

Ms. BERA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the lifetime achievements of Angelo K. Tsakopoulos.

Mr. Tsakopoulos' story is a story of the American Dream. Angelo immigrated to the United States from Greece at the age of 15. He worked hard. He didn't have a whole lot but went into the real estate business to help pay for his education at California State University, Sacramento. He built a real estate company.

Angelo helped shape Sacramento over his life. The Sacramento Bee has identified Mr. Tsakopoulos potentially as the most influential Sacramentan since John Sutter. His contributions, not just to our community but to philanthropy, to education, and to the arts are outstanding.

Mr. Tsakopoulos also never forgot his roots in Greece. This Monday he will receive lifetime recognition for his service to Hellenism. He established multiple foundations and organizations to celebrate the values and the culture of his homeland.

He also, through his family, continues to do public service through his daughter Eleni who is our Lieutenant Governor in California. On Monday, February 6, all of us in Sacramento, the United States, and all Greek Americans recognize the contributions of Angelo Tsakopoulos and his family; contributions to preserving Greek culture.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the first day of Black History Month to recognize the importance of studying African-American history and Black history in the United States.

It is incredibly important for us to recognize Black history and teach it not only to our young students from elementary school to middle school to high school, but to all Americans. We have to understand the good and the bad. We have to understand the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow, and mass incarceration.

We need to understand—as I stand here on the floor of the House of Representatives in the United States Capitol, a beacon of democracy and freedom—that this is a building that was built by enslaved people. It is important for us to understand that because we need to recognize that and get better at teaching that to future generations of Americans.

We also need to recognize the accomplishments of a few individuals: the moral character of our former colleague, John Lewis, who really was the moral backbone of this institution; the first President that I served under, Barack Obama, the accomplishments, not just as President but as a great human being, father, and husband; my close friend, the first female Vice President, the first African-American Vice President, the first Asian-American Vice President, Vice President KAMALA HARRIS who is a role model for my daughter and future women across the spectrum in the United States; and

our good friend, the minority leader of the Democratic Party, HAKEEM JEFFRIES, someone who we are all proud of.

Let's understand African-American history. Let's teach it. Let's not try to erase the parts that we don't want to teach. If we don't teach Black history, we will be condemned to repeat some of those mistakes. We need to learn from the past, and we need to get better. Let's teach it to all of our students.

HONORING KEN COOLEY

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Assemblyman Ken Cooley for his decades of service to Sacramento County and the State of California.

Ken served in the California State Assembly for 10 years representing the Eighth Assembly District, which covered the eastern half of Sacramento County.

Assemblyman Cooley started his public service career in Sacramento as the chief of staff to the State assemblyman, and later as chief counsel to the Assembly Finance and Insurance Committee.

He was elected to the Rancho Cordova's first city council in 2002 and twice served as mayor to Rancho Cordova. Ken was a constant presence and continues to be a constant presence throughout our community.

I have had the privilege to go to many events with Ken, and he is a close friend. He is an Eagle Scout, as well, and his commitment to Scouting helped recognize youth achievement through the Boy Scouts of America.

The City of Rancho Cordova and all of us in Sacramento County are better off thanks to his hard work and determination, and I wish him all the best in the next chapter of his life.

AMERICANS HAVE THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS

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

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, Americans have a fundamental right to keep and bear arms that shall not be infringed.

The unelected bureaucrats at the ATF do not have the constitutional authority to ban guns and violate the Second Amendment rights of American citizens.

I am proud to join my colleagues to fight to block Joe Biden's pistol brace gun ban and also to fight to defund the ATF.

□ 1030

In Illinois, Governor Pritzker signed an unconstitutional gun ban that violates the Second Amendment rights of my constituents. Joe Biden and J.B. Pritzker's policies released dangerous criminals and defund the police, and then they want to take our Second Amendment right to defend ourselves.

I am a proud member of the House Freedom Caucus and the House Second

Amendment Caucus. We are united in our opposition to these unconstitutional attacks on the rights of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I will always stand for our constitutional rights and protect our Second Amendment rights in Congress.

PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, Social Security coverage is an earned benefit. In January, Social Security beneficiaries began to see an 8.7 percent cost-of-living increase, the largest since 1981. This COLA covers retirees as well as workers who become disabled and surviving children under age 18 whose working parents died.

For nearly a century, America has honored the sacred insurance promise intergenerationally. Those who work throughout their lives will benefit from the fruits of their labor.

Yes, this historic cost-of-living adjustment will help Americans manage their cost of living to pay bills and put food on the table. In addition, millions of Medicare users will now only pay \$35 per month for insulin. This cost savings will benefit hundreds of thousands of Ohioans.

The Social Security COLA along with affordable insulin are being championed by congressional Democrats. We know the foundation of financial stability for over 66 million retired Americans is their earned social insurance benefits. Respecting their lives and their work, Democrats will always honor Social Security and vote to protect it and to strengthen Medicare.

FUND NEW GREAT LAKES AUTHORITY

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to also call upon President Biden to fund the new Great Lakes Authority in the administration's fiscal year 2024 budget request.

With support from our Great Lakes colleagues, the Great Lakes Authority was authorized in the fiscal year 2023 omnibus appropriations bill and signed into law on January 2, 2023.

Across America, regional development instrumentalities like this have existed for decades. Until now, the Great Lakes region was the one major region left out of our Nation's toolkit for regional cooperation, reinvestment, and revitalization.

Launched initially with Federal resources to drive economic and environmental recovery, this authority now exists and aims to become self-sufficient sooner rather than later. This new year brings new opportunities for public-private partnerships across our Great Lakes region for investment and revitalization.

