

suspend the State gas tax, as other States—including just recently Georgia—have done to provide consumers with relief from soaring prices. The legislature can provide a modest measure of relief by passing Assembly Bill 53 by Assemblyman Vince Fong, which would immediately suspend the State's gas tax and lower prices by 58 cents per gallon. The bill would also assure that no funding is lost for road projects throughout the State.

At a time when Californians continue to struggle with the effects of inflation, this relief would make life a little easier for millions of people. It is a commonsense proposal that merits bipartisan support, and I urge the legislature to act on it immediately.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF GERALD "GERRY" HEBERT

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life and legacy of a good friend and brilliant attorney and someone who is a staunch advocate for voting rights all across our great land in the State of Texas, Gerry Hebert.

Originally from Worcester, Massachusetts, Gerry earned his law degree from Suffolk University. Upon graduating, he began his career as an attorney practicing voting rights.

From 1973 to 1994, Gerry served in the Department of Justice, where he worked as lead attorney in numerous voting rights and redistricting lawsuits. He also served as a chief trial counsel in over 100 voting rights cases. In his 20-year tenure at the DOJ, he received numerous commendations, including an award for his work in connection with the Boston school desegregation case in 1975, which received much national attention.

I had the privilege of knowing Gerry very well through his times as co-counsel with the Legal Defense Fund, the Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP firm, where he partnered to successfully challenge racially discriminatory voting ID laws in Texas.

I will always remember Gerry's hard work, his dedication. Gerry was someone that just understood the Constitution and the laws of our land so well and could have chosen a different career in law that would have earned him millions and millions of dollars, but Gerry truly wanted to help the people, especially people that were disenfranchised and had been wronged, particularly people that had been historically wronged.

Gerry will always be remembered as a great guy. Gerry leaves behind a wonderful family, some of whom I have gotten to know. I express condolences from the bottom of my heart. We will all miss Gerry, in particular, the people and the communities that Gerry defended to make sure that they had equal rights in this country.

CONSTITUTION UNDER ATTACK

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I think probably the single most important thing done in this body is when we uphold our oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.

I, therefore, would bring to the attention of the body two instances while we were on break in which the Constitution was under attack, and I don't think enough Americans know about it.

One of the things was in the State of New Mexico, the Governor of New Mexico decided to declare war on the Second Amendment on the grounds that there was an uptick or maybe a big increase in murder in the Albuquerque area.

The Second Amendment is absolute. We don't get rid of the Second Amendment if the murder rate is up 30 percent. The reason we don't get rid of it is our Forefathers wanted the power to be with the people, not the government. But it is particularly ridiculous in that it is obvious why we have had an uptick in murder in the last 3 years in this country. I think there are three obvious reasons.

One, the government is mucking around where they shouldn't, as was mentioned by the founders of Black Lives Matter. People around here wanted to disrupt what they refer to as the Western-prescribed nuclear family. In other words, they want to get the man out of the household.

We also have people trying to elect district attorneys who don't like to put people in jail, judges who don't like to put people in jail, and antipolice forces who make the police timid. When all these things get done, you wind up having an increase in murder.

I would point out that John Adams said that America was built for a moral and religious people. We have to get back to that moral and religious people so they don't abuse their right to guns. In the interim, the idea of leaving guns in the hands of the lawbreakers, which of course is what will happen, and taking guns from the people who are law abiding could not be worse. It is almost hard to believe that at this time in our history we have a Governor—a lawyer no less—who wants to enact a law, taking away the guns from the law abiding but presumably leaving in place the policies which resulted in increase in murder in the first place by not taking action against the type of people who are breaking the law.

The Second Amendment was under attack. A decision was made in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in which the Biden administration had tried to weigh in on social platforms that were giving a narrative of the COVID epidemic that was not in line with what Pfizer and their political allies wanted to say.

We have a First Amendment in this country, and we expect decisions to be

made based upon a free exchange of ideas. We beat people in the court of public opinion. We don't say the government shouldn't weigh in and say we are not going to let people who disagree with us have a public platform.

The Biden administration chafes at the idea of free speech. They wanted to get only their way in dealing with the pandemic, and they decided to restrict free speech here in America. That should scare everyone to death, that we elected a President of the United States who wanted to restrict free speech.

Another thing that really concerned me about that, in an article by The New York Times, which I think is still viewed as an important paper by some people in this body, said the Court decision, which was a slap down of the Biden administration, was a victory for conservatives.

In other words, today, the people who write for The New York Times have said that upholding free speech is something conservatives do, implying it is not something that progressives or Democrats or liberals, or whatever, do. This is a scary thing.

When I was very young, I was a Democrat, believe it or not. At that time the Democrats were perceived I think even more boldly in favor of free speech than Republicans. So everybody was in favor of free speech. Nobody disagreed with the First Amendment.

Now, we have a decision in which truly the paper of record of leftwing America is saying that when the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upholds free speech or slaps down the Biden administration for trying to restrict free speech, that is a victory for conservatives, implying it is a defeat for the progressives. Think about that.

I hope The New York Times reconsiders its position and does some sort of apology to America and say that they are going to try to do what they can to make progressives or the left, or whatever, advocates for free speech again.

In any event, we have two examples of the Constitution under attack. I hope the public demands that we stand united behind the First and Second Amendment.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 54 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Chaplain Major Troy S. Bates, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, commander of the hosts of Heaven, humbly hear and grant our prayer today.

We pause today, before conducting the people's business, asking for wisdom and courage. Wisdom to know the right way to lead and the courage to lead the right way.

The 9/11 anniversary reminds us our freedoms come with a cost. So I am thankful for those who pay that cost, for men like Staff Sergeant Patrick Quinn, who sacrificed his life in Afghanistan, as well as Captain Doug Frazier, class of 1975, who selflessly served humanity his entire long life. People like these represent our why.

God, You have shown us what you require: to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You.

May we seek justice for all by living justly before all. May we proclaim mercy by being merciful, and may we walk humbly before You by living in humility before others. We pray this in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof. Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SORENSEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SORENSEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING CHAPLAIN MAJOR TROY BATES

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Chaplain Major Troy Bates to the U.S. House of Representatives.

He currently serves as the garrison family life chaplain at West Point. He was direct commissioned into the Army Chaplain Corps in August of 2009 as a reserve chaplain for the 478th Civil Affairs Battalion.

Chaplain Bates has provided spiritual support for our troops in harm's way in six combat deployments. He first deployed as the battalion chaplain from the 25th Infantry Division to Afghanistan. He then became a member of the

10th Special Forces Group, my old group. Chaplain Bates deployed twice to Afghanistan with the Special Forces Group and once to Africa. He then joined the XVIII Airborne Corps and deployed again to Iraq, and then became a JSOC chaplain and deployed to a classified location.

He has had an extensive education, including attending many military schools, and winning numerous awards, leading off with the Bronze Star.

Especially interesting and meaningful to me, he has the U.S., British, Canadian, Italian, and German Jump Wings, as well as the Combat Action Badge.

His education includes an associate of arts from the Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College, a bachelor of science from Baptist Bible College, a master of arts from Liberty University, a master of divinity in religion from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, and a master of arts in counseling from Webster University.

He is joined by his wife today, Duchess. They have five children, three of whom serve in the military today. I thank Chaplain Major Troy Bates for not only his service but his legacy and his family.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

(Ms. DE LA CRUZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month as the first Latina from my community and the first Republican Latina to represent the great State of Texas in the people's House for a full term.

The foundations of this great Nation are ingrained with Hispanic influence, from our beginnings with the Spanish settlers to General Bernardo de Galvez, hero of the American Revolution.

The Nation's pulse beats with our rich and vibrant culture. For generations, our families have woven their stories into the fabric of this great Nation. Our contributions in the arts, agriculture, business, military, and public service have left an indelible mark on America's history.

Our community's success lies in our faith in God, hard work, family values, and love of country. I am so proud of what we have achieved and will continue to achieve.

Let us renew our commitment to supporting policies that uplift Hispanic families and all Americans. Together, we will build a future that honors our past and preserves "the American

Dream," "El Sueno Americano" for future generations.

HONORING THE LIFE OF BILL RICHARDSON

(Ms. GARCIA of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Bill Richardson.

Former Governor Bill Richardson was a devoted public servant and a skilled diplomat whose career improved countless lives in New Mexico and across America, and indeed, the world.

As Governor of New Mexico, he tirelessly worked to improve the lives of his constituents while making history leading as a Latino, but Bill Richardson's influence extended well beyond the borders of New Mexico. He served as Energy Secretary and also as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, where his diplomatic skills and commitment to peace played a pivotal role in addressing many global challenges.

Today, we remember Governor Bill Richardson, and we also honor his legacy of public service and diplomacy, which continues with his work at his center. He was an inspiration to all of us, and he was a true American patriot.

His leadership and kindness will forever be remembered. Rest in peace, my friend.

BIDEN IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

(Mrs. MILLER of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the historic impeachment inquiry into Joe Biden.

Congress must hold Joe Biden accountable for serving as the kingpin over a series of shady foreign business deals involving his family members. Bank records and extensive evidence show that the Biden family received \$20 million in cash, diamonds, and sports cars from China, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, and other foreign entities.

Joe Biden was directly involved in this foreign influence-peddling scheme, and when Biden's son demanded \$5 million in cash from a Chinese official, he wrote, "I am sitting here with my father. . . ."

Congress has a duty to the American people to protect taxpayers from this type of foreign corruption.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

JOINING IN SOLIDARITY WITH UAW

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)