

To so many people in this country, Fred Wolfe was a friend. He was a spiritual leader. He was a life coach. He was a father figure. He was a big brother. That is why we all simply called him Brother Fred.

□ 1015

Brother Fred had a God-given ability to make everyone feel special, and he truly believed that everyone was special. Every waking moment in Brother Fred's life, he understood that God was not only watching him, but God knew exactly what His next step would be in Fred's life.

Brother Fred, on numerous occasions, would tell me that everything in our life is controlled by God, and everything was put here to serve God.

Later in life, Brother Fred's health started breaking down, but he never took his eyes off of God. I remember when he had open-heart surgery and the men from the church would stay with him to take care of his needs. One night when I was there with Brother Fred, I asked him how his open-heart surgery had played a role in God's master plan.

He told me, I don't know. He said, It is part of the plan, but I don't know. I am here to serve. I thought that was a pretty strange response seeing he just had his chest cracked open and everything moved around. But he knew he would wait. He told me, We may never know; then again, we may.

Just a few minutes later, a nurse came walking in to take his vital signs—of course, as they do in the hospitals and keep you awake all night—while doing so, he smiled at Brother Fred and said, You don't remember me, but a few years ago, I got saved under your ministry.

Unfortunately, I have slipped away from God, and I am paying the price in my family today.

With all the tubes, with all the monitors, with everything going off in that room, Brother Fred stopped what he was thinking and doing and prayed with that man. He left with much higher spirits than he actually entered with.

As we sat there quietly, I was thinking, Did God use Fred Wolfe in this position because of this man? I looked up and made eye contact with Fred, who was laying in the bed, he simply winked and rolled over and went to sleep like he knew that was the answer.

For thousands of people who were saved under his ministry, raised their family with his wisdom, and learned that God is the most important thing in their life, I say this is not good-bye, for we will see you again. We will see Miss Anne, and we will see Brother Fred at the right hand of God.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DURANGO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as some extraordinary Durango High School students are making news and scientific history.

A team from Nevada's Third District, Durango High School, recently became one of only 60 teams nationwide to win the NASA TechRise student challenge. This year the challenge was to design an experiment that could be tested on a NASA-sponsored balloon flight.

The Durango team won with their entry, Project Nighthawk, which they will continue to work on for the rest of the school year. This summer, the project will be tested in a high-altitude balloon flight.

This is a big deal, but I know it is just the start of some amazing endeavors into STEM that these Durango Trailblazers will make in their future careers. These students will be mentored by the best and the brightest researchers and have an invaluable opportunity to learn about the edge of the Earth's atmosphere.

The ingenuity of these talented Nevadans reminds us that when it comes to exploration of our final frontier, the best is yet to come. I have no doubt that we will all benefit from their contributions in years to come.

Congratulations, Durango High School's Project Nighthawk.

REINING IN OUR NATIONAL DEBT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss our national debt. In 2022, Speaker MCCARTHY unveiled the Commitment to America which outlines the Republican platform for governing as we took control of the House in the 118th Congress.

Through our plan, it is critical we support policies that lead to a strong, healthy economy, fight inflation, and lower the cost of living. We must rein in reckless spending here in Washington and root out waste, fraud, and abuse in government.

For the last 2 years, the Biden administration has been left unchecked. Because of their policies, we have seen record-breaking inflation, skyrocketing gas and grocery prices, and increases to daily expenses. Hard-working families are forced to decide between feeding their families or paying the heat and electric bills.

These economic hardships are brought on by unrestricted reckless spending. That irresponsible spending stops now. With \$31.4 trillion in national debt, House Republicans are committed to finding a reasonable, practical, and responsible solution to raising the debt ceiling. Just like millions of Americans are forced to make difficult financial decisions to make ends meet, we must finally address out-of-control government spending if we want to put America on a better fiscal path.

Mr. Speaker, I heard from hundreds of my constituents who are concerned about America's checkbook. On December 16, 2021, Congress voted to increase the national borrowing limit to \$31.4 trillion, an increase of \$2.5 trillion more than the previous allowance. This bill kicked the proverbial can down the road until now when we are, once again, faced with raising the Federal debt ceiling even further.

