

we want to accomplish, not our own personal political endeavors, but to truly know what is best for the American people and do a better job of that.

We as a Republican majority will continue to deliver with those types of commonsense policies.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS: DELIVERING IN THE FACE OF REPUBLICAN CHAOS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. RAMIREZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Madam Speaker, we are here talking about the work that we have done, or tried to do, in this past year. This week is the last week Members of this body will gather to work on legislative business for 2023.

The last time I convened the Special Order hour, my colleagues and I came to the floor to discuss the impact that the debt ceiling would have on everyday, working people. We said over and over that a debt ceiling agreement that shortchanged funding for vital programs shortchanges everyday people.

I find that, much like in May, we are in the same place fighting to protect and to preserve the programs our communities need. Just like in May, I am here to remind this body why we were sent here and who sent us here: Our constituents.

Let me be clear. Who sent us here are our constituents, not MAGA extremists, not lobbyists, and definitely not Donald Trump.

This year, my colleagues and I on the Congressional Progressive Caucus have been fighting like hell for policies that protect people, including expanding healthcare for DACA recipients; addressing gun violence; securing protections for the workforce; and centering our policies around equity and justice.

I am proud to say that we have been able to deliver for our communities, yes, even in the midst of chaos. While we were able to accomplish so little—although I know that my colleague tried to talk a little bit about what the GOP tried to do—I am convening this Special Order hour to speak truth to power.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear and say that Republicans have held progress hostage. It has been a year, and we have spent more time on speakership elections—19 to be exact—point-

less censures, and political theater, jeopardizing the safety and the well-being of people, instead of moving policy that improves their lives.

We have spent countless hours subjected to words that dehumanize and devalue Brown and Black people, and I have witnessed firsthand as Members across the aisle call immigrants vile names like infestations over and over again, not just here but during my committee hearings; denying their humanity.

I have spent more time attending vigils than celebrating life because Republicans are intent on holding up bills that would address gun violence.

I have spent more time voting “no” to protect my constituents from harmful cuts and reckless policies than I have had the opportunity to vote “yes” to legislation that prioritizes working people and families.

I have spent more time on picket lines affirming that workers deserve living wages, protection from retaliation, and the right to collectively bargain than actually passing policies that ensure that all workers are compensated well, respected, and valued.

When I was elected to Congress, I told my community that I was committed to delivering results. I am here today to say that in the face of everyday Republican-manufactured obstacles to progress, their political games, their disorganization, and their opposition to honoring our shared humanity, I remained true to my commitments and my values as a Member of Congress.

I have remained focused on delivering results for Illinois' Third Congressional District and honoring our diverse multicultural, multigenerational community.

I am not alone.

My colleagues in the Congressional Progressive Caucus have also remained true to their commitment and their values and focused on delivering for their districts. I am grateful to be flanked by such dedicated, persevering, and courageous leaders.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to welcome one of my colleagues to share some of the progress that she has made and what Congress must still continue to do to accomplish and deliver for the people.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I stand here today because we are just 1 month from another government shutdown, and Congressional Republicans have demonstrated once again that they are more concerned about satisfying their culture warrior base than actually addressing any of the problems their constituents face.

Madam Speaker, that hasn't stopped us from delivering for our districts. I am here because the everyday working-class people of Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties came together to say, everybody should have a livable

wage, clean air and water, affordable housing, decent transportation, and healthcare.

The people I represent resoundingly rejected the status quo and decades of corporations leaving us behind and polluting our communities without accountability. They demanded political representation that will actually try to solve the problems they face and not play political games with their lives.

Our movement's detractors, including those in Congress, many of them, will try to make you believe that people from working-class backgrounds representing working-class districts are too consumed by fighting national political battles and don't do enough to deliver for our districts.

Let me be clear. Key priorities of the Biden administration, like the Inflation Reduction Act, would not have happened without progressives here fighting tooth and nail to ensure that our communities had what they needed to thrive. Despite Republicans' dysfunction, we haven't stopped fighting even for one second.

We are proud to have delivered in my district nearly \$1 billion in Federal investments for infrastructure, affordable housing, STEM innovation, clean air, and good-paying jobs because the people of Western Pennsylvania and across the country deserve leaders in Congress who have lived their struggles and work as hard as they do.