The Great Lakes Authority will harness the region's strengths, which include stewardship of the largest body of freshwater on the continent and on

Earth. Our region is home to America's industrial and agricultural strength. We have hardworking men and women who manufacture the majority of automobiles and trucks this Nation manufactures, as well as, of course, farmers in our agricultural heartland who feed us all. We have these massive production assets in this region.

Finally, the wealth of the region has allowed for an array of educational and corporate institutions, as well, which now can be mobilized together to reboot and repurpose the region's recovery from massive job outsourcing and, frankly, outright neglect that has damaged its potential for far too long.

Investing to strengthen the Great Lakes heartland will usher in a new era for our communities. It is time to fund the Great Lakes Authority to be the key economic development engine that becomes self-supporting through public-private partnerships that make a lasting impact.

Onward Great Lakes Authority.

There is no time like the present to launch a stronger and more hopeful future for every community across our precious region.

PROTECTING WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' SPORTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, sports and athletic competitions provide essential opportunities for women to thrive at every stage of their life, as children in youth sports and as teens in high school and in college, in order to live a healthy and productive life.

As a former competitive athlete, an equestrian, a basketball player, a golfer, and, yes, the teenage curling champion of 1975 in my hometown, I know the unparalleled opportunities that sports offer to women and girls.

Competitive sports give women a chance to learn new skills, to develop lifelong friendships, and to challenge themselves to compete at the highest levels. Title IX and the banning of discrimination against women in sports made so much of this possible for me and countless other women.

Today, these opportunities are under threat. Joe Biden's Department of Education and State agencies across the Nation are allowing, even encouraging, biological men to participate in women's sports. This is fundamentally unfair. It deprives women and girls of what so many of us fought for decades to achieve: equal opportunity to train, to compete, and to excel in athletics.

We witnessed this past year, during the NCAA women's swimming championship, a phenomenal female athlete robbed of her title by a biological male. This is not an isolated incident. The tragedy is playing out in countless other sports and athletic leagues across our Nation.

Today, we take a stand, with compassion for all, in defense of women's

sports to stop this dangerous precedent.

I am honored to be joined by an amazing group of outstanding women athletes who are in our Chamber today and are courageously standing up for women in all sports across our Nation and all women athletes.

This is why I am so honored to co-sponsor Representative GREG STEUBE's Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act and to announce its introduction today in honor of National Women and Girls in Sports Day.

Mr. Speaker, I have here the legislation. This bill will make it a violation of Title IX for biological men to compete in sports designated for women or girls. Further, it sensibly defines sex based on one's biological designation at birth.

This bill isn't just anti-woke. It is actually pro-science. This bill will protect opportunities for women and girls to compete fairly on the athletic field and in life without interference from woke agencies or politicians who are making up definitions of sex and gender as they go, all to fit toxic political agendas and ideologies.

Women have fought hard over the years for equality of opportunity, and it is essential that we protect these opportunities we cherish today for generations of women and girls to come.

The Republican majority has pledged to protect women's sports, and today, we are delivering on that promise with Congressman STEUBE's bill.

Mr. Speaker, I shall introduce Mr. STEUBE's bill today.

HOUSE REPUBLICAN ECONOMIC SCHEME HURTS WORKING FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, the work of Congress, and particularly the House of Representatives, is to advance the well-being, security, and economic growth of the American people.

Let me define for you, Mr. Speaker, who the American people are. For all of us as Members of Congress, that looks very different.

For me in my district, it means the young entrepreneur who is eager and excited about starting a new business, a startup company.

It is the middle-aged couple who have government jobs and who have worked diligently, scrimped and saved to buy a home, and are now looking for financing and support to send their children to college.

It is the veteran who has served this country and now has to navigate through the bureaucracy of the Federal Government to get those rights and privileges that, having served this country, he or she deserves.

It is the senior citizen and the retiree who are always watching their budget to make sure that they have enough to

meet all of their bills and somehow get by.

Those are the people and the families whom I fight for. I know that, on my side of the aisle, those workers, parents, seniors, and young people are whom we, as Democrats, are fighting for. While we may come from different families with different standings, beliefs, and statuses, that is whom we all should be working for in this Chamber.

Presently, however, the House Republican economic scheme will only hurt working American families, whom we say we are here to support. As Congress, as the House of Representatives of the people, we must, in partnership with the President, continue to enact legislation to protect the financial security of American working families.

That is why I am directly calling on my colleagues, the Republican Conference members, to begin the work of legislating for the American people—the majority of Americans, not the performative politics required by an extreme social media fringe—with legislation to help work out the best possibilities to solve the growing challenges that our families, the American people, face every day.

The current Republican-led plan to cut taxes in favor of the wealthy does not help lower- and middle-income families. Instead, it increases our national deficit and makes inflation worse.

The dismantling of Social Security will be devastating to retirees, who have paid into that system and believe that it is something that they are going to have to live out their best days yet.

Likewise, allowing for prescription drug prices and health insurance premiums to rise while simultaneously allowing for an increasing energy bill and student loan payments only make it harder for families to financially stay afloat and take care of their health.

In the last Congress, the 117th Congress, President Biden and House Democrats forged extraordinary progress, working in a bipartisan manner in the other Chamber, for American working families with many consequential new laws.

They include the American Rescue Plan, which kick-started the fastest and strongest jobs recovery in modern times, creating more than 10 million jobs in just 2 years; the infrastructure law, which put Americans back to work while simultaneously rebuilding our roads, bridges, ports, and water systems; the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which deploys stronger tools to keep guns out of dangerous hands; the PACT Act, which ensures that veterans who are exposed to toxic chemicals while protecting our Nation can access the healthcare services they need; the CHIPS and Science Act, which will power American preeminence in science, innovation, and manufacturing, strengthen our national security, and bring jobs back to