

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, when I helped clients win asylum cases as a young law student, I heard the tragic stories of how they fled their countries, carrying with them fear and pain but little else.

It is already very hard to win asylum. You must first show that you have a credible fear of being persecuted in your home country. Asylum seekers must later prove their claims in an administrative or court process.

There are many things wrong with our immigration system, but showing credible fear is the right first step. Now, we are seeing major permanent proposed changes to our asylum law as a condition for emergency funding for Ukraine, Israel, and the Indo-Pacific.

I stand in strong support of this emergency aid. It is essential, but just as it was wrong to tie Israeli aid to gutting the IRS' ability to go after tax cheats, it is wrong to tie harmful, significant, and permanent changes to asylum law to passing essential aid for our allies.

Instead, we need comprehensive immigration reform. We need to protect our Dreamers, and we need to support our allies. Our Latino communities, our asylum seekers, and our allies abroad deserve better.

CELEBRATING THE BLESSING OF OSCAR ORTIZ IN OUR LIVES

(Mrs. RAMIREZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of my friend and constituent, Oscar Ortiz, a devoted champion for educational equity.

Oscar was a visionary. He believed that education was a powerful tool to realize our collective potential and dreams. As a teacher, "el maestro," "teacher," Ortiz helped the students find their power and joy in learning. As an organizer with the Chicago Teachers Union, he energized our community to advance social justice and equity through education.

Oscar committed his time on Earth to building a future for everyone. His passion and optimism were infectious. I am going to miss him dearly, and I know countless others will, too.

To his family and loved ones, know you are in my heart and prayers. Together, let's celebrate the blessing he was in our lives and the mark he has left in our city of Chicago. A bullhorn will never be the same after Oscar Ortiz. May his passion for change and love of community always guide us.

Rest in power, Oscar Ortiz. We love you.

LOURDES UNIVERSITY LEADS THE WAY

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Lourdes University of Sylvania, Ohio, and its new president, William Bisset, who held a vital convening last week as part of the university's Courage Conversations Town Hall series. It focused on the Israel-Palestine conflict, with dozens of students, staff, and faculty taking part.

University President Bisset and Professor Mary Robinson, who chairs the history, geography, and political science departments at Lourdes, said their goal was to offer a historical perspective to develop an understanding of the past history of Israel and Palestine to help people grasp the full scope of what is taking place in that war-torn region. They hope the conversations will help provide a better understanding of a longstanding conflict in which world leaders have long sought a true path toward a lasting peace and a two-state solution.

Thoughtful discussions in which history is examined, as was done at Lourdes University last week, is the way a breakthrough for peace and reconciliation will come about. May other organizations follow the lead of Lourdes University.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a copy of an editorial from the Toledo Blade that recognizes this event and its important contribution to human understanding.

[From The Blade, Nov. 25, 2023]

EDITORIAL: LOURDES LEADS

(By The Blade Editorial Board)

Kudos to Lourdes University for showing us the way forward on the future of Palestine and Israel.

Not afraid to tackle probably the most emotionally fraught topic of our day, the university last week offered a "town hall" on the topic of the Israeli-Hamas War.

Would that others who have taken to the streets shouting chants and waving signs and issuing orders to U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Toledo) would show some of the same awareness of how complicated this problem is.

The university in Sylvania devoted its Courageous Conversations Town Hall to the topic.

Conscious of the ethnic and religious tensions, there was security stationed at the door, but it wasn't needed.

About 40, including administration staff, faculty members, and students, attended.

"My goal was to offer this from a historical perspective because I think the more people understand the past and the history, the better understanding they will have of the subject and be able to better understand both sides of the story," said Mary Robinson, associate professor of history and department chairman of history, geography, and political science at Lourdes.

President William Bisset said, "We needed to start with a conversation that explained that this has been a very, very complicated part of the world for many, many years, that leaders throughout the world have tried to figure out.