Whether it was delivering \$400 million from the Department of Energy's clean financing program to fund EOS, a battery storage manufacturer that will employ thousands of workers in PA-12's Mon Valley, in particular, or the over \$150 million to improve transit in Pittsburgh, or helping to deliver \$50 million for affordable housing in the historically divested Hill District of Pittsburgh.

Our movement in Pennsylvania is delivering on priorities that won't just improve our communities but the lives of people across the country. We are demonstrating the power we can recognize when communities that have been left behind elect leaders that have actually gone through what they have.

Throughout history, and particularly over the past four decades, working-class people, disproportionately Black and Brown, have been told our priorities are too radical, our needs are too unrealistic, and that our lives are expendable. Our movement stands in direct contrast to that, standing up to monied interests and fighting for our communities to be healthier, stronger, and more resilient.

The wins we have secured that I have talked about today represent just a small part of what our movement has done while in elected office, and you can be sure we are not done yet.

On the other side, Republicans are demonstrating that they are fundamentally unserious when it comes to addressing the problems that their constituents face, and all of our constituents.

Now Republicans are fighting battles so they can reconcile their internal struggle between satisfying their right-wing cable-news culture warriors and their ultra-wealthy corporate donors.

They are an embarrassment, and their constituents and our country will remember.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Madam Speaker, as the gentlewoman was talking, I started asking myself that if our colleagues that are in the majority were actually serious about delivering for their constituents, then perhaps we would spend less time in censures; perhaps we would spend less time fighting each other, doing whatever kidney-elbow situation; arguing with each other on the corners, and all the games and all the other things they do, and actually pass legislation that helps people's experiences improve, like legislation around housing, making it more affordable so that no one has to live in a tent.

It is interesting because Republicans seem to really care about homelessness when it is someone that is undocumented, that is an immigrant or asylum seeker, but they have had the opportunity in leadership in these past 12 months to pass legislation to address housing, and instead, they are cutting funds for housing.

They say they care about families and women and their wives and their children, but they refuse to pass paid leave.

They say they care and are worried about healthcare, but are they really? Because if they were worried about healthcare, we would be doing less of the crazy theater here—19 elections for a darn Speaker—and actually pass quality healthcare.

Let's talk a little bit more about what they haven't done and what we should be focusing on.

I know that the gentleman from Utah attempted to talk about the GOP accomplishments, but I couldn't figure out which one accomplishment he was able to actually tangibly prove.

Let's talk about housing. It is no secret that housing prices are skyrocketing.

In Chicago, for example, we have seen a 5.7 increase in the cost of rent in 1 year. In some communities, it is as high as a 20 percent increase.

As temperatures plummet, more people find themselves in tents suffering cold nights in unsafe conditions, or they are just one paycheck away from homelessness.

You would think that our colleagues would be concerned about government shutdowns since so many people are just one paycheck away from homelessness. While working families are struggling to pay rent, we faced not one, but two threats of a Republican national shutdown.

I have to say it over and over. This is what my constituents ask me about every time I go back home, or message me: We didn't elect you all to spend your time fighting each other because you don't like each other, or because

one person said this thing that this other person didn't like. All this time you spend censoring each other and fighting instead of negotiating appropriation bills that would fully fund our communities.

Yet, that is what 12 months in Congress have looked like. The Republicans are leaving everyday American families literally out in the cold.

In spite of Republican chaos, I, along with Representatives RASHIDA TLAIB from Michigan-12, AYANNA PRESSLEY from Massachusetts-07, JIMMY GOMEZ from California-34, and GREG CASAR from Texas-35 are delivering when it comes to housing.

We introduced H.R. 5827, the Tenants' Right to Organize Act, legislation that will protect the power of tenants with Federal vouchers to organize.

□ 1915

We know that throughout our Nation, from big cities, like Chicago, to smaller cities, tenants have recognized that when we fight, when we come together and claim our power, we win.

Tenant organizing is not only winning battles against unfair housing practices, unjustified evictions, housing discrimination, and uncontrolled price hikes; it is also changing housing public policy.

The Tenants' Right to Organize Act, my bill, aims to amplify their efforts by protecting the organizing rights of tenants with housing choice vouchers and tenants living in low-income housing tax credit properties. It also expands protections for mixed-status families and those who may not be eligible for tenant-based rental assistance.

