

person of a different hue can get a better decision than a person of color in this country.

We see it all the time in the courts of the country. I was a judge of a small claims court for one-quarter of a century. I was a litigator. I saw the injustices as they took place that I could do nothing about. This is an injustice that is in its infancy.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I warn you that you are going to see the injustice take place. You will see it. Maybe what I am saying today will help to prevent it. I doubt it. I doubt it.

There are some Members that I am very much concerned about now that this vote has been taken. I am very much concerned about them because there are people here who would want to remove them from office if they could without having committed a crime because of positions that they have taken, policy positions. That would be an injustice.

So, I am proud of my vote. I voted the way I voted for reasons that I have called to your attention, Mr. Speaker, but a review does not hurt.

One, Mr. Speaker, the only way you get here is if the people elect you. You can't be appointed to the House of Representatives. It is the people's House. The people send us, and the people ought to remove us unless we have committed a crime and been adjudicated as such by a proper court.

Two, the decisions are not appealable. There is no appeal from our decision.

Three, the process itself is not bifurcated any longer when it comes to removal from the House of Representatives. Prior to today, it was bifurcated, and the judicial system would have the opportunity to judge a person and determine whether the person was guilty of a crime. Finding such, that could then be used by the House of Representatives to expel the person.

We have taken the judicial system completely out of the process. We have become judge, jury, prosecutors, and investigators.

The truth is, whatever 290 of us can agree on, then that is a reason to expel a person. If 290 of us can agree on a reason, then that is it. Given the way we have entrenched ourselves now into teams, I don't favor the consequences that I can foresee.

We have allowed ourselves now to become, unfortunately, a House of Representatives where this discord is no longer just a difference of opinion about policy. It has become a means by which we can come to the floor to remove a person from office, a person who was sent here by people who voted. I am much afraid for what we are going to have to regret because of what we will do as time progresses.

So, I shall now move to the well of the House and file my resolution affirming the state of Palestine's right to exist. I have read it to you, Mr. Speaker. Some Members may be tuning in late, so I will read it again. This is the resolution.

I voted for Israel's right to exist on Tuesday of this week. I think we ought to vote similarly for Palestine to have a right to exist, as well.

It reads:

Affirming the state of Palestine's right to exist.

Whereas, this resolution may be cited as the Original Resolution Affirming the State of Palestine's Right to Exist;

Whereas, Palestinian people are inhabitants of the land of Palestine;

Whereas, in 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 181, which called for the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states;

Whereas, on May 14, 1948, President Harry Truman issued a statement recognizing Israel as an independent state.

Mr. Speaker, I support Israel as an independent state. That is not here. I support Israel as an independent state. This is a sidebar comment. I have supported it. I will continue to support it.

I supported Israel by voting for more than \$50 billion in funds, but I did it because I thought we were moving toward a two-state solution. I did it because I thought a two-state solution was the will and the desire of the House of Representatives.

I have reached a point now where I have to know. That is what I thought. Passage of the resolution will give me the certainty I need. The absence of the passage of the resolution will cause me to have a great deal of consternation about how I am going to approach votes in the future.

To continue:

Whereas, on November 28, 2023, the House of Representatives agreed to H. Res. 888, reaffirming the State of Israel's right to exist—I voted for it, and I would vote for it again and again and again if given the opportunity—by a vote of 412 “yeas,” 1 “nay,” and 1 “present.”

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the House of Representatives, one, affirms Palestine's right to exist and at a future time to become a state.

Mr. Speaker, I accentuated at a future time because I am making it clear to those who would make the argument that this is about saying that Palestine should become a state today. That is not what I am saying. “At a future time”—I don't know when in the future, but I do believe that we ought to have that as our goal since we have stated that we want a two-state solution.

Number two, recognizes the two-state solution as the only solution that will secure a lasting peace in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this. There are some people who want a one-state solution. They mouth “two state,” but in their hearts, they want one state. I am not one of them. What I say is what I mean.

Those Members who say they want a two-state solution and really want a one-state solution, well, this is not for them. This is for people who want a two-state solution.

Number three, rejects calls for Palestine's destruction.

Mr. Speaker, there will be people who will say that nobody is calling for Palestine's destruction. They are wrong. I was on C-SPAN just this week, and there was a caller who called in and who literally, by virtue of the way he presented his argument, wanted to see the destruction of Palestine, the destruction of Palestine. I am not for that. I am not for that. I am not for what is happening with the destruction of Palestine currently. For us to conclude that it is okay to destroy Palestine is an absurdity.

