

Department for the department of reconciliation so that we can at some point, at some point, span the chasms that divide, separate, and prevent us from having the level of unity within our country that we richly deserve given the great documents, the great founding documents, of the country, that all persons are created equal, endowed by the creator with certain inalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These certain documents include the pledge of liberty and justice for all.

We need to do these things. I am committed to Slavery Remembrance Day. I am committed. I stand alone sometimes with this commitment. It is an idea that I brought to this Congress, and I am going to stay with it.

Yes, I am the progenitor, the progenitor, of Slavery Remembrance Day. I am going to stay with it. I am not letting it go.

The Congressional Gold Medal for the enslaved, I will not let it go.

Removing Mr. Russell's name, I will not let it go.

Establishing a department of reconciliation, I won't let it go.

The question is: Will others find it within their hearts and their spirits to take a similar stance? I pray that they will.

I close with this, Mr. Speaker: We persons of African ancestry have suffered, our ancestors have and are still suffering, from the indignation and humiliation associated with slavery and segregation. We are still suffering from it. We are still suffering from racism.

There are people who would say: Forget the racism.

I am not going to forget it, just like I would not want my Jewish brothers and sisters to forget the Holocaust. Don't forget the Holocaust, and I won't forget slavery.

We are still suffering, and we are suffering because of what I indicated initially.

Why were we brought to this country? When I say "we," I am talking about my foreparents. Why were they brought to this country? They were brought here to be: permanent, remember, 240 years of slavery is evidence of it, centuries; identifiable, they wanted people of color because they could spot them easily; powerless, no power, not recognized, the law recognizes no rights for you as they relate to persons who are Anglo; subservient, always servile, always humble, always ready to serve, pleading with the master, "Give me something that I may do for you, master"; and caste, the difference between caste and class, remember, class is a socioeconomic condition. Caste is usually hereditary. You are born into it, you live it, and you die.

We are still suffering from this original reason that enslaved persons were brought to this country. Nevertheless, I believe that we can bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice for African Americans and all other persons who suffer from invidious discrimination.

I believe it. I believe we can achieve it. I just know that we have to work hard to get it done.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the time. I am proud to have stood here, and I proudly move forward with the conscience agenda that I have called to the attention of our country. God bless you, Mr. Speaker, and God bless the United States of America.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCORMICK). Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

#### HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF ALLISON GETZ

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

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the extraordinary life of one Allison Getz, who was a friend, a public servant, and a true Texan who has left a tremendous mark on southeast Texas.

Allison's public service wasn't just a job, Mr. Speaker. It was a calling. From chairing events like the Spindletop Ball to leading organizations such as the Symphony League, Temple Emanuel, and the Fire Museum of Texas, she demonstrated a deep commitment to the betterment of our community.

For the last 9 years, she served as Jefferson County tax assessor-collector. Her innovation and modernization efforts as tax assessor earned her the prestigious title of Tax Assessor of the Year for the entire State of Texas in 2021, and that is no easy task.

I speak for southeast Texas, Mr. Speaker. We are forever indebted to Allison's tireless devotion and dedication. Allison had always said three things when she talked with anyone. She said, "How can I help? Is there anything you need?" and she always finished with, "I appreciate you."

She was known for her huge heart, her love for her husband, Mike, her parents, children, grandchildren, and, most of all, southeast Texas.

Brenda and I were deeply saddened to learn about her passing on October 10, 2023. Our prayers are with her family during this very difficult time.

As we bid farewell to this remarkable public servant, let's remember Allison Julia Getz with a great deal of gratitude. May her legacy continue to inspire us to continue the work of service and compassion she so fervently championed.

We are grateful for Allison's dedication to community. We will miss her. She will never be forgotten and will always be in our hearts.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JOSEPH "JOE" RUTA

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to honor the life and legacy of

one Joseph "Joe" Ruta, who passed away on October 14, 2023, at the age of 96.

Joe Ruta was born on February 25, 1927. He was one of the dwindling members of the Greatest Generation. Like so many others of his time, he actually lied about his age to join the Army during World War II. Joe served in Germany as an ambulance driver at Dachau concentration camp, where he saw firsthand the horrors of the Holocaust.

Upon returning home, he married Victoria Damico and became a truck driver. Vicky and Joe were married for 75 years, Mr. Speaker, having two children, six grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. One of those grandchildren is my chief of staff, Jeanette Whitener. She is a jewel.

Joe was an avid card player, enjoyed doing puzzles, and especially enjoyed time spent with his family. He was an amazing husband and an amazing father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He served this country and his family with pride, generosity, and devotion.