Currently, only public housing tenants have legally recognized the right to organize. By extending this right to housing choice vouchers and low-income tax credit tenants, the bill acknowledges that all tenants deserve decent, safe, stable, and sanitary housing.

The fight for safe, stable, equitable housing must also include tenants, and as we are encountering a worsening housing affordability crisis, we understand that now, more than ever, all tenants must have the right to organize.

Now, let's talk about immigration. This is a place where I find the most dissonance. The same people that love to quote Scripture—God has called me to love him above all things—and then they seem to forget the second commandment: Love your neighbor as you love yourself—it couldn't be more clear as it comes to immigration.

I cannot count the number of times the same people who quote Scripture come to this podium to respond while scapegoating immigrant communities, demonizing them, and then saying that they care about them, "poor immigrants."

Well, if you cared about them and if you cared about humanity, and certainly if we were living our Christian

values, then we would be looking for legal pathways so no one would have to endure what so many people seeking asylum have to do every single day.

Republicans have repeatedly tried to introduce legislation and resolutions that deport unaccompanied children. These are the same people that say that they are the ones of family values, they are the ones protecting life and children. They want to end asylum, and they want to jail families.

They are trying again right now. They are seeking to extort immoral and deplorable border provisions in exchange for aid for Ukraine. I have said it before and I will say it again and again and again: It is hypocritical, cynical, to target immigrants when many of the people who serve in this Chamber, some of them with me right now, have reaped the benefits of immigrant labor and become wealthy on the backs of immigrant sacrifice.

It takes courage to cross the border, to seek a job, to pursue an opportunity to raise your children in safety. The courage of our people stands in stark contrast with the cowardice of my colleagues.

There is nothing people-centered, nothing noble, nothing redeeming about their extremist approach to border immigration policy. Let's just be clear. They are scapegoating immigrants right now so they can say to their voters that they are doing something about the border, but they are not going to want to do enough, because they want to take the border conversation and issue to the polls in November.

Their unwillingness to negotiate, to actually get to the root cause of migration, is mind-boggling. They don't want solutions. Because if they wanted solutions, they would understand that actually addressing immigration, passing comprehensive immigration reform, would actually prioritize our economy. It would actually address the root causes of migration in Central and South America by creating legal pathways, by working with these countries, by ensuring that we help strengthen their democracies.

Yet, in spite of all the Republican chaos, a number of us have reintroduced the Dream and Promise Act, and we will work and work until we deliver it.

In spite of my Republican colleagues' inability to act beyond the border, we are here taking that first step in the right direction to give Dreamers and immigrants in America an earned pathway to citizenship that reflects our values as a Nation, a multicultural democracy of diversity and inclusion. We are here moving the needle to a real comprehensive immigration reform package that embraces our values as a nation.

Now, let me talk a little bit more about that. There are 9.8 million job openings right now. You can go to your local grocery store, go to Aldi, because some of us shop there still, very proudly, or you can go to absolutely any

other store. You talk about supply chain, and you realize that we don't have the workforce we need in order to address the issues of economy of the moment.

Now, just imagine, if the people that are here already, of the 11 million people living in the shadows, some of them for the last 30 years, if they were able to get a work permit, they would pay taxes, generate revenue for the Federal Government, helping address our issues of budget. They would address supply chain issues, our manufacturing, hospitality, agriculture, and the list goes on in terms of the different trades that are desperately needing workers that would get the workers they need. They would actually extend Social Security by decades if we passed comprehensive immigration policy, but that is not what we want to do.

We are so insecure perhaps about ourselves that we are unable to see the bigger picture of the economy for our country. Comprehensive immigration reform is a solution to the economy. Comprehensive immigration reform is the American way. This country was founded by immigrants, and every single person in this Chamber right now comes from a family who also migrated to this country, unless you are from the original indigenous communities.

Let me say this. As the only Member of Congress married to a Dreamer, this issue is extremely personal to me. I am committed to fighting this fight until we have a humane immigration policy that doesn't question the validity of people's lives and claims, that doesn't impose hurtful limitations on our communities, or doesn't leave anyone behind. No bans. No walls. No raids. Punto.

