

is every day because every day America and her people cherish the sacrifice and the service of our Nation's veterans.

OCTOBER 7 IS DEADLIEST DAY IN JEWISH HISTORY SINCE THE HOLOCAUST

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on October 7, hearts, minds, and lives were forever changed. We believed hatred and murder of Jews to be a thing of the past, but we were heartbreakingly wrong.

October 7 will go down as the deadliest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust.

Today, our strongest ally in the Middle East, our friend, Israel, is at war after enduring a multipronged terror attack by Hamas.

Let me be clear: Hamas is not a militant group. They are terrorists.

The atrocities that took place on October 7 by Hamas against innocent Israelis were not the result of provocation. It was a massacre.

It was not in response to occupation of the Gaza Strip. It was a massacre.

It was not a flare-up. It was a massacre.

If you take elderly women, mothers, the disabled, and children hostage, or if you target families and slaughter and torture civilians indiscriminately, you do not get to claim the moral high ground.

There can be no confusion about the war between Israel and Hamas. It is good versus evil. It is civilization versus barbarism. It is self-defense against aggression.

We must be a voice for the truth, and here is the truth: At least 1,400 Israelis were murdered. More than 4,400 were severely injured. More than 200 hostages were taken to be used as human shields. Twenty-seven Americans are dead, and 10 remain unaccounted for.

Make no mistake, Israel is shaken but is not defeated. The United States must be bold and courageous in standing up for the nation of Israel and the right for her to defend itself.

When fighting evil, there can be no neutrality. We must send a clear message to Hamas and Hezbollah and those that fund them that the United States stands with Israel today, tomorrow, and always.

#### WORKING TO MAKE IT EASIER TO VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, we need to make it easier, not harder, for eligible voters to make their voices heard in our elections. We need to make sure that voting is accessible to everyone, whether they want to go to the polls, vote early, or vote by mail.

In Congress, there is so much we can do to make it easier for people to vote and participate in our democracy. It starts with passing the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the Freedom to

Vote Act. These commonsense bills would end partisan gerrymandering, expand voting by mail, protect early voting, help get big money out of our elections, combat dark money, support election integrity, and make additional reforms to improve ballot access.

□ 1045

It is time to put politics aside and get these commonsense bills across the finish line. I will continue to do everything I can to protect the right to vote and work to make it easier for people to vote and to participate in our democracy.

CONGRATULATING MAYOR KEN MARSHBURN ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and celebrate the exemplary service of Mayor Ken Marshburn, a distinguished leader and devoted public servant to the town of Garner.

During his time in office, Mayor Marshburn has worked tirelessly alongside council members, town staff, and community leaders to enhance the quality of life in Garner. He has an unwavering belief in Garner's potential and has always worked to make Garner a place where people can not only live but also thrive.

Mayor Marshburn's leadership is coming to an end today with our elections in Garner. He has steered Garner toward a positive and prosperous future. His commitment to fiscal responsibility has laid a solid foundation for the town's growth, attracting new businesses that enrich our economic diversity. His legacy is one of leadership, service, and unwavering dedication to our community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Mayor Ken Marshburn for his unwavering commitment and invaluable contributions to the town of Garner and extending our best wishes to him and his family as they embark on this well-deserved retirement.

Our community is richer and brighter due to his leadership and service. I again thank Mayor Marshburn for his service.

FIGHTING HATRED IN ALL FORMS

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, in North Carolina last year, anti-Semitic incidents increased by 30 percent. The ongoing conflict in Israel has led to even more anti-Semitic attacks both in the U.S. and around the world.

Just this week, the ADL's Center on Extremism reported a nearly 400 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents compared to the same period last year. The situation has been even worse since Hamas launched a brutal and calculated attack against Jewish people and the State of Israel on October 7.

In New York, Jewish students at Cooper Union College were forced to shelter inside the school library on Wednesday for their own safety during a campus protest. In Indianapolis, a woman deliberately crashed her car into the building of what she believed was a pro-Jewish organization.

Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation to remain vigilant against anti-Semi-

tism, discrimination, and prejudice. Let's work to fight hatred in all forms and ensure that the scourge of anti-Semitism does not rear its ugly head both at home and abroad.

AVOIDING A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss our core job here in Congress, funding the Federal Government. We have 10 days until a government shutdown. Mr. Speaker, I will say that again, 10 days, just over a week until the government runs out of money.

A government shutdown would hurt the economy, risk our national security, and would be a disaster for North Carolina. Hundreds of thousands of people would be put on temporary leave without pay or be forced to work without pay. Essential staff—like our TSA agents, air traffic controllers, and many others—would be required to work without pay through the duration of any shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, there is only one path forward, and that is bipartisanship. Republicans have a very narrow majority in the House. Democrats have a very narrow majority in the Senate. We have the White House, but we have to work together.

Right now there is no plan to fund our government, and we have to do it next week. This needs to be a priority for this body, for this institution, and we have to do our job. The American people expect us to fund the government, and right now there is no plan to do that.

A shutdown will cost taxpayers money. It will hit our economy hard. My constituents are hit hard right now with the rising cost of inflation, the high cost of mortgages, and the continuing costs that hit hard, whether it is childcare or healthcare. A shutdown would be an incredible unforced error at this time.

Mr. Speaker, we need to fund the government.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN CALIFORNIA

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, Congress is considering a transportation appropriations bill right now as we speak. It is critical that we don't give another dime to California's failed high-speed rail project that has sought money year after year after year from the Federal level.

Indeed, this document does not provide any new money for the high-speed rail project, but they are certainly seeking it. There are reportedly proposals for \$3 billion requested by Governor Newsom and even reportedly asks of a possible \$28 billion, which is what they really seek.

Let's go back just a little bit to learn the history of this project. In 2008, a proposition was passed on California's ballot with the idea to build a high-

speed rail system from San Francisco to L.A. The voters were told the cost would be \$33 billion. Okay. There would have to be a high-speed rail that would go from the two cities at approximately 220 miles an hour and get the job done in approximately 3 hours or less. It has fallen far short of those goals.

They only have to have one high-speed train a day go in order to be eligible to be called a high-speed train. Otherwise, it is going to be a commuter line stopping in every little burg along the way. As it is turning out, from San Francisco to San Jose, it looks they are going to use local electric rail. Passengers would need to jump on a train in San Jose and then take it down to an undetermined point in southern California and perhaps jump on another train there.

We were talking about this last night in the debate, and I mentioned that you could take a Southwest Airlines plane and already be on the beach and have half a sunburn before you could get off the high-speed rail at that point.

What is the cost these days? That is the interesting part. In 2008, \$33 billion is what they were sold. A year later, they adjusted the price up to \$42 billion. Not long after that, when I was still in the State legislature, they actually admitted the price then would be \$97 billion. Today's estimates show it to be \$128 billion.

How much construction is finished on it? The voters were told in 2008 that it would be ready to go by 2020. Well, it is 2023, and not a single mile of track has been laid. They have some bridges and aqueducts already built around Fresno and such, but it is nowhere near being completed.

They are trying to do it in segments, so they are doing the Central Valley segment because, as they said at the time—this is pretty funny—they can build it in the Central Valley, there are fewer people there, so there is less resistance to having it built. They are going to do a segment from Merced to Bakersfield, where it ends up in an orchard somewhere as the terminus. At this point, we are finding they need \$28 billion just to complete that segment, not the entire thing.

It has been a boondoggle from the beginning, with lies basically from the rail authority about what is going to happen with the timeline, the environmental work, and the number of jobs.

Here is another good one: They were promising there would be a million jobs for California. Well, 3 years into the project, they finally admitted it would be a million job years. Currently, they claim 5,000 people are working on the rail, and so at that rate for a million job years at 5,000 people, that would take 200 years to complete the system.