Joe will be missed by his family and everyone who knew him. Another from the Greatest Generation is now gone.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF WILLIAM "BILL" BIGGS

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of William "Bill" Ambrose Biggs III, who passed away on November 16, 2023.

Bill Biggs was born in Abilene, Texas, on February 19, 1937. At the age of 11, he and his family, Mr. Speaker, moved to Austin, Texas, where his local adventures would make Tom Sawyer green with envy.

Bill graduated from Austin High School in 1955 and went directly to the University of Texas, where he graduated with a degree in chemistry in the year 1959. He also earned his MBA from Texas in 1961.

Following graduation, Bill went on Active Duty in the United States Army in 1962. During his military career, he earned his Ranger Tab, graduated from the Army War College, and rose to the rank of colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve before retiring in 1988. His final commendation was the Legion of Merit.

Perpetually in motion, after the Army and retiring from his successful business in Pennsylvania, Bill returned to school, earned his J.D., juris doctor, from the St. Mary's School of Law in San Antonio, and graduated in 2020.

He was a tremendous husband, father, grandfather, brother, son, entrepreneur, citizen, soldier, and devoted Texas Longhorn. Bill will be sorely missed by his family and all who knew him.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO BOB HARVEY

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bid farewell to a true titan of Texas, a man whose dedication has left an indelible mark on the landscape of the greater Houston region, Bob Harvey, the president and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership.

Bob is retiring at the end of 2023. Over the past decade, under his steadfast leadership, the Houston metro area has witnessed unprecedented growth and prosperity.

A lifelong Houstonian, Bob dedicated each waking day to championing the city's expansion, working hand in hand with the business community to foster opportunities for every single Houstonian.

The Greater Houston Partnership is so much more than the Chamber of Commerce for one of America's great cities. Under Bob's guidance, the partnership became a beacon for economic development, advocating for policies that sustain the thriving business environment while enhancing the overall quality of life for all its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating my friend, Bob Harvey, on a well-deserved retirement.

I thank Bob for his service to our dynamic region and our beloved State of Texas. Blessings to him and his lovely wife, Vicki, and three great kids, Michael, Tom—who worked for us—and Mary, as he embarks on the next chapter of a life well lived.

HONORING THE INCREDIBLE LIFE OF JOHN PAUL SPEES, SR.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the incredible life of one Mr. John Paul Spees, Sr., a man whose journey from Gary, Indiana, through Lake Charles, Louisiana, to the great State of Texas left an indelible mark on our community.

Born in 1936, he went to be with Jesus on December 1, 2023.

Paul was a proud Navy veteran. Paul served 2 years on the USS *Randolph*. His dedication to our great country was surpassed only by his devotion to his family.

□ 1215

In 1958, he married his beautiful wife, the former Sheila Sarver, and together they were blessed with four children, of which we get the privilege of knowing Kelly and her great husband, Paul; four children; fourteen grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

In addition to God, family, and country, Paul loved skeet shooting—at the world championship level, I might add—tinkering with cars, and sharing his musical talents on the piano and accordion. Now, we know where Kelly gets it from.

Mr. Speaker, though, we mourn his passing, we celebrate a life well-lived with Kelly and Paul and all their family. We commend Paul Spees' legacy of love, laughter, and service.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ROBERT MOODY

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a businessman and philanthropist, Robert Moody, who was known to many of us as Bobby.

Bobby's journey was one of resilience, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to family and community

in the city he cherished, which I am privileged to represent, Galveston, Texas.

Bobby's legacy is etched in the successes of businesses he shepherded for over six decades. His leadership transformed National Western Life Insurance Company and American National Insurance Company into industry leaders, providing financial security for millions.

Yet, Bobby's heart beat the strongest for our Galveston community, with a passion that is reflected in the creation of Moody Gardens and the Moody Neurorehabilitation Institute, both testaments to his philanthropic vision.

Beyond his professional achievements, Bobby's devotion to his family was unparalleled. As a loving father, grandfather, and a great-grandfather, he effortlessly blended business acumen with the warmth of family life.

As we bid farewell to such a stalwart leader, a compassionate patriarch, and a beacon of generosity, let us hope, pray, and carry forward Bobby's legacy of resilience, empathy, as well as community stewardship. The island city of Galveston and the Moody family have lost a guiding light, Mr. Speaker, but Bobby's spirit lives on in the institutions he built and in the countless lives that he touched.

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF PORT ARTHUR, TEXAS

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate 125 years of Port Arthur, Texas, a community with a storied history, located in the 14th Congressional District of the great State of Texas.

The city of Port Arthur began as a dream, quite frankly, of a railroad man named Arthur Stilwell, who envisioned it as a trade and tourism center and a port town that eventually wound up bearing his name.