How could we possibly approve of the destruction that we see and the lives that are being taken? How could we approve of that? I don't approve of it. If others can approve of it, the killing of babies, I don't approve of it.

Yes, you have a right to defend yourself, but you have to do it in a just fashion. To perform, if you will, an unjust act in the name of justice is still an injustice. You cannot clean it up by saying it is a just act. Your actions themselves speak for you.

Killing babies is not a just act, especially when you have declared war on Hamas and you end up killing Palestinian babies. It was wrong to kill Israeli babies. What Hamas did was dastardly. The way they did it, it is impossible to even imagine a human being doing it, but you can't complain about killing innocent Israeli babies and then decide: Well, it is okay. The Palestinian babies are just collateral damage. They just happened to be in the wrong place.

What is wrong with us? I will not support the killing of these Palestinian babies. I will not support the destruction of Gaza. I pray that this country will come to its senses.

How long can this go on?

Mr. Speaker, I am always honored to have this opportunity. I don't know how much longer I will have it. There are a lot of people who don't like what I say who have the power to change rules.

As you have seen today, Mr. Speaker, they can change the rules. So, I never know when I will be giving my last speech from this podium, but as long as I have the opportunity to give a speech, I am going to speak truth to power, but more than that, I am going to speak truth about power.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF NANCY PALMER

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

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Nancy Palmer, a longtime Grass Valley resident and community leader who passed away peacefully in her home in September.

Nancy was born in Jacksonville, Florida, on September 18, 1938, and later went on to attend Jacksonville University. She and her husband, Captain Gary H. Palmer, moved to western Nevada County in the 1970s where she soon began devoting her time and talents to many local organizations, including Music in the Mountains, Hospice of the Foothills, Grass Valley Rotary, and Sierra College.

Having grown up in a college town, Nancy recognized the value of community-based education. In 1994, she was elected to the Sierra College board of trustees, a position she was to hold for an impressive 29 years. During her tenure, Sierra College opened two other campuses, serving thousands of students in Placer and Nevada Counties.

Trustee Nancy Palmer's passion for community colleges extended beyond the Sierra College district. She coordinated professional trainings for fellow trustees at the State level, coaching student trustees from the 73 California community college districts across the State.

As the keynote speaker for numerous Sierra College commencement ceremonies, she often inspired students with her motto: Action Requires Courage.

Nancy's accomplishments demonstrated a life lived with action and courage. She will be lovingly remembered by the people she influenced and for her invaluable contributions of time and effort to her community.

The Sierra College board of trustees wrote that they are deeply saddened to announce the passing of their valued colleague. President of the board, Paul Bancroft, stated that Nancy cared about the college so much and her dedication as the representative for Nevada County was evident in everything she did.

Willy Duncan, Sierra College's superintendent and president, spoke for his colleagues by stating that Nancy was a wonderful colleague, but more than that, she was a dear friend, and he will miss her greatly.

On behalf of the Third Congressional District and the United States House of Representatives, I offer heartfelt condolences to Nancy's colleagues; her sisters, Judy Butler Good and Roberta Butler; her daughter-in-law, Lisa Palmer; her nephew, Rodney Shawn Scott; and the countless other lives that she touched.

□ 1230

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
DOW HOTEL AND DOW VILLA MOTEL

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to mark and celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Dow Hotel and Dow Villa Motel located in my district in Inyo County, California.

Over a century ago, in 1923, Walter and Maude Dow built the hotel to provide lodging for big movie crews that were filming the stunning eastern Sierras.

Today, the hotel still hosts guests from the film industry as well as tour-

ists visiting the nearby natural attractions.

In 1957, Joe and Verna Bonham and Ivan and Barbara Turner took over ownership and played an integral role in expanding the hotel's facilities.

With their leadership, an adjacent motel named "The Dow Villa Motel" was built and additional sections were constructed, expanding the hotel's overall capabilities by more than double, from 20 rooms to 50.

With a core value of being a family-operated hotel, it was then sold in 1978 to the Bonham's daughters, Lynne Bunn and Jeanne Willey, who still own it today.

The historic Dow Hotel overlooks a magnificent view of the Sierra and Mt. Whitney and is well known for its hospitality and charming atmosphere.

It holds countless memories and historical significance for the area, having hosted producers, directors, and stars, including Clayton Moore, John Wayne, Roy Rogers, and many more.

One hundred years ago, Walter and Maude Dow saw the economic benefit of having movie business in the region and responded by building what has become a treasured and iconic landmark for the Lone Pine community.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States' House of Representatives and the Third Congressional District of California, I am honored to recognize the Dow Hotel and Dow Villa Motel for their 100 years of contributions to our local economies and participation in the business community.