In recent years, the Federal debt has ballooned because of many of the Biden administration's policies, including the student loan repayment pause and forgiveness, Congressional Democrats' multitrillion-dollar spending spree, and rising interest rates stemming from historic inflation.

The first step toward reducing the debt is controlling the annual deficit. To fully address the drivers of the national debt, Members of both parties and the President will have to come to an agreement in addressing unchecked mandatory spending and reckless discretionary spending priorities.

Mr. Speaker, as part of my commitment to America, I will continue to work to rein in government waste, fraud, and abuse, while limiting skyrocketing government program costs and finding solutions on reducing our national debt.

RAISING AND EXTENDING THE DEBT CEILING 78 TIMES

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, since 1960, Congress has raised and extended the debt limit 78 times over a 63-year period.

Let's put this in perspective: 49 times under Republican administrations, 29 times under Democratic Presidents. Sixty-three years we have raised the debt ceiling 78 times.

We are one of only two democratic nations with a statutory debt ceiling and the only one, because of the magnificent extent of our country, the U.S. dollar being the common currency of the world that can threaten a global economic crisis—think about that—by playing around with the debt ceiling.

The debt ceiling has no impact on government spending. Why? Because it only commences to pay the bills that we have already committed ourselves to. Both Republicans and Democrats have passed legislation that has created debt, that requires us to pay Social Security, that requires us to pay other mandatory programs in which there has been bipartisan support for.

Instead, this debt ceiling restricts the Treasury, if, in fact, we do not lift the debt ceiling, from paying those bills. That is why for over 63 years, 78 times, the Congress has chosen to raise the debt ceiling. Why? Because we don't want to put the liability of the world's economy, let alone the U.S. economy, at risk.

We don't want to be deadbeats, right? I think most Americans feel they

ought to pay their bills. My colleagues on the other side want to hold the debt ceiling hostage, leaving Social Security recipients and veterans potentially without their pensions or benefits.

Does that make any sense? If we default on our debt, over 6 million jobs could be diminished. Seniors may not get their benefits for a period of time. Costs will skyrocket. Some economists indicate we could put \$12 trillion of American savings at risk if it were extended in this gamesmanship, this attempt to stare each other down, on whether or not we lift the debt ceiling.

That makes no sense. That is risky business. We ought to raise our debt ceiling and pay our bills, and I think there is common agreement that we ought to get our debt under control.

As a Blue Dog, our focus and purpose of being is in the area of fiscal responsibility. As a matter of fact, the last American President that balanced the budget was President Bill Clinton. That was a while ago.

I think that there is common bipartisan agreement to focus on waste, on fraud, and abuse. I mean, those are the buzzwords, right? If we could only focus on waste, fraud, and abuse. But no one wants to highlight, well, how will that impact Social Security? How will that impact other mandatory spending that we have all committed to on a bipartisan basis?

The way to do this is for Republicans and Democrats to come together, separate from raising the debt ceiling, and agree to focus on two things that cause debt—expenditures and revenues.

If we can get an agreement on what we think the Nation's responsibility to be on our priorities for expenditures and the necessary revenues to pay for them, then, only then, would we get our deficit under control, which is what, by the way, President Bill Clinton was able to do a while ago on a bipartisan basis.

So let's get real. Let's not hold the American people hostage, our economy, or the global economy as we play fast and loose with this talk and notion of whether or not to lift the debt ceiling. We must lift the debt ceiling because it is the responsible thing to do.

I ask my colleagues on the other side: Let's come together, let's work on fiscal responsibility in a bipartisan fashion because we should. It is obviously an important, critical issue as we move forward. Let's not play fast and loose with whether or not we are going to be deadbeats and whether or not we are going to pay our bills. That is putting the American economy at risk. It is something we should not do.

HONORING MASTER SGT. JOSEPH KAPACZIEWSKI

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

Mr. DAVIDSON. Mr. Speaker, today, I am here with a very heavy heart to honor Master Sergeant Joseph

Kapaczewski, a member of the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

□ 1030

Army Rangers are some of the most elite soldiers in the world, and Master Sergeant Kapaczewski, nicknamed Kap, was no exception.