I want to talk to you a little bit about education and veterans. While extreme Republicans have served up hate and fear from every direction with no regard for the harm it causes our communities, I have been focused on addressing the real issues everyday people face—people like Army veteran Christopher Brown from Des Plaines, Illinois, who was promised by IIT Tech that his GI benefits would cover his tuition, only to be left with \$95,000 in student loans, or Navy veteran Bryan Tario from Lisle, Illinois, who was left with a significant debt after DeVry failed to be clear about the amount of money needed to complete his education.

Constituents in our districts have real problems that require real policy solutions. There are bad actors who should be held accountable and whose impact on our constituents can be minimized through prevention and redress.

These are the problems we should be addressing. If we spent the actual time addressing these issues, we would see the American people feel the improvement in their day-to-day lives.

Too many veterans are defrauded by predatory, often for-profit institutions that see the GI Bill education benefits and only see a profitable exploit.

In spite of the Republican chaos, I, along with Representative MIKE LEVIN from California, have introduced the Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act, my very first piece of legislation in United States Congress.

H.R. 1767 establishes an across-the-board process for student veterans to have their GI Bill education benefits restored in qualifying instances, such as when a student veteran has been defrauded by an educational institution.

While Republicans waste our time doling out impeachments and censures, they deny veterans who have been defrauded justice, leaving them without recourse or the ability to start again in a reputable institution using the benefits they earned while serving our Nation.

It is time to bring H.R. 1767 to the floor, and I know that our veterans are watching closely and deserve it.

Now, I want to talk about health. Every person in Illinois' Third Congressional District has a right to achieve their dreams. As Members of Congress, our policy choices should enable them to realize their full potential.

Access to healthcare and healthcare services are critical supports to that end. That is why, while Republicans have made it their mission to cut funding for hospitals, healthcare providers, on-the-ground organizations that support health equity efforts, and programs that enable the healthcare ecosystem to function, my colleagues and I have made expanding access to healthcare services a priority.

Republicans proposed a Labor-HHS appropriation bill that cuts vital programs and services by 28 percent, equivalent to \$64 billion. Democrats held the line, and this bill did not pass. However, my colleagues, of course, did not stop there.

In spite of their chaos, I, along with so many of my colleagues, continue to deliver for our communities. Our fearless chair, Representative JAYAPAL, also introduced the Medicare for All Act, which would expand healthcare coverage to everyone, and I am a proud cosponsor of it.

We advocated for and we are proud to see the proposed rule from the Department of Health and Human Services that would grant eligibility for healthcare coverage to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, recipients.

I introduced an amendment to the Labor-HHS appropriation bill that affirmed how critical it is for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to maintain its independence from congressional meddling so that it can continue to address practices that harm consumers, especially predatory lending that leads to medical debt.

Medical debt puts people in an impossible position, having to choose between seeking necessary healthcare services and paying for their basic needs, like housing, food, and heat.

We didn't do that work alone. Achieving health equity requires col-

lective action, which is why I am proud to highlight the work of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. In partnership with over 200 organizations and with funding support from the Ryan White program, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago served over 8,000 individuals last year through case management, housing, emergency financial assistance, and food support. Services include, but are not limited to, connections to housing, medical care, transportation, and behavioral health support.

The last thing I want to talk about is appropriations, something that this leadership doesn't seem to figure out. We are on our second continuing resolution, and the way things are going, we might have to go to a third one in January.

Let's not forget that Democrats have effectively kept the government open amid Republican infighting and, goodness, so much disorganization.

If we remember their first attempt at a continuing resolution, it included terrible anti-immigrant provisions and about a 30 percent cut to government services, which would have meant that in Illinois' Third District, 10,901 women and children would have gone hungry, 28,187 active and reserve servicemembers would have gone without payment in Illinois, and 5,000 residents in Illinois' Third District would have lost access to Federal help and vouchers.

These are not the goals of people who care about working families. How can you say that you are the party of family and then do everything you can to slash resources for them? To me, on the contrary, it is a vicious attack on working families.

At that time we said that if the Republicans were serious about averting a shutdown, they would bring a clean CR to the floor to keep our government running and to continue bipartisan conversations about funding priorities.

With less than 24 hours to avoid a shutdown, Republicans presented another CR. In spite of the Republican chaos, I, along with so many of my colleagues, delivered.