CONGRATULATING THE ROCKLIN HIGH SCHOOL
FOOTBALL TEAM

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize and congratulate the Rocklin High School football team on winning the CIF Division 2 Sac-Joaquin Section championship game.

The Rocklin Thunder football team beat St. Mary's Rams last week by a score of 17-6, winning their first section title since 2009.

Rocklin head coach Jason Adams set this goal for his team and the defense led by defensive coordinator Greg Benzel was ready for the challenge.

The stout Rocklin defense stopped the Rams in the red zone time and again, forcing four turnovers in the process.

The offense took advantage of the defensive stops and turnovers when Rocklin quarterback Reeve Slone scrambled for a 44-yard touchdown run to put his team up 14-6 just before half-time.

From that point, Rocklin never looked back. Coach Adams' team was able to achieve this because of their commitment to a common goal and every member of the team playing their role.

However, the job is not quite finished for the Rocklin Thunder. They will be hosting Grant Union High School tonight in the Division 2 NorCal Regional game.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Coach Adams and his team the best of luck in their pursuit of a State championship.

Go Thunder.

DISCOVERY OF A SECRET, ILLEGAL CHINESE
BIOLAB IN CALIFORNIA

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, following the discovery of a secret, illegal Chinese biolab in California, I requested an investigation by the House.

The Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party recently released its highly disturbing report, and I commend the select committee and Chair GALLAGHER for getting to the bottom of many of the disturbing facts in play here.

The lab was run, we have learned from the committee's report, by an international fugitive from China named Jesse Zhu.

After running various state-connected companies in China, Mr. Zhu moved to Canada where he set up dozens of corporations to steal valuable American intellectual property and unlawfully transfer it to China.

The Supreme Court of British Columbia found he committed fraud on an epic scale, resulting in a \$330 million judgment.

He then fled to America, assumed a new alias, David He, and set up several more companies, including the one behind this lab in Reedley, California.

The lab was discovered nearly a year ago when a code inspector came upon a suspicious warehouse in Reedley. There was a hose out of the back of the warehouse. Inside, she found many Chinese nationals wearing white lab coats, glasses, masks, and latex gloves, along with thousands of vials of biological substances, and 1,000 mice. Some of the mice were actually found dead.

It was later learned that these were transgenic mice, genetically engineered to catch and carry the COVID-19 virus.

A further inspection found blood tissue and other bodily fluid samples and serums, along with thousands of vials of selected biological material. Some of the vials were labeled with the names of infectious agents, while others were labeled in a code that was never deciphered.

At first, the CDC refused to investigate. They even hung up on local officials who had called to ask for help when they learned about the lab.

The local Representative got involved and, finally, the CDC did do an inspection. They found at least 20 potentially infectious agents, including HIV, tuberculosis, and the deadliest known form of Malaria. Yet still, the CDC didn't bother to test any of these samples. They simply accepted what was on the label even if the contents were unknown. They didn't test it even if there was a code they couldn't decipher.

The committee said this made it impossible for them to fully assess the potential risks that this specific facility posed to the community.

The select committee report calls this decision by the CDC "baffling." Later, local officials discovered a refrigerator in the lab that had eluded the CDC that was labeled "Ebola."

Now, while the supposed purpose of the lab was to sell various medical test kits, all this company actually did was buy counterfeit kits from China and then resell them here in the United States. Thus, as the committee put it, there was a lack of apparent legitimate or even profit-motivated criminal motive in the operation of the illegal facility.

This raises the question: What was it there for? What was the true purpose of the facility? This is especially pressing to ask given that Jesse Zhu, the illegal operator of the lab, was receiving unexplained payments via wire transfer from Chinese banks.

The report further notes that no one knows whether there are other unknown biolabs because there is no monitoring system in place.

It is very clear that we need further congressional action and investigation here. First of all, we need to examine the role of the CDC, which seemed to completely drop the ball here.

Why did the CDC ignore local officials about the lab for months? Why didn't they test any samples from the thousands of vials with unclear or coded labels? How did they manage to miss a freezer that was actually labeled "Ebola"?

Then we also have to ask: How did this lab escape detection? How many more such operations could there be in California and across the country? Finally, we need to learn more about what was the lab's true purpose. Why was it there? What was it planning on doing? Why is it that its operator was receiving so much money from China?

These are questions that we need answers to. Furthermore, it has also become clear that we need to update the monitoring and regulatory framework, which clearly has gaps because a facility like this was allowed to go undetected. In fact, it relocated several times and potentially posed a serious risk to the surrounding communities.