From tankers navigating the waves to an oil boom that echoed with promises of prosperity, Port Arthur has been a beacon on the Gulf Coast. Refineries proudly claiming, "we oil the world," the allure of Pleasure Island, a Cajun influx adding spice to our culture—I know that is true because my bride grew up in Italy. She can cook that Cajun food—and a museum on the Gulf Coast honoring our famous folk, Port Arthur is a tapestry of history as rich as the soil beneath our feet.

Earlier on, Port Arthur became the heartbeat of the petrochemical industry. In 1901, following the game-changing gusher of Spindletop, Gulf Oil Corporation set up shop, followed by Texaco in 1902.

This marked the dawn of a new era.

By 1957, we had become the center of the world's prosperous oil refining facilities, fueling not just our city, not just our State, but the world.

Today, Port Arthur is home to over 55,000 hardworking, salt-of-the-Earth folks. It is truly something special.

May I add that as your Representative of Port Arthur, I am grateful every day to stand before you as the

voice of Port Arthur here in the hallowed Halls of Congress. Representing a community with such a rich history, where resilience and progress echo from every corner, is an honor beyond measure.

Here is to 125 years of Port Arthur's pride, their progress, and that enduring southeast Texas spirit that defines us. Happy anniversary, Port Arthur.

CONGRATULATIONS TO NORMAN REYNOLDS, JR., ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Groves City Marshal, Mr. Norman Reynolds, Jr., on the occasion of his retirement.

This is the end of an era for the Groves Police Department. Norman Reynolds, Jr.'s, journey into law enforcement is a tale deeply intertwined with his family's legacy. A third-generation police officer, Norman joined the ranks through the encouragement and wise counsel of his father, Norman Reynolds, Sr.

With over 41 years of dedicated service, Mr. Speaker, Reynolds has not only become the longest serving law man in southeast Texas, but also a steadfast pillar in the Groves Police Department.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Marshal Reynolds for his unwavering service, his commitment to keeping our community safe, and for leading the Groves Police Department with dignity, as well as honor.

On behalf of a grateful community, it is my absolute honor and privilege to honor City Marshal Norman Reynolds. I join his wife, Becky, and his family and friends and colleagues in extending him best wishes in his retirement.

CRISIS AT THE BORDER

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about the border for just a second.

Joe Biden and company have allowed this situation at our southern border to escalate from a crisis to a full-blown catastrophe. It was announced just this past Tuesday, CBP saw more than 12,000 encounters with illegal immigrants along the border.

Let that sink in. Twelve thousand in one day crossed the border—those are the ones they know about—that American taxpayers are having to pay for, I want to add. It is unconscionable.

Under this administration's failed policies, every town is a border town, Mr. Speaker, and the rest of the country is beginning to feel the strain that my home State of Texas has felt for so long under a constant stream of illegal migrants encouraged by President Biden's wide-open border.

That is why I introduced H.R. 6477, a bill that would effectively reimplement the remain in Mexico protocols established by and under President Trump.

It would crack down on the rampant abuse of the asylum system that has enabled so much of this problem. My bill would also hold the administration responsible for knowing the whereabouts and the status of illegal migrants throughout the parole process,

and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor it.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR EDUCATING GENERATIONS FROM TEXAS

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to proudly acknowledge and celebrate the remarkable achievement of Alvin Community College.

Let me hasten to add that it is where I met my beautiful bride of 47 years 49 years ago in the cafeteria there at Alvin Junior College, or what was called Alvin Junior College.

Alvin Community College, once again, for the seventh time, ACC has been recognized by their prestigious Aspen Institute as one of the top 150 community colleges in America.

The Aspen Institute's recognition, citing ACC's achievements in teaching, degree completion, workforce success, and equitable outcomes underscores the college's commitment to student success. Don't I know it.

As an ACC alum, I can personally attest to the transformative power of this institution. It laid the academic groundwork for my future and even, more importantly, became the serendipitous backdrop where I met my beautiful bride. Did I mention that, Mr. Speaker? I think I did.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that I thank Alvin Community College for not only educating generations of folks from Texas 14th Congressional District and the neighboring communities, but I congratulate them for continuing to shine as one of the best in the Nation. ACC rocks.

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

#### MATH ALWAYS EVENTUALLY WINS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, thank you for your patience as we get ourselves set up here.

Mr. Speaker, I obviously try to do this every week we are here, and my goal is not to sound like some idiot economics professor. I am trying to point out the biggest thing that is ahead of us, the reason we are here, and the hardest thing we talk about.