Well, the people who voted for it would probably like to see it done in their lifetime, which may not even happen. I think at this point, why don't

we just cut our losses and move toward something that is useful not just for Californians but for all Americans.

Indeed, we want to do infrastructure around here. Why don't we do true infrastructure? We talk about highways. We talk about a lot of things. I am focused a lot on California's water situation. We have several projects to add to its water supply so it can continue to grow crops and people can thrive in our State, not just environmental water that gets shifted more and more towards fish water and running it out the delta, which doesn't actually help that situation or do anything environmentally positive anyway.

Instead of continuing to come to Washington, D.C., for more money to do something that is only covering this little portion of California, rather than San Francisco all the way to L.A. as originally planned, I propose instead that we shift the money into other projects that can help all Americans.

They don't even have the route planned out for the high-speed rail project. They don't know how they are going to get the last leap from Bakersfield into southern California. Are they going to build a tunnel through there with all that seismic activity? Are they going to go around it? Are they going to go over it? They don't have the whole plan this many years into the project, and they still want more money from Washington, D.C., from all Federal taxpayers.

If they shift the money into other infrastructure that can help all Americans, these crops that are grown in California, look at these numbers, basically 100 percent of walnuts and tomatoes grown commercially are grown in California. Many of these other crops, 90-plus percent are grown in California. Having a stable food supply is what benefits Americans, so dollars invested into our water system in California would go much further than wasting money on high-cost rail.

#### COMMEMORATING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. VAN DREW). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PORTER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Indigenous Peoples' Heritage Month and the enduring contributions made by the Acjachemen and Tongva people to our community. In Orange County, we are dedicated to supporting our indigenous neighbors, as they reclaim their history.

For generations, indigenous groups have fought against the pressure to assimilate. They have retained a strong connection with their cultures even when the Federal Government has failed to support them. Indigenous Peoples' Heritage Month is a celebration of their resilience.

We owe these communities recognition. In the past, I have held

roundtables with Tribal leaders and chaired hearings to better understand how our current systems leave Native people behind.

I am proud to represent indigenous populations, to lift up their stories, and to celebrate how their perspectives make our communities stronger. I will continue to be a partner with indigenous leaders and will fight to get their communities the help that they need.

#### STANDING UP FOR VETERANS

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, elected officials have a duty to stand up for veterans. I rise today not only to honor their sacrifices with my words but to reiterate a call for meaningful action.

Nearly 100,000 veterans call Orange County, California, home. They embody the resilience of our Nation. Yet, when they come home, they face institutions that systematically fail them. For those who have fought for our country, we must take care of them and their families. We must deliver the benefits that they are owed. We must address their invisible wounds by making it easier for them to get mental health care.

In Congress, I have proudly worked on improving military families' housing, strengthening the Veterans Crisis Line, and getting Orange County veterans answers and care from the VA.

On Veterans Day, we thank our troops for their service, and we recommit ourselves to getting them the help that they need.

#### STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, student debt holds back our entire economy and hurts all of us. Americans today, young and old, cannot start businesses or save for retirement because they are burdened by student loans.

I am glad the Biden-Harris administration is doing what it can to forgive student debt despite roadblocks from a corrupt Supreme Court. The administration's actions will extend relief to 125,000 Americans who can participate better in our economy, totaling \$9 billion that will go back into our communities.

In the long term, we must have a comprehensive plan to prevent another student debt crisis from happening as we fix the current one. I founded the College Affordability Caucus to address these problems.

Debt-free higher education is one of the best investments that we can make to improve the lives of young people and strengthen our Nation's workforce for decades to come.

#### STANDING UP FOR TRANS STUDENTS

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight how anti-transgender campus policies hurt students' well-being.

In September, the Orange Unified School District became the sixth school district in California to adopt a forced outing policy. As young people are growing up, these harmful mandates expose students for something as simple as going by a different name