In April 2010, while serving in eastern Afghanistan, his team of Army Rangers was locked in combat with a group of armed insurgents. When one of his comrades was hit, Kap sprinted through the fire to provide aid. With the help of a fellow Ranger, they dragged the wounded soldier to safety, actions which earned Kap an Army Commendation Medal with valor.

Kap's actions would be remarkable under any conditions, but considering his experiences from a few years earlier, they were inconceivable.

A native of Connecticut, Kap enlisted in the United States Army following his senior year of high school in September 2001, just days before the 9/11 attacks. In 2002, he was deployed to Afghanistan, and the following year, he parachuted into Iraq for the initial invasion.

With only 2 days left in his fifth deployment to Iraq in 2005, Kap's convoy was ambushed by heavy fire. A grenade exploded inches away from Kap after falling through the hatch of his vehicle. Shrapnel ripped through his body, shattering his right leg and severing an artery in his right arm.

Severely wounded, Kap collected himself, directed his vehicle to cover, and alerted the rest of the convoy to the attack. It wasn't until then that he allowed his wounds to be treated. Kap was evacuated to Walter Reed Hospital, and while his arm recovered, his leg did not.

Despite numerous surgeries, his leg was barely functional. Ultimately, there was only one choice—to amputate it. With the pain gone, Kap was fitted with a prosthetic, and he completed hundreds of hours of physical therapy. He had one sole objective during his difficult and lengthy recovery: He wanted to return to combat with his unit.

Everyone thought it would be impossible for Kap to achieve that goal. No one under his circumstances had ever returned to combat, and they agreed Kap had completed his service to our Nation. Kap didn't care. He completed the 12-mile ruck march test, parachuted with a combat load, and not only regained his squad leader title but was promoted to platoon sergeant.

Kap became the first Ranger in United States Army history to return to combat action with a prosthetic limb. He was awarded the Bronze Star with valor and a Purple Heart, among numerous other decorations. Kap was deployed to combat 11 times to fight the global war on terrorism, five of which were while he had a prosthetic leg.

He wrote a book about it called "Back in the Fight."

There is more to any of our soldiers or warriors than what they do in uniform. I have had multiple friends reach out to me who talked about the impact that Kap had on them as a leader and as a friend, whether it was riding motorcycles together or just hanging out after a tough day at work, in training, or any other way. He never lost sight of how he came to be where he was.

Unfortunately, Kap's life ended far too soon last week at the age of 40 due to a significant enemy our veterans face right here at home: suicide.

Our Nation has a moral obligation to not only prepare and equip the servicemembers we send into harm's way but to support and care for them when their duty is done. Yet, we have drastically failed countless numbers of our veterans who have sacrificed everything, including their lives, to protect us.

President Lincoln's promise to care for the men and women who have "borne the battle" is one of the most important functions of our government, and we must do better.

Kap's wife, Kimberly, and his sons, Wyatt and Cody, as well as the rest of his family and friends, are in my prayers through this difficult time.

Kap will always be remembered by many for his warrior spirit and his extraordinary story of resiliency that made him an inspiration and a military legend.

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of lyrics to a song one of my friends, Darryl Worley, sings called "The 22."

Let me share a few of the lyrics:

You can't unsee what I saw
You can't get back what I lost
I've lost a wife
Five brothers
My kids and the man I was
I thought that I left the front lines
But the fight for my life rages on
We've lost 21 soldiers in only a day
And that's the unthinkable truth
So I'll lay down my gun
And I'll soldier on, and I will not be 22
I'll lay down my gun
I'll soldier on, and I will not be 22.

At the end of his journey, the Apostle Paul said: I fought the good fight; I have kept the faith; and I have finished the race.

I pray that everyone would live a full and natural life, fight that battle, and never surrender to it.

I thank you, Kap.

RESTORING AMERICANS' TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to pass the TRUST Act to ban individual stock trading by Members of Congress and their spouses.

Now, Representatives are elected to serve their communities back home, and this bill builds trust and makes important reforms. While the American people are working hard to keep