"We felt that it was important, especially for our students, but also for our community members to start the conversation [about Israel and Palestine] with a historical perspective," Mr. Bisset said.

Israel and the Palestinian people, and the armed guerilla groups, Hamas and Hezbollah,

who nurture the bitterness of the Palestinians over their displacement from the land that officially became Israel in 1948, are at an impasse, with both sides claiming ownership of the land between Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

But yet, there have been instances under at least two U.S. presidents, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, that the Palestinian people came close to securing a Palestinian state.

Among the Arab states of the Middle East, there appears to be a willingness to once again take up the possibility of a so-called two-state solution.

It's not going to happen, though, if Hamas remains in power in the Gaza Strip. Whether by Israel's current invasion of Gaza or through the diplomatic intervention of Arab leaders in the neighboring Islamic countries, Hamas and Hezbollah have to be neutralized.

Calm discussion in which the history is examined, as was done in Lourdes University's Courageous Conversations Town Hall last week, is the way a breakthrough will come about.

□ 1730

PROGRESS IN NORTH CAROLINA

(Mr. JACKSON of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JACKSON of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent Mecklenburg and Gaston Counties and just want to report back on some bipartisan progress we have had lately.

We have a huge problem with fentanyl across the State, as we do across the country, but we have new funding both to prevent overdoses and to crack down on the organized crime that is trafficking fentanyl into our communities.

We also got bipartisan support to close the weather radar gap which exists in Charlotte. We have the largest weather radar gap in the country. We are working on new technology to make sure we have more accurate forecasts to keep people safe.

We are also working on the Junk Fee Prevention Act to save your family money and prevent all of those fees that attach as we make purchases online. It is a solid bipartisan start with more work to do. I will keep you posted.

REMEMBERING TRINIDAD "TRINI" GARZA

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the extraordinary life of Trinidad Garza, better known in our community as "Trini."

Trini was just a tremendous individual, a great person. I cannot say enough about this man. He loved trying to help kids when it came to education in the community. He was an incredible businessman. He served our country in the U.S. Navy. He did so much for the city of Dallas. I love the Oak Cliff neighborhood that he lived in.

He was just such a tremendous leader. He was part of the city's first Mexican-American Leadership Conference.

He was also educated here in the north Texas area.

He was the first Hispanic member of the board of trustees at one of our local colleges. He was also appointed as a regional director of the U.S. Department of Education under President Clinton.

The life and legacy of Trini Garza just goes on and on and on. He is going to be deeply missed by so many because of everything he has done and accomplished. Everything that is going to be said about him and how it will be commemorated will be well deserved.

Great job, Trini. Please rest in peace. My condolences to his entire family.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, we are sitting here on the precipice of entering December, a month in which those of us who profess the Christian faith and belief in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, celebrate his birth into this world to give the world, and each and every one of us in it, hope for eternal life and eternal salvation.

We are immeasurably blessed to live in a country where we can carry out our faith and exercise our beliefs.

It is critically important that we just came out of the weekend of Thanksgiving. At Thanksgiving, of course, we are thankful to live in a country in which we have In God We Trust emblazoned over the dais on which the Speaker sits in front of the American flag.

The Wall Street Journal eloquently prints every Wednesday before Thanksgiving "The Desolate Wilderness" editorial that has run in that paper for—I don't know—probably some 60 years.

It eloquently lays out all of the hardships that faced those Europeans who came to the North American Continent, and what it was like, and what they experienced going out into the desolate wilderness, and what that meant for mankind throughout the world.

I am always struck at how often we, as Americans in this generation and in this day and age, are too often either actually apologetic or forced to be apologetic or taught to be apologetic for being American, for our existence as Americans because of both actual and, frankly, perceived or taught past wrongs.

I started this talking about my Christian faith. My colleagues and con-

stituents and people across this country who share that faith know that we are taught in Romans that we all fall short of the glory of God for we are all sinners.