I commend the work that was done by the select committee, and we need to move forward to make sure that we are doing everything we can to get to the bottom of what happened here and to keep our communities safe.

\$6 BILLION PERMANENTLY OFF-LIMITS TO THE
IRANIAN REGIME

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the passage of the No Funds for Iranian Terrorism Act, which I am a cosponsor of, which overwhelmingly has passed the House of Representatives and would permanently freeze \$6 billion that the administration had released to Iran.

Now, this was released by the administration as part of a deal. They claim the money was only for humanitarian purposes, but we know full well that money is fungible; that Iran is very skilled when it comes to sanctions evasion, and that Iran is funding terrorist organizations and their proxies on a massive scale, including Hamas and Hezbollah and, thereby, posing a serious existential risk to the State of Israel.

In fact, FBI Director Christopher Wray recently confirmed that Iran is the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism and has even attempted attacks on American soil. By imposing immediate, mandatory sanctions on foreign financial institutions that facilitate the transfer of these restricted \$6 billion in funds covered under that deal, the No Funds for Iranian Terrorism Act will ensure that that money remains permanently off-limits to the Iranian regime.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that the House came together on a bipartisan basis to pass this legislation that I have coauthored. I urge the Senate to give it prompt consideration and for the President to sign it.

GOVERNOR NEWSOM IS MAKING CALIFORNIA
WORSE

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, last night there was a televised debate between the Governor of my State, Gavin Newsom, and the Governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis. It was set up as sort of a comparison of the two States' models of governments and which is the better model for other States and the country to follow.

While it is true that Florida has done quite well in any number of areas, really the comparison could have been made between California and virtually any other State in the country. When it comes to the key metrics of economic performance and quality of life, California is the very worst State in the country.

Despite that, we have a Governor who went on television and, in fact, has for months, for years now been trying to claim that California is, in fact, leading the Nation. He has said time and time again that California is a model for the Nation. He has said the future happens first in California.

Indeed, it is true that the current administration here in Washington has copied any number of California's policies and, in fact, has elevated many of California's officials—Julie Su, the Acting Secretary of Labor held that position for Governor Newsom; Vice President KAMALA HARRIS; the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Xavier Becerra was formerly California's attorney general; Alejandro Mayorkas; Douglas Parker, the head of OSHA.

Therefore, a matter of great national concern is to really look at the facts of what is happened in California. What the Governor tried to do last night, Governor Newsom, that is, was to present a complete alternative reality using false, misleading, in some cases simply delusional, assertions about the true nature of life in California.

I wanted to take a moment today to correct some of the misstatements that were made by Gavin Newsom in last night's debate.

First, there was a discussion of the California exodus, and the Governor refused to acknowledge the fact that people are leaving our State in record numbers. In fact, he even asserted that

more people are moving to California than to Florida.

Here is the reality: Between 2019 and 2022, 1,044,000 people left California, while 737,000 people moved to Florida. So many people have been leaving California that the State literally did run out of U-Hauls. In fact, for three straight years, California has led the Nation in U-Haul departures.

What is so notable about this is that prior to the Newsom Governorship, California has gained population every year since our founding in 1850.

We have always been the State that people want to come to, the State where anyone could get ahead, and now we are the State that so many people can't wait to leave behind.

It was just this complete abrupt change in the trajectory. California continued to grow and then Governor Newsom took office and suddenly we are leading the Nation in departures. We have the highest out-migration rate in the country.

In fact, it is even more stark when you look at San Francisco, the city that Newsom was the mayor of, the city represented by Congresswoman PELOSI, the city that Vice President HARRIS is from. This is a city that is on the verge of collapse.

Those aren't my words. That is the editorial page of the San Francisco Chronicle. This is a city where businesses are leaving seemingly every day, citing the intolerable conditions in that city.

□ 1245

In fact, San Francisco right now is losing residents faster than any major city in United States history. That is right, San Francisco is losing residents faster than even Detroit when Detroit went bankrupt.

What is Newsom talking about when he actually said on live television that there are more Floridians going to California than vice versa? The reality is that, actually, if you do a direct comparison, over 50,000 more people went to Florida than came to California.

What Newsom did is very revealing. He said that the rate of Californians per capita moving to Florida is lower than vice versa, but he did an asymmetrical comparison where he used per capita numbers when looking at the State that people are departing from but used raw, absolute numbers looking at the State that they are going to.