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We defeated the extremist CR, and that victory made the clean CR that averted a shutdown possible.

We forced them to, at least momentarily, back down from their anti-immigrant demands and their cold disregard for working families. Let's remember that fight is not over.

You just heard a number of my colleagues, particularly the last one, talk about H.R. 2. H.R. 2 is the most anti-immigrant bill we have ever seen pass the Homeland Security Committee. We call it the child deportation act.

They want to bring back draconian Trump-era border policy. In the same sentence, they talk about how they are concerned about the women and children crossing the border. If that is not dissonance and hypocrisy, I don't know what is.

Let me say this loud and clear. It is our responsibility to deliver for the

people who sent us here. We are looking like chaos under Republican leadership. We must continue to double down, push back, and fight for working families.

I am committed to continuing the fight for an appropriations package that protects essential safety net programs and vital services, brings Federal resources back to my district and the State of Illinois, and prevents further cuts that threaten the well-being of our communities.

Madam Speaker, I thank Congresswoman SUMMER LEE for joining me today as we talked about the Progressive Caucus' Special Order hour, the things that we continue to work on, and the victories in the midst of the chaos.

Here is what I want to say as I wrap up. Two days ago, I got back from Guatemala and Honduras. I went on my first committee delegation trip. As I visited Guatemala as a United States Congressperson, I couldn't stop thinking about my mother and how she has reminded me over the years of the 1,800-mile journey she took, walking and suffering as she was pregnant with me. She left poverty. She left a place she loved to have a better opportunity for me, her daughter.

I think about the moment that we are in today. I am very proud that I am the daughter of Guatemalan immigrants. I am very proud that I am the very first Latina of many to come from the Midwest. But I am more proud and honored to be able to be in this place, in this Chamber, fighting every single day for working families.

I am fighting for women who deserve paid leave and for constituents across the country who deserve quality healthcare.

I am fighting for clean water, clean energy, affordable housing, and the ability of the American people not to have to worry about living paycheck to paycheck.

I am fighting for that senior in my district who calls me crying: "If the government shuts down and I don't get my Social Security check, at 74 years of age, I am out in the street." These are the people who send us to Congress.

Madam Speaker, most of my colleagues, while celebrating and partying at holiday celebrations, perhaps having many spirits, should be reminded why they were sent to this Chamber. They were sent to represent the people who see them as their voice.

I will say to women, women of color, immigrants, the working class, children and our youth, Brown and Black people, the LGBTQ community, advocates and activists, on-the-ground organizations providing critical services, and anyone who feels afraid or invisible right now, to friends and allies of the progressive movement, and to my constituents in Illinois: I see you. I am fighting for you every single day.

There have been hard days in Washington, D.C., when I have been the only woman, the only Latina, the only

elected official with a mixed-status family where people are making decisions that will impact my life and your life, things that will impact the people I care about and the people you care about.

If there is ever a moment I falter, I think about my roots. I think about who I was sent here to fight for, and I find my footing again. My community is with me wherever I go, no matter how far away from home I might be.

While Republicans and their destructive agenda seek to decay the trust we have with one another, and they seek to divide us by holding resources hostage, community holds us together.

I refuse to allow Republicans and their obstruction of justice stop my colleagues and I from achieving true progress. I believe that progress is possible and that we can build a country that honors and respects the humanity and dignity of all marginalized people.

I believe that seeking asylum is a human right. I believe housing is a human right. In a country as rich as ours, no one should ever go hungry. No one should be trapped by crippling debt, whether it be student loan debt or medical debt. Brown and Black people are not disposable.

I fiercely fight for a world in which no one has to make impossible choices between going hungry or keeping the lights on at home.

I fight for a world where my loved ones like my uncle, who has been waiting for so long, can finally feel like this country is his home; where the color of our skin isn't a death sentence; and where we don't have to protest to ensure that climate change is taken seriously and the land and the people who take care of it are respected.

I believe in a self-determined future where all Palestinians and Israelis are free and safe. Our futures are intersected, and that realization can provide a path to coexistence.

A more just and loving world is possible. Progress is possible. It is possible because of the collective movement we are building—a progressive movement that does not move in fear but moves in courage.

