity to American families every day.

Semper Fidelis.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, but first, before I begin, I want to associate myself with the remarks of Reverend Green. It is always great to be in the presence of someone who has performed so extraordinarily well and is indeed a great American. I congratulate, Joyce.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the 88th birthday of Social Security, which will take place on August 14. We are calling upon Members all across this Nation joined by great groups like the National Committee to Preserve and Protect Social Security, Social Security Works, the AFL-CIO, and the list goes on, to please save the date as a date of action. It is a date of action because Congress hasn't taken any action.

It might interest people in the gallery to know that Congress hasn't done anything to enhance Social Security in more than 52 years.

We found ourselves in the midst of a pandemic, a pandemic that in this country has impacted people over the age of 65 more severely than any other group. Slightly over a million people have perished. Over 856,000 were over the age of 65.

Those same individuals are the ones that because of global inflation have found themselves in the situation, as people on fixed incomes often do, where they are most severely hurt.

As Reverend King would say, "the fierce urgency of now" is upon the United States Congress.

What are we asking the United States Congress to do?

Vote.

How hard is that?

Whether it is in the United States Senate or whether it is in the House of Representatives, everybody claims how much they respect and love and admire Social Security. If that is true, then why don't we vote on it?

It hasn't been enhanced in 52 years. The last time something was done was in 1983. Ronald Reagan was President, Bob Dole ran the United States Senate, and Tip O'Neill was Speaker of the House. They extended Social Security at that time, its solvency, but they didn't do anything to enhance the program.

I dare say that things have changed a lot since Richard Nixon was President

in terms of the cost of procuring goods and services in this country, and yet we have not done anything as a Congress to enhance the benefit of the more than 66 million people who are on Social Security. That number will exceed 70 million within a year and a half. Mr. Speaker, that is 70 million of our fellow Americans.

Here is the real deal: 5 million of them get below-poverty level checks from the government. After having worked all their lives, paid into a system to get an earned benefit, they find themselves getting a below-poverty level check because the United States Congress has not acted on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, 23 million of our fellow Americans get taxed on their work in their job for what they are doing, and they shouldn't be. That tax should be eliminated. There needs to be an across-the-board increase for all Social Security recipients.

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That is why we call attention to this day of action.

The day of action that is needed most, though, is by the United States Congress and for us to act in a bipartisan manner across the board and make sure that the people are getting the benefits that they have richly earned.

Mr. Speaker, 10,000 baby boomers a day become eligible for Social Security, and still Congress does not act. America needs to rise up and prevail upon their Members of Congress to act, and by act, I mean vote—vote to bring Social Security 2100 to the floor for a vote and vote in the Senate to bring those bills forward.

Mr. Speaker, if you have a better idea, if you have a better plan, then lay it out there for the public to see, but for God's sake, vote on it for the sake of the American people.

The American people deserve more from their Congress than lip service. They need action.

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS OVERSEAS

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

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank our servicemen and -women, our military personnel who are stationed all around this world who are standing in the gap and who are ensuring that our freedoms are protected—not only our freedoms, but those of our kids, our kids' opportunity to grow up in the greatest country in the world.

We all know there are enemies out there all around who would like nothing better than to see this country, our freedoms, and our way of life be destroyed and taken away.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the veterans appropriations bill that will support our troops overseas and will let them know that we have their backs.

You see, Mr. Speaker, House Republicans are providing over \$800 million above the President's budget request for new military construction that is focusing on the Indo-Pacific theater to counter China.

H.R. 4366 also funds new barracks and other quality-of-life projects just so our men and women in uniform can perform at their best while out there defending our Nation.

Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker, our troops and their families make great sacrifices in defending our country, and it is our duty to support them and give them that support they deserve.

BIDENOMICS

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

Mr. LIEU. Mr. Speaker, today Bloomberg reported that U.S. GDP growth accelerated to 2.4 percent blowing past economists' estimates.

Consumer confidence is also at the highest level in over 2 years, and inflation has now declined for 12 consecutive months to a low of 3 percent. The United States has the highest GDP growth and the lowest inflation of all the G-7 countries.

So growth is up, consumer confidence is up, and inflation is down. This is Bidenomics, and it did not happen by accident.

When Democrats were in control last term, we passed numerous laws to grow our economy from the bottom up and the middle out. We passed the American Rescue Plan, the Inflation Reduction Act, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the infrastructure law. All those laws have now grown our economy and grown the middle class.

What are Republicans focused on?

Putting women in jail for concealing abortions.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. LIEU. Mr. Speaker, as a recovering computer science major, I am excited about artificial intelligence. AI has moved society forward and will continue to do amazing things in the medical field and many other fields.

At the same time, there are potential risks to artificial intelligence, and we need to make sure we can harness the benefits of AI and reduce these risks.

That is why I have proposed a national AI commission that is a bipartisan blue ribbon commission that will make recommendations to Congress as to what kinds of AI we should regulate and how we might go about doing so.

This legislation is coauthored by Republican Congressman KEN BUCK with Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO, and on the Senate side it will be carried by Senator SCHATZ.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Speaker to put this legislation on the floor for a vote.

In addition, AI can also destroy the world. We can never ever let AI control nuclear weapons. I have also introduced bipartisan legislation that would