If you were to do it in a symmetrical manner, whichever way you did it, whether you did raw numbers on both sides or per capita numbers on both sides, of course, California does much worse. It is, after all, the State that has the highest outmigration rate in the country.

The Governor's willingness to go on television and distort the numbers so egregiously, use this completely nonsensical trick where you make it per capita on one side but not the other, shows how willing he is to mislead both

his own constituents and people throughout our country.

A second area where major correction is needed is when it comes to the handling of COVID-19. Here is the reality: California had the single most draconian and longest-lasting lockdowns in the country when it came to school shutdowns, business shutdowns, church shutdowns and when it came to mask mandates, vaccine mandates, and vaccine passports. Each and every step of the way, California had the highest level of government coercion and control.

Yet, the Governor gets up in last night's debate and says, no, Florida was the lockdown State, which is truly boggling to the mind that he would stand up and, with a straight face, make that assertion. Yes, it is true that basically every State, right when COVID arrived, did take drastic measures when we didn't know what this was in those first couple of weeks in February and March. The difference is some States learned and others did not.

Some States looked at the evidence on how best to handle this public health challenge and acted accordingly in an evidence-based manner that placed trust in their citizens, whereas California never learned and continued a state of emergency until 2023.

In fact, if you look at a direct comparison, Newsom last night claimed that Florida shut down schools, but in fact, if you look at the facts, Florida ranked third out of the 50 States in getting kids back to school. Where did California rank? California ranked 50 out of 50 States in getting kids back to school. We had the longest-lasting school shutdowns in the country. Those harms are going to be with us for a long, long time.

Newsom was saying one thing last night, but just a few weeks ago, he actually admitted—this is a Politico story—we would have done everything differently when it came to COVID. He tried to make excuses. He said we didn't know what we didn't know, but that is not true. It is not a matter of hindsight being 2020 because so many other States—in fact, every other State—managed to do a better job.

Here is the truly perverse thing: Despite everything California did to take away the rights of its citizens, to shut down beaches, to shut down youth sports, to keep kids out of school, many of whom have not come back, by the way, despite the incalculable damage to our young people, to our businesses, to our democratic institutions in the name of public health, California wound up with an excess mortality rate exceeding the national average even though we had the benefit of a relatively young population.

That is why the recent Lancet study actually says California had one of the highest standardized COVID mortality rates in the entire country. Yet, Newsom, of course, ignores that. He simply accuses Florida of having tens of thousands of lives die unnecessarily,

completely ignoring the actual facts of the situation.

The reality is, having lived through Newsom's one-man rule in California, at every turn, the Governor prioritized getting himself in the headlines and rewarding special interests over the health and well-being of Californians, and this continued for years. In fact, things got worse as time went on.

Even after he had set the record for how long he was keeping kids out of school, on October 1, 2021, the Governor announced that California was going to be the first State in the Nation to impose a student vaccine mandate for COVID-19. It applied to all grade levels, public and private schools alike, with no exceptions for religion and personal belief.

He was the first Governor to announce such a mandate. He boasted about being the first Governor to announce such a mandate, and he wound up being the only Governor to announce such a mandate. At the beginning of this year, he formally withdrew the mandate without it ever going into effect. Even the World Health Organization now says COVID vaccines are not needed for healthy kids and teens.

A third issue that came up in last night's debate was homelessness. Newsom claimed that he has spent unprecedented resources on homelessness and has gotten 68,000 people off the streets. The first part is true; the second is preposterous. California has spent \$20 billion on homelessness over the last 5 years, and the problem has gotten worse. We spent all that money, and it has gotten worse.

In recent years, homelessness in California has increased 15 times faster than the country as a whole. Half of all the unsheltered homeless in the whole country now live in California. Newsom himself acknowledged that Californians are "wondering where the heck all their tax dollars are going." If you want to do a direct comparison, the Federal Government has counted over 171,000 homeless in California last year versus 25,000 in Florida.

Newsom himself even said when he was in Los Angeles recently that it looked like a third-world country. San Francisco, frankly, is much worse, with the one exception of a couple of weeks ago when the President of China came to town when there was the AIPAC conference with world leaders in San Francisco. The New York Times wrote a story talking about the makeover and beautification efforts that were hastily undertaken. The Times article said: "San Francisco had the air this week of teenagers frantically cleaning up after a house party with their parents on the way." The Times continues, "Perhaps the most obvious change has been seen at the Speaker Nancy Pelosi Federal Building. For 2 years, . . . people regularly used drugs in an adjacent alley. Most have seemingly disappeared in a poof."