That is inherently true. It is true in the United States. It is true in Great Britain. It is true in Russia and China and throughout the world. We are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God.

The thing that is unique about this country is that we have set up a system that is designed to protect us against the worst impulses of man in terms of the centralization of power in the hands of a few to be used tyrannically against the many.

That is the great gift that we have inherited from our forefathers who bled, died, and fought so that we could live here and live free, so that we could exercise our conscience, so that we could live according to the dictates of our conscience.

That is why I am thankful. That is what I was thankful for over Thanksgiving because that is what it is supposed to be about.

It is not just about the football game. It is not just about the turkey. It is not just about Friendsgiving or whatever people talk about these days.

It is a specific holiday about our thankfulness as Americans and why that is so critically important to the ethos of being an American because you aren't an American simply because of DNA or blood.

You are an American because of the idea that is embodied in this Chamber, in the people's House. It is for that reason that I came to the House floor on the Thursday before we adjourned for Thanksgiving week, after this body had passed by a suspension of the rules—that is, without the normal debate process, without the regular order that was such a central part of the debates last year in this body—we passed through suspension of the rules some \$400 billion to \$500 billion of additional spending up and through late January and early February of 2024.

I found that then, and I continue to find it to be repulsive, that that is how we would conduct business, that that is how we would carry out the business of the people's House.

I made clear then that I thought that it was destructive and that it was carrying on the continued policies of the previous regime passed last December over the loud objections of my colleagues on this side of the aisle to pass a \$1.7 trillion omnibus spending bill chock full of leftist priorities that are destroying the American Dream—nothing short of that.

A Wall Street Journal poll from this month found that only 36 percent of voters said the American Dream still holds true.

The American Dream is dying because Americans' government is failing them. It is actively working against them, and our people feel it.

Our country, our society, our culture, our people, the people we represent, are

in deep despair. \$11,400. According to "CBS News," the typical American household must spend an additional \$11,434 annually just to maintain the same standard of living they enjoyed in January of 2021.

That is a problem. The average American family in this country is hurting. I watched the Democrat White House press secretary walk up to the microphone and just dismiss it and just pretend that the average American family is totally fine and can walk right out and go buy their Thanksgiving dinner, and there is no harm, no foul. They are all good. The Biden administration policies and the Democrat policies, they are having no negative effect. Ignore these numbers. Ignore the cost of goods and buying food. Ignore the cost of housing. Ignore the cost of car ownership. That is what this administration wants the American people to do.

Our constituents are literally being priced out of the American Dream of owning a home. My staff, making decent money relative to some people in the world, come to me and say, I don't know how to buy a house. I don't know how I can possibly ever buy a house, certainly not in the Nation's Capitol.

Housing prices have nearly doubled since 2010. In the second quarter of 2023, the median home price was \$416,100. In 2010, it was \$219,500.

In May of 2023, median mortgage payments hit an all-time high of \$2,165 a month. According to The Wall Street Journal, the buyer of a typical home faces a monthly principal and interest payment of nearly \$2,200, more than double the level of early 2021. Goldman Sachs' Housing Affordability Index hit a new record low in August.

That is just homes. What about cars, kind of the second biggest expense? Americans can't even afford to purchase a car because of the efforts of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and this administration to ban the internal combustion engine in pursuit of unicorn energy policies that are going to do nothing to actually reduce CO₂, and they are driving the American people into bankruptcy with an inability to afford an automobile to go about their lives and their jobs.

A new car costs \$50,000, nearly double the cost just 10 years ago. Electric vehicles are piling up on the lots of dealers across this country because the American people know they can't work for them. They can't afford them. They can't stop to charge like the Secretary of Energy did when she showed up and made a pregnant woman and her family get out of the way for a photo op while she charged her EV driving across the country.

That is the truth. The truth of this administration and my Democratic colleagues is they are perfectly content, as they have admitted to me in the Rules Committee and on this floor, to drive the American family into bankruptcy so they can pursue climate change reform.