The work is nowhere near done. Whether Republicans like it or not, I am here to stay and do the work that secures the future for all people. May we be reminded in this new year why we are here, who sent us here, and the responsibility we have to represent our constituents.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, during the 118th Congress, Democrats have worked persistently to advance legislation and policies that support the American people.

This Congress, Democrats have been met with fighting and incompetency from Republicans, an unwillingness to work together, and one of the most unproductive sessions in the history of Congress.

Despite the chaos, we have kept the government from defaulting on its debts and made sure that the government stayed open to do the work of the people.

I have worked with my colleagues to fight for the 18th Congressional District of Texas and my constituents, ensuring that the work of the federal government continues despite the chaos from Republicans.

House Democrats stand firm in our commitments to protect essential safety net programs and vital services, deliver for our districts, and prevent further cuts that would threaten the wellbeing of our constituents.

Democrats are united in putting People Over Politics to lower costs and grow the middle class.

As we wrap up the 1st session of the 118th Congress and look forward to the 2nd session, it is the job of Congress to fund our government, pass legislation that betters the lives of the American people, and ensure that we advocate for our constituents.

Extreme MAGA Republicans have had a difficult time coming to a consensus on how to pass their wildly unpopular and harmful legislation.

Instead of working in a bipartisan matter, they are wasting time and taxpayer dollars by bringing legislation to the floor that has no chance of passing the Senate and being signed by President Biden.

Congress should be working to lower costs and protect of national security instead of focusing on partisan politics.

As we go home for the holidays to our constituents and families, we bring with us a looming government shutdown, a result of incompetency and disfunction from extreme MAGA Republicans.

When we come back in January we must get back to our work.

The American people deserve a Congress that is serious in manner and functions to the best of its ability.

My friends across the aisle have not been willing to compromise during any of the most time-sensitive and dire moments in the 118th Congress.

While they have been focused on division and fear, House Democrats have worked to advocate for their communities while simultaneously offering to collaborate on the most crucial legislation on a bipartisan basis.

In this Congress, I have worked tirelessly to improve the lives of my constituents in Houston.

I have worked to fight against sex trafficking and introduced legislation to stop human trafficking in school zones, introduced gun safety legislation as well as legislation to stop the trafficking of fentanyl, and have brought over \$200 million in grants to my district.

While I am proud of the work that I have done for the 18th congressional district of Texas, there is still much work that we need to do.

We have been kicking the can down the road for months, and rather than address the main duty as members of Congress—funding the government—House Republicans instead are launching baseless accusations against our President to score cheap political points.

Under Republican leadership we have just barely avoided two government shutdowns by the skin of our teeth and have been unable to pass meaningful legislation that would improve the lives of Americans.

This is not to say Democrats have not tried to reach across the aisle.

We indicated we would be open to negotiation to avert the first shutdown, and we were

rebuffed until the situation was at its most critical point.

We indicated we would be open to negotiation to avert the second shutdown, and our friends across the aisle took to the media to express countless times that they would refuse to work with Democrats to find a solution.

By trying to suppress Democratic voices, Republican leadership is silencing half of the country simply because they have a different worldview.

Moreover, by not passing serious legislation, Republicans are stifling the very constituents who put them in office.

To serve the people who elected us to Congress, we all must work together to enact positive change born from compromise and a combined desire to serve as a voice for our constituents.

The performance of Republican leadership in this Congress has been utterly disappointing, and I urge my colleagues across the aisle to remember that to serve the people, we must work together to provide comprehensive and meaningful legislation.

#### EVERY AMERICAN WANTS A STRONG MILITARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CLOUD) for 30 minutes.

Mr. CLOUD. Madam Speaker, every American wants what every Republican wants, and that is a strong military. We realize that is our number one constitutional obligation.

We want the most capable, the most lethal military in the world. We need them to maintain peace and security. When we have to send them into harm's way, we want them to go with a clear mission and with every tool they need for victory. When they come home, we want to take care of the veterans and make sure they are welcomed and cared for. We want to make sure they have everything they need to succeed following their service in uniform to our country.

Unfortunately, what we have seen lately is our military has, in many ways, gone off its primary mission of protecting, securing, and preparing to continue to secure our Nation. They have gotten into social engineering, indeed, teaching CRT, DEI, and advancing things like gender ideology.