I want to start off by saying that, apparently, I hurt some people's feelings in the last two floor speeches when I walked through the math, and I don't care. The math is the math, and the math will win. The math always eventually wins. This is substantially a math-free zone.

Another thing I want to point out for some of the folks who end up watching a video of this and they get cranky that there is no one in the House. That is actually the way it is supposed to be. They are supposed to be off in their committees or other places working.

This is our chance to talk to the body. Please understand that we are on hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of televisions right now talking to staff. The reason I show up with these charts is trying to see if you can breakthrough and understand just the scale of what is going on.

Remember, we have a debt and demographics issue, and that is the thing that just enrages me. If you are on the left, you say we don't tax enough. If you are on the right, we can't cut enough, which I am more on the cut side; however, you still got a mathematical problem.

I will show you in some of the slides that you can get rid of every dime of Defense and every dime of discretionary and you are still borrowing hundreds of billions of dollars.

Last year, we borrowed 8.4 percent of the economy. Ever hear these discussions about having a 2 percent GDP growth? Okay. Fine. That is what long-run projection is. We borrowed 8.4. That is just the borrowing, not the spend. That is what we borrowed.

It is also one of the reasons we have tried now not to talk in percentages of GDP because no one has any idea what the hell you are talking about.

Mr. Speaker, let's actually have some fun here. We are going to actually try to break this up in two or three different presentations over the next couple weeks.

Today, I am just going to relay out the math, see if any of it still sinks through. Then next week, we are going to try something that we haven't done in a few months. We are going to come in with optimism that the breakthroughs in healthcare, the breakthroughs in technologies, the opportunities that are out there will help us bend the debt curve.

□ 1230

Once again, I am going to go back to a sentence I had a couple moments ago, for those who will text my office, call my office, fuss at me when I am in Costco and say, "David, I want you to balance the budget this year." I can do it. You just have to be willing to let me get rid of all of defense, all of discretionary, and \$300 or \$400 billion of your Medicare. That is how upside-down the numbers are.

Let's walk through some of this. We are two-plus months into this fiscal year, and the number one spend this fiscal year will be Social Security. Now, let's talk about this for a moment.

Social Security is its own trust fund, its own funding mechanism. None of the money is spent in the general fund; it is loaned to the general fund. Social Security gets these special Treasury notes, and then they are paid interest twice a year. If you ever geek out and you are someone who watches U.S. debt and all of a sudden there is this sudden spike, often that is actually because we made our twice-a-year interest payment to Social Security, but it is separate.

You have also got to understand the flip side of that. In 8 or 9 years, when the Social Security trust fund is empty, it doesn't have a claim on the general fund, either.

CBO put out a number of 2033. The Social Security actuaries, which I think are a year behind in their reports, had projected 2034. However, let's use CBO's number. CBO projects that a 25 percent cut in your check is coming in 8½, 9 years.

For the average couple in America on Social Security, I think that is like a \$17,400 cut. We will double poverty in the senior population in America. Okay. It is immoral, and the solution we get is, okay, just raise these taxes, do the cap.

Now, we are still working on the math because it turns out Tax Foundation, the actuaries, and CBO have vastly different modeling numbers. We found a couple interesting nuggets, the Democrat bill does cut benefits, it cuts benefits on high-income earners where they told us they would never cut benefits.

We are starting to realize rhetoric is often different than reality when you are trying to make the math work.

Hopefully, in the next couple of weeks we will actually have nailed down the actual impact, but right now it looks like raising the cap on Social Security, doing these other mechanisms still does not close that \$616 billion shortfall. That is a \$616 billion shortfall. That is the very first year the Social Security trust fund is gone.

Why this isn't talked about constantly here, when defense is like \$830 billion, and just the shortfall in a single year in Social Security is over \$600 billion, does anyone see the scale we are talking about?

Understand, if we use the tax solutions, where you say we are just going to raise these taxes, we are going to take everyone over \$400,000 or just everyone, and you are going to pay the extra 12.4 percent, and then we are going to tax some of these unrealized capital gains and these things to make up that difference. Okay. If that is the Democrat solution, you have just used up your entire opportunity because there is no more money.

What do you do with the other two-thirds of the borrowing, which is the shortfall in Medicare? You have no more capacity. We are going to walk through that.

Why this board here is so important to understand is: in 2024, Social Security will be \$1.450 trillion this year, so \$1 trillion, \$450 billion. Social Security is our number one spend.

Gross interest, that means the interest we pay to Social Security but also the interest we pay to whoever has been willing to buy one of our bonds, is over a trillion dollars this year. Interest now is number two. Interest is now number two this fiscal year. That wasn't supposed to happen for like 8, 10 years, and it happened.

Number three is Medicare.