The Times reported that San Francisco added more than 200 beds to its

shelter system just for the arrival of President Xi from China. It notes: "Some residents have wondered why San Francisco has been able to fix its notorious problems for the President [of China] but not for them."

A fourth issue that came up in the debate was education, and Newsom tried to claim that California is outperforming Florida. He cites fourth grade reading and eighth grade math. Here is the reality: Number one, California spends a lot more money than other States. California spends 45 percent more per pupil on K-12 education than Florida does. What do we get in return for that money? California has the lowest literacy rate in the country.

There are 800 California schools where 75 percent of students do not read at grade level. California's most recent eighth grade reading scores are the worst of any State in the country that was measured. Our fourth grade reading scores are the third worst in the country.

That is why it was unbelievable to me when, last night, Newsom asserted that our eighth grade reading scores are somehow indicative of good leadership when we literally have the worst eighth grade reading scores in the country.

Poor students, by the way, fare worst of all in California's education system. California has ranked 49 out of 50 States in achievements for students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

The issue of gas prices also came up last night, and Newsom tried to say that Californians are being ripped off. I agree with him on that. Californians are being ripped off. He said we are being ripped off by the oil companies. The reality is that California has by far the highest gas prices of any State in the country.

Right now, gas prices in California are \$1.58 above the national average, so if the oil companies are ripping us off, why are they ripping us off so much more in California than any other State?

There are a few reasons why gas prices are so much higher in California. Primarily, it is that we have the highest gas tax in the country. We have all kinds of regulations and fees that add much more to the price of each gallon. The reality is that we are getting ripped off, but we are getting ripped off by our own government.

By the way, what do we get in return for this, for paying the highest taxes on gas in the country, money that is supposed to be going to transportation? California generally ranks as having about the second or third worst roads of any State in the country, which people will be sure to tell you if you drive through California for any reasonable stretch of time. That is the sad reality of Gavin Newsom's California—highest taxes, deepest potholes. We sacrifice the most and get the least in return.

The issue of taxes also came up last night, and Newsom tried to somehow

slice and dice the data to say that California for certain people has a lower tax burden than Florida does. The reality is this: California has the highest income tax in the country and the highest gas tax in the country. When you look at the overall tax burden in California, total taxes are \$10,167 per person. In Florida, it is about half that, \$5,406.

Newsom wanted to talk about the working class. Well, here is the reality of life in California for the working class.

California has the third highest cost of living in the country.

California has, by far, the highest gas prices in the country, thanks to an extremely regressive set of taxes.

California has the third worst inequality in the country.

California has the highest poverty rate in the country. California leads the Nation in the real poverty rate.

Last year, California had the lowest wage growth in the country. Wages went up less in California for workers than in any State in the country.

That is why the California exodus, when you think of all the people leaving, is not just people who are well off who want to escape the very high income tax rates. It is actually working people who just cannot afford to get by in our State, who are not allowed to pursue their career, who are unable to buy a home because of skyrocketing home prices. That is the reality of life in California under Gavin Newsom.

There was also discussion of the economy, both nationally and in California. Newsom said something very interesting. He said that the Nation's current unemployment rate is a sign of a booming economy. He said the unemployment rate is pretty low nationally. That is the link that he drew—low unemployment rate, good economic stewardship.

The first response to that is that that is a mirage on a national level, given that the workforce participation rate has gone down significantly. Any small business owner will tell you that they are still to this day having a very hard time getting workers.

However, if we take Newsom at his word that the low unemployment rate is a sign of good leadership, well, then we can look at California's unemployment rate to assess his leadership. As it turns out, California has the second highest unemployment rate in the entire country.

If you want to do a direct comparison between California and Florida, just to pick one example, since January 2019, employment has increased by over a million—1,031,000—in Florida. It has declined by 85,000 in California.

If you ask Californians themselves how they think the economy is doing, 71 percent of Californians expect bad times economically over the course of the next 12 months. That is a majority of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents who believe the economy is on the wrong track and expect things are going to get worse in California.

As a final point, the Governor was just a few months ago boasting about how California had a surplus the last couple of years and how that was, again, a great sign of positive governance, of economic stewardship. Well, you didn't hear him mention that last night, and the reason why is that California has a massive deficit right now, a \$31.5 billion deficit, which is out of step with what was happening last year. Right now, Florida has a \$17.7 billion surplus.

Now, when it came to immigration and the border, Governor Newsom made a truly outlandish claim. He said that it is Congress and not President Biden that is responsible for the border crisis. Let's just look at the basic facts.

