

Today, I am honored to recognize Eugene's service to our country and celebrate an incredible milestone in his life.

Our Nation's veterans are the backbone of this country. To Eugene, I say thank you for your incredible service and your sacrifice in the two wars that you fought for this Nation.

I wish you many more years to come with your family, and I thank you for your time and your dedication.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

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

Mrs. FLETCHER. Madam Speaker, for 1½ years now, people in Texas who are able to do so have been traveling out of State to obtain abortion care, and now that 15 other States have banned abortion, more people are traveling even farther to get the reproductive healthcare that they need.

In response to this exercise of the constitutional right to travel, lawmakers and others in Texas—and in States across the country—are threatening to take away that right, too.

These threats fail not only to reflect the will of the majority of people in this country, these threats fail to recognize the fundamental rights of Americans guaranteed in our Constitution.

Congress has the authority and the responsibility to protect people from these unconstitutional efforts to prevent, restrict, impede, or otherwise punish a person traveling to another State to obtain a legal abortion and to protect healthcare providers and others who assist that person.

Last week, I reintroduced the Ensuring Women's Right to Reproductive Freedom Act which passed this House last year with Congresswoman MARILYN STRICKLAND, Congressman JAMIE RASKIN, and more than 150 original cosponsors.

Madam Speaker, I urge the House to pass this bill, once again, to protect this fundamental right.

MAKE WASHINGTON SAFE FOR ALL AMERICANS

(Ms. LEE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.J. Res. 26, Disapproving the Action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Revised Criminal Code Act of 2022.

As a former Federal prosecutor and circuit court judge, I know firsthand how important it is for criminal penalties to reflect the seriousness of a crime and to ensure the safety of our communities.

Despite surging crime rates, the D.C. Council seeks to reduce the maximum sentences for violent crimes such as carjackings and robberies and enact procedural changes that will overburden the courts.

This will undermine law enforcement, and it is contrary to the actual needs of the residents and visitors to our Nation's Capital.

Republicans are committed to data-driven criminal justice policies that will strengthen our courts and law enforcement, combat rising crime rates, and protect our communities.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important measure to put an end to these policies and make Washington safe for all Americans.

THE PRESIDENT'S INTERPRETATION OF THE STATE OF OUR UNION

(Mr. CLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, last night President Biden gave his interpretation of the state of our Union