We have heard about drag shows at military bases, taxpayer-funded abortion travel, and taxpayer-funded transgender surgeries. It has certainly affected our recruiting. It has affected our capabilities. It has affected our readiness and ability to project power around the world.

I was happy to support the NDAA as it left the House and went to the Senate because it was focused on getting our military back to its focus, its purpose of protecting and securing our country; being that strong, lethal fighting force; and getting out of what we have known to become this woke move toward the military that has affected our capability.

Let's talk about the process it was supposed to go through. We understand that we send forth a good bill from the House, and then it goes to the Senate. There is supposed to be a conference on that. As a matter of fact, many Members worked to get on that conference committee. Many other Members worked to support people who would get on that conference committee in order to work and support different objectives that were in there.

A couple of things we were working on in our office was a bill that would let rank-and-file military be able to go into work in military contracting right after service. There has been a law that was meant to keep, for example, generals who were making big-time decisions about government, for example, from going to Raytheon and serving on a board because it wanted to make sure that their military decisions were not affected by future board positions. But the rank and file of our military kind of fell under that.

For example, we have an Army depot in our district. The rank and file cannot be employed there for 6 months after their retirement from military service. By then, they have often had to move on and find other careers.

We also had another provision that we were working on to make sure that the depots throughout our country that are tasked with the important duty of restoring and refurbishing our military hardware, supporting the warfighter and doing it in an efficient manner, that they continue to be able to thrive and survive. Those things fell off in what was our alleged conference.

This conference—instead of the Members that we elected to send there to represent this body—were instead four people who got together and the staffs probably of those four people made the decisions. Those two provisions were taken out of this bill, as well.

Let's talk about the House rules. All year, we talked about rewriting the muscle memory of Congress. We worked hard. I cannot tell you how many times we have heard the importance of single-subject bills and that we as Republicans were going to advocate for that. We were not going to marry things that were extraneous to each other. We were going to have bills that had to deal with germaneness. We added a germaneness rule in January that had never existed. We were going to say that any amendments to bills have to be germane. Anything we are going to add onto a bill has to be germane.

Come to find out that we now have the NDAA, which has come back from the Senate with a number of woke provisions in it, and added to that now is a FISA extension. In the Senate, the Parliamentarian says that is not germane to the NDAA. In the House, we actually have a tougher germaneness rule.

How are we getting around that? We are going to put it on the suspension calendar. We are just going to suspend

the rules and say the rules that we said we were going to operate by, we are not going to operate by when it comes to this bill. This is a tragedy.

Finally, when it comes to the Constitution, the Constitution is clear that Americans should not be warrantlessly surveilled. We know we have a DOJ that has been doing that. They have well extended their authorities.

We had so much FISA abuse. There were literally hundreds of thousands of instances of FISA abuse. Yet, we are asking for a clean extension of these provisions.

The Constitution was not written to be shredded in times of crisis or urgency. As a matter of fact, the Constitution was written specifically to place limits on our government in times of crisis and urgency.

It is not a time for us to look away and say that we will shred the Constitution a little bit here. The very purpose that the Constitution exists is to protect us in times like this and to make sure that we continue to protect the rights of the American people.

It is extremely important that we do everything we can to make sure that we do not pass a FISA out of this House that does not protect the American people. We cannot continue to allow them to spy on the American people, to surveil them without a warrant.

Let's get back to what we are here for. We want an NDAA that is going to focus on our military. We realize the importance of the first constitutional responsibility of this House, and that is to fund a military that will defend our Constitution and protect this land.

□ 1945

We are willing to do that.

Let's revisit this NDAA. Let's send this back to conference. Let's get us focused on what needs to be done, and for goodness' sake, let's not put a FISA extension that does not protect the rights of the American people.

I am happy to be joined by my good friend from the great State of Texas.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY).

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, I appreciate my friend from Texas yielding, and I appreciate his remarks because we share a committed interest to defending the United States, defending our military, and ensuring that our military is able to do its job.

Just in the last 24 hours, I saw that one of our generals put forward a report basically detailing the extent to which our recruiting levels and morale levels are low and that it is a particular time of difficulty for them in terms of recruiting.

I have been engaging with my colleagues, particularly on this side of the aisle, about the National Defense Authorization Act. It is, I believe, going to be on the floor tomorrow under a suspension of the rules. That means we are not going to go through regular