From 2014 until the beginning of the Biden administration, there were only 4 months out of that whole span of 6-plus years that had more than 100,000 encounters along the southern border, so only 4 months out of all those months for 6 years where there were more than 100,000 encounters at the border. Under the Biden administration, there were 29 straight months with more than 100,000 border encounters.

□ 1300

If you ask what changed between the time before Biden took office and the time that he did take office, it wasn't Congress. The President had a Democrat Senate and a Democrat House for the first 2 years of his administration.

The total numbers now are: 6.4 million illegal crossings at the southern border. There have also been 1.7 million known got-aways.

In fiscal year 2021, this administration set a record for illegal border crossings. In fiscal year 2022, the administration broke that record. In fiscal year 2023, the administration broke that record.

This is another area where Newsom's tendency to grasp for some distorted factoid and paint a completely alternate picture of reality is on display.

When he did his initial interview with Hannity in June of this year, Newsom said, no, no, no. Biden is doing a great job at the border. Look, this month illegal crossings are down 70 percent. There happened to be a blip in June.

You didn't hear him use that talking point last night. Why is that?

In subsequent months, illegal border crossings have been off the charts.

In September of this year, we set an all-time record for a single month where we had 269,735 crossings across the southern border.

There was also mention of sanctuary policies in the debate last night. Newsom has tried to mislead everyone about the extent to which he supports sanctuary policies and exactly what these policies do.

I will read to you something he said in 2018. Newsom said, "Let me be clear: California is a sanctuary State." That

is what he said. "Let me be clear: California is a sanctuary State."

He said, We have defied and resisted the Trump administration's policies at every turn. We will do it again.

Newsom even signed a law closing ICE detention facilities that was overturned by the Ninth Circuit as unconstitutional.

The evidence is extremely clear that we have a crisis at the southern border, that this administration has refused to take the actions that are necessary to address it, and that Governor Newsom has made the situation worse in our own State.

For him to now blame Congress or to blame the House specifically is beyond belief when in the House we passed the Border Security Act earlier this year, the most robust border security bill that has passed the House in a long, long time—maybe ever—which would make a huge difference in the crisis at the border, which is contributing to the fentanyl crisis, to human trafficking, and is introducing potential national security and terror threats into our country.

In the House of Representatives, we passed that bill. What has happened since? It has been gathering dust on CHUCK SCHUMER's desk in the Senate. It is well past time for action on this issue.

The ninth area where the Governor completely misled in last night's debate was when it came to crime. He said crime is down in California.

In fact, FBI data shows violent crime in California increased 13 percent the last few years as it has gone down across the country.

California cities have seen an epidemic of retail theft. In San Francisco this year a string of high-profile businesses, Whole Foods, Nordstrom, Anthropologie, have left the city, and they basically all cited the crime problem as the reason. In Los Angeles, police have advised residents not to go outside wearing jewelry.

In fact, if you want to do a direct comparison between Florida and California when it comes to crime, there were a few figures cited in the debate last night.

One that is very interesting and is very telling is when it comes to motor vehicle theft. Now, why is this telling? Because in California, a lot of the crime doesn't even go reported because it won't be prosecuted.

You have all these laws that have basically legalized retail theft, have legalized open air drug use, like Prop 47. We have other laws like Prop 57 that have downgraded a lot of offenses. We have cities that have defunded the police.

We have these so-called progressive prosecutors like George Gascon who Newsom initially appointed as D.A. of San Francisco who refused to prosecute even those crimes for those laws that are on the books.

You have businesses that will be robbed in broad daylight and they will

just let the people go. They won't bother to file a police report because they know that nothing is going to happen.

You can't actually look at reported crimes as an accurate gauge of how much criminal activity there is.

When it comes to vehicle thefts, that is different because there is usually an insurance claim. We get realistic, accurate numbers when it comes to motor vehicle thefts.

How does that compare? In 2022, reported vehicle thefts per capita were 250 percent higher in California than they were in Florida.

That will be no surprise to anyone who has been to San Francisco. The advice often is you should roll down your windows when you leave your car parked so at least they won't break them when they are trying to break in.

I want to mention one final issue, the 10th and final issue—although there are certainly plenty of others—where the Governor of our State gave a completely false and misleading characterization about what life is like in California, and that is on the issue of personal freedom.

The Governor called California the freedom State, but the Cato Institute rankings of freedom in the 50 States ranked California as the 48th most free State. Florida ranked second out of the 50 states.

Just look at what happened, of course, during the COVID lockdowns where California had the highest measure of government control and the least measure of personal choice and freedom.

It began long before that. California has every year continued to erode the rights and freedoms of its residents.

