

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

prevent AI from ever launching a nuclear weapon by itself. We need to have meaningful human control.

Mr. Speaker, I also request the Speaker to allow that bill to be voted on on the floor.

FLORIDA LOVES SMALL BUSINESS

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

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the new rankings are out, and Florida is number one. It is not football, although I would understand one making that assumption. Florida is number one for small business.

According to a recent Venture Smarter's study that considered numerous factors like business climate, tax structure, and burdensome business regulations, Florida has just been ranked the number one State in America.

Today, I rise to congratulate my home State, the free State of Florida, on this outstanding accomplishment.

In the Sunshine State, we support small businesses to do what they do best: invest, hire, and grow. When we shop small, we all win big. Spending your money at that local small business can make a big difference.

Today, 2.8 million businessowners and entrepreneurs call Florida home, but, Mr. Speaker, there is room for one more.

Mr. Speaker, if you are considering coming to Florida to open a business, then I urge you to make a plan. Frankly, you should have a plan of what to do with all that extra money you will have in your pocket because Florida has no income tax.

As a member of the House Small Business Committee, I am working to ensure every small business has the opportunity to thrive and fuel our economy in communities all across America.

HONORING NATHALIE WU

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Small Business Committee, I rise today to honor Florida's Main Street Award for Business Owner of the Year, Nathalie Wu.

Ms. Wu is a resident of Nassau County, and I am proud to represent her in Florida's Fourth Congressional District.

Nathalie opened the wonderful Wick-ed Bao Restaurant 5 years ago. For the first time, amazing Asian street food was available to patrons of downtown Fernandina Beach's historic district.

Delectable and scrumptious are words we use to describe our food, but what about innovative?

Who knew that tater tots made with rice instead of potatoes—rice tots—could be so delicious?

That would be Ms. Wu. With her establishment, she has inspired what was once an overlooked area off the beaten path into a popular destination.

In addition to serving up delicious treats, Ms. Wu is a steadfast advocate

for local small businesses. She is a Fernandina Beach Main Street No Cost Ways to Promote Your Business panelist and a prominent supporter of the Fernandina Beach window painting event, inspiring local high school artists to showcase their work. She is also an awesome mother to her two sons, Phillip and Martin Toxldorf.

Ms. Wu's dedication to her business and our community will have a lasting impact on Fernandina Beach. My colleagues and I on the Small Business Committee are inspired by her story.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all of my colleagues in Congress join me in honoring Florida Secretary of State's Florida Main Street Award for Business Owner of the Year, Ms. Nathalie Wu.

CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Speaker, extreme weather is climate change unfolding before our very eyes. This past weekend, the San Francisco Bay Area recorded temperatures in the 90s and 100s—a far cry from our usual temperate summer weather.

My region wasn't the only part of the country feeling the heat. The month of July has been a scorcher for the whole country with no end in sight. In fact, the Fourth of July was one of the hottest days on Earth in at least 50 years—a record that scientists said would have been virtually impossible without climate change.

The story doesn't end with heat waves. Other climate disasters, like severe storms and wildfires, have been and will continue to be more intense and more frequent.

Earlier this year, atmospheric rivers and devastating flooding pummeled my district, nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay, causing millions of dollars in damage.

Many Americans can afford to shield their properties from climate disasters and have done so over the years, but families who are already struggling to make ends meet are often left behind. This is especially true for households of color, many of whom live in more disaster-prone areas.

We need to ensure everyone, regardless of their income, can shield their properties against the most devastating consequences of climate change.

That is why I introduced the Weatherization Resilience and Adaptation Program, or WRAP Act, along with 20 of my colleagues from across the country, from California, but, also, Texas, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Ohio, and Michigan. We stand together.

My bill would help low-income homeowners, affordable housing providers, and mobile home communities harden their property so they are more resilient to climate-driven natural disasters. Homeowners would get help to pay for things like double-pane win-

dows, heat resistant roofing, artificial berms and dunes, and more.

The Biden administration recently announced a nearly \$1 billion investment through the Inflation Reduction Act that will assist the owners of federally subsidized affordable housing buildings to become more resilient to climate disasters.

The WRAP Act would build on this historic action by helping individual property owners and the owners of other types of low-income housing who are left out of the IRA program.

It is unfortunate that climate resilience-building measures are seen through a partisan lens. The reality is far different. Climate disasters don't distinguish between so-called red States and blue States. We are all impacted. Congress has the opportunity to shield our most vulnerable communities before disaster strikes.

BIDENOMICS

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

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the reality of Bidenomics.

We have heard the President say time and time again that his economic policies have worked. He actually believes that the American economy is better today than it was before he took office.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at the facts because we know this administration has a habit of changing terms, redefining issues, and really not looking at the facts.

So let's look at the facts.

Gas is up 34 percent since Joe Biden took office, energy prices are up 28.5 percent, and the average American family is paying almost \$1,200 more per month in everyday needs.

Now, tell me, Mr. Speaker, does that sound like an economy that is strong? The clear answer is no, the economy is not strong. It is actually a lot weaker than it was before Joe Biden took office.

The sad reality is that hardworking taxpayers are footing the bill for Biden's policy failures. I think it is time we tell the truth, that Bidenomics has been a complete and utter failure.

□ 1045

ADDRESSING PASSPORT DELAYS

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

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the extended processing times for passports, global entry applications, and tax returns.

On average, Americans are waiting 2 to 4 months for passport renewals and 4 to 6 months for global entry appointments. Many are waiting even longer.