

weakness we have been projecting in the last 2½ years from our leadership.

What do we see? When you have a vacuum like that—we know the terminology “nature abhors a vacuum”—China is all too eager to step in and move in and replace us in that regard. We are seeing that with the undermining of our currency around the world. We see it with the BRICS group trying to go on its own where the American currency for many, many years has been the standard.

Now, we don't have a birthright to that. We don't have a birthright as the United States for being number one in anything, but I think we can agree that we would be stronger as a country, as well as with our good intentions as a people, that the United States is well positioned to continue to be the light of the world that it is capable of being.

With bad leadership, with poor leadership, we allow others to come in and replace us in that role. China is seeking to do so on so many things, like manufacturing and food. That is what I would like to talk about today: food production.

At the same time as western countries are saying we need to blame agriculture for climate change, which basically means CO₂ production, I would remind you once again, carbon dioxide is only .04 percent of our atmosphere. All the hysteria over that is that it is somehow going to be the end of us as a people, the end of the Earth; it has only grown a minute amount.

They would have us cut one-third of agriculture in this country. John Kerry, the so-called czar, as he flies in his private jet to yet another fancy event in Davos to talk about climate change, along with hundreds of other private jets, would have us cut one-third of our agriculture in this country.

You see that happening in Europe. You see the Dutch farmers valiantly fighting back against their oppressive government where they are wanting to put a bunch of their land out of business. Holland reclaimed a bunch of land from the ocean via those polders, via those levees they used to push back the ocean and made prime farmland out of that. You have extremists trying to push them out. You see Ireland a while back deciding they need to cull about 30 percent, maybe a third of their dairy herd because dairies make CO₂ and methane gas and such.

There was a time in this country where we had way, way more buffalo on the plains than we do have currently with beef and dairy cattle. That is an interesting stat. It isn't about the animals burping or whatever.

As we see the U.S., due to bad policy, to poor leadership, being displaced in that area, do we really want to become dependent even more so on China and a cartel they might be in with Russia and other alliances they have with Iran, to be more and more dependent on them? We are already dependent on them for 90 percent of our pharma-

ceuticals, and so much of our manufactured products. Do you want to do that to agriculture, too? It makes no sense.

You see what is happening in my home State of California, where California produces so many of these great crops here. Ninety-plus percent that Americans rely on comes from California. We saw just last year, in 2022, that due to the decisions made by the Bureau of Reclamation and others, and the environmental groups, the water got cut off from Shasta Dam and other Federal project water to much of agriculture.

We saw just an example of rice, for example. Normally, about half a million acres of rice are grown in California. They cut that number in half to 250,000. Do you know how devastating that is to communities when you have that and other crops just wiped away because of mismanagement of our water supply during a drought period?

There is still plenty of water that hits California, plenty of snowpack. We were certainly blessed with a lot this year that made things good for the 2023 crops. We are still having a decent carryover, it looks like. As we watch, they are going to fritter the water away at this time of year, as they have to lower the lakes to have a flood control level, conservation level. Indeed, the water that could be used for other things is just now going out to the ocean as so much of it is. It is a water-management issue. It is a leadership issue.

Where is this food going to come from? They want to continue to take dams out. I heard a colleague here yesterday say, well, these dams haven't been maintained over the years. Well, that is purposeful. If the government doesn't put forward the dollars and the effort and the permitting process to maintain and keep dams upgraded, yeah, after 40 years they can deteriorate. Then someone decides, well, it is going to be too expensive to revamp the dam, to bring it up to spec, so let's go ahead and tear it out. That is what they want to begin with.

Where is our food going to come from if we don't have the dams, the water storage, our hydroelectric power, all of those things? It makes no sense what we are doing.

THE PRESS NEEDS TO WAKE UP

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I will address some of the votes that took place on the floor last week, in particular the vote regarding a continuing resolution designed to keep the government open that was taken here last Friday.

The effort to keep the government open failed 232-198. Every Democrat voted against that resolution to close the government. What I am going to address is the fact that 21 Republicans voted against keeping the government

open at that time. The press, particularly The New York Times, probably other organizations as well, referred to those 21 people as hardcore conservatives.

As our country goes under, some people are going to blame the executive, some people will blame Congress, some people will blame the courts, but a lot of it has to fall on the utterly incompetent press corps of this country. Hard-line conservatives?

Let's look at the bill that we wanted to have to keep the government open last Friday. First of all, a continuing resolution is primarily about spending, and that spending bill cut spending, discretionary spending, on all but veterans, the border, and defense, by 30 percent. In other words, across-the-board, you put everything else together, discretionary spending on the Department of Education, the Department of Commerce, the Department of the Interior, the State Department, energy, the legislature itself, a 30 percent reduction in spending.

How in the world can you say the people who voted for the 30 percent reduction in spending are not conservative? How in the world can the press corps refer to the people who voted against a 30 percent reduction in spending as the hard-line conservatives?

We all know part of that bill was not just focused on government spending. Probably the biggest crisis facing America today is the massive group of people coming across the southern border, over 200,000 a month. In addition to that, we have all the unaccompanied minors, 8,000 to 10,000 children, coming across the southern border with no adult accompanying them at all.

In that bill, we also tried to add 22,000 new border agents, end catch and release, so people showing up at the southern border would be kept in Mexico, and the policy of inviting unaccompanied minors into our country. In other words, we were dealing with the immigration crisis.

We had two parts of the bill: A 30 percent reduction in discretionary spending on so much of the budget and, in essence, closing down the border to prevent all of these people coming here illegally, as well as to prevent the drugs coming across that kill over 100,000 Americans a year. The press corps in this country has the nerve to say that the people who sided with the Democrats to kill this bill are hard-line conservatives.

I call upon the slumbering press to wake up and pay attention to what is in these bills and tell us exactly what you mean by hardcore conservatives if they vote against the bill.

There may be a variety of motivations to vote against a bill. There may be personalities. Maybe you want to fancy yourself a hardcore conservative and you count on utter incompetence in the news media.

I beg the press corps in the future to pay attention to what is in these bills

and only use the phrase “hardcore conservative” to describe people who are voting for hardcore conservative bills.

The next thing that I think we should point out here today and the importance of having that large reduction in spending—and I don’t mean to bore you with numbers—is the degree to which, on a daily basis, our country gets in worse and worse shape. That is because the interest rates go up. That is no vote that we take here in Congress. I mean, we fight trench warfare here on a variety of bills. Sometimes the bills are just minor bills that have a few million dollars in them. In the last 2 days, because of an increase in interest rates, the amount of money we are going to have to spend on interest, just interest in the next year, went up \$12 billion.

Since April, when interest rates were like 3½ percent, the cost in interest has gone up over \$100 billion. We have serious problems here, and the costs in interest should also be reported by the press.

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 11 o’clock and 14 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

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

O God, You desire not the strength of our arguments, nor the vigor of our opinions, but the gravity of our humble sacrifice.

On this day, may we sacrifice our inclination for contempt and instead initiate kindness; loosen our grip on judgment and instead may we grab hold of a generosity of spirit; may we forswear our grudges and commit instead to exercise forbearance.

Hold us accountable that our arguments will support Your righteousness and not ring hollow in the defense of our rightness.

May our struggles serve to preserve the dignity of this body and not erode our commitment to its noble purpose. May our words underscore our devotion to the common good and not undermine our ability to see, even in our adversary, the image of God common to all.

Open us to Your inspiration, for only in You can we aspire to an attitude of sacrifice. With You upholding us, we can be strengthened in our every effort

to do what leads to peace and mutual edification.

We pray unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, hoping that You in Your mercy will receive our prayers and this body into Your keeping.

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 California (Mr. LAMALFA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LAMALFA 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

NATIONAL CLEAN ENERGY WEEK

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, National Clean Energy week just passed by. It should be a time to recognize the various forms of clean energy available to all of us.

Unfortunately, one form continues to be taken not as seriously and, in many cases, undermined, and that would be hydroelectric power, which has so many benefits. Yet hydroelectric dams across this country, including one in the Klamath area of my district, are being torn out because of an environmental agenda that isn’t even true.

Others are on the hit list, like up in the State of Washington, by their environmental extremists. As policy leaders and consumers push for a more green future, hydropower should be part of that solution as a lot of the needed infrastructure already exists, as well as nuclear power.

Why are we seeing dams that supply low-cost renewable energy that have already existed for over a century being decommissioned?

Because here is the trick: You make it where it is almost impossible to do the maintenance and upgrades to that infrastructure so that over time it becomes too expensive now to continue to have those dams and they are old relics that need to be taken out. That is the trick.

Indeed, had we maintained them and kept them in place, we wouldn’t have

this economic crossroads to deal with. We need to preserve our dams and keep hydroelectric power as a cornerstone of our power grid.

MERIT-BASED EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR ALL PROFESSIONS

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, medical education based on competency and merit is necessary to lead the world in healthcare and medical innovation.

Americans sign up for a healthcare system free of racial discrimination. Medical schools must instill this fundamental precept in our country’s future healthcare professionals.

That is why the Education and the Workforce Committee pressed the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, the medical school accreditor, on its diversity, equity, and inclusion standards for applicants and its mandate for diversity.

LCME responded to the committee inquiry and publicly clarified that accredited medical schools will not treat applicants differently on the basis of race. With lives on the line, racial discrimination must play no part in our Nation’s healthcare system.

The committee will continue to push for merit-based education standards for all professions in the American workforce.

THE DEDICATION AND PASSION OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Alpha Fire Company of Centre County.

Recently, the Alpha Fire Company made history when an all-women crew took on the initial attack line in a three-alarm fire. Lieutenant Claudia Rudisill, firefighter Talia Cholach, and firefighter Kara Stover answered the call to protect and serve.

Claudia is a recent Penn State graduate, and Talia and Kara are current students at the university. All three come from a long line of firefighters.

Madam Speaker, they made history and they made a difference. They have put in the time and dedication to train, so when the call for help comes, they are able to respond and perform professionally. I know firsthand the dedication and passion volunteer firefighters have when it comes to protecting their communities.

Madam Speaker, I thank Claudia, Talia, and Kara for their bravery and dedication to the State College community.