When it comes to economic freedom, for example, Newsom signed into law AB 5, which has deprived countless people of their right to earn a living, effectively abolishing independent contracting for many professions in California.

Now, his former Secretary of Labor, Julie Su, is trying to do the same thing through the regulatory process here in Washington, D.C.

Look at things like bans on straws, bans on gas-powered leaf blowers, bans on chopsticks and other single-use food items, bans on even gas-powered vehicles by 2035, if Gavin Newsom has his way.

Every day in California, we wake up wondering what is going to be banned next. For Newsom to somehow claim we are the freedom State is a delusion of the highest order.

I will close by making this point, though, Mr. Speaker, which is that California, I believe, is the greatest State in the country.

It is the State where everyone has always wanted to come to. We have everything to offer, and there are still so many great things about our State: the amazing people and diversity of cultures and world-leading companies in California. We have great universities in our State, as well.

We have so many great things going, and we still have parts of our State that people are moving to and want to live in—specifically, my district.

My district is one of the few parts of California that is growing right now. In fact, while the State as a whole has for three straight years led the Nation in U-Haul departures, the largest city in my district, Roseville, was second in the Nation in U-Haul arrivals.

Why is it that people are moving to our area while they are leaving other parts of California?

The reason is that we have fought against the failed governance model that Gavin Newsom has tried to impose on the State as a whole and that is in an especially advanced stage in places like San Francisco.

During the COVID years, we fought in every way we could to allow our communities to follow the evidence and allow citizens to live their lives as they saw fit.

We ended up getting our kids back to school sooner than any other part of California. We ended up having an unemployment rate in Placer County, for example, that was about half the rest of the State.

What was the result of that? We actually ended up having way better COVID-19 outcomes than the State as a whole because we focused on the things that would actually make a difference on disease control rather than population control, rather than gratuitously taking away the personal freedoms of our residents.

Even before COVID and now after—at least as we have moved away from that paradigm—we continue to try to chart a different course than California as a whole has taken.

We support small businesses in our communities rather than attacking them. We support law enforcement in our communities rather than defunding the police and rather than contributing to a false and misleading narrative, a negative narrative about our law enforcement.

We have led the entire Nation in going after fentanyl dealers and charging them with murder, so we don't have more of our kids continuing to get victimized.

When Gavin Newsom says California is a model for the Nation, nothing could be further from the truth. I am very proud to represent communities that do represent a model for how California as a whole can once again become the Golden State.

I encourage everyone who watched the debate last night to take a close look at the facts because there is an increasing tendency for California's failures to become national failures.

As a Representative from California, I will be fighting in every way I can to make sure that that doesn't happen.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE GAZA STRIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the current situation in what used to be called the Gaza Strip.

I believe looking at American polls prior to the invasion that took place in October, there were too many segments of the American population who—insofar as there were disagreements between, I guess, what we will call Gaza and the State of Israel or Palestinians in the State of Israel—sided with the Palestinians. They felt somehow Israel was doing something wrong.

I still run into some of these people when I go back to my office across from the Capitol building because sometimes they are out there protesting or making some sort of a case.

I believe that all Americans should realize that—until what they did to themselves about a month and a half ago—that the people in the Gaza strip were fortunate to belong in an area right adjacent to Israel proper.

First of all, in that part of the world, there is probably nowhere where you would want to live more than Israel.

As far as basic freedoms, which we take for granted in the United States, those freedoms are available to people living in Israel, and the freedoms, to a large extent, came from a Western culture which was brought to that part of the world as Jews moved there from other areas around the Middle East and from Europe beginning before World War II.

Indeed, that land was largely a wasteland. It is interesting to read Mark Twain's comments when he toured that part of the world. It was largely a wasteland until the great Jewish migration.

At that time, it not only eventually benefited the Jewish people who came to Israel from Europe, but it benefited the Arabs, as well.

Indeed, between about the year 1900 and right prior to World War II, as the number of Jewish people in that area went up from about 100,000 to 600,000, the number of Arabs in that area moved up from 600,000 to 1.3 million people.

In other words, Arabs from the other areas around Israel, as more people moved there from Europe, they moved there as well to take advantage of the economic opportunity that became available as more Westernized people moved in there, and that continues to this day.

I don't think it is reported enough in the press that many people from Gaza who were working worked in Israel, and the economic opportunities in Israel were far greater than the economic opportunities in Gaza.

Indeed, I believe something like a person who left Gaza to work in Israel may be making four times as much than if they tried to stay in Gaza and work for the employers in Gaza. Again, they are very fortunate that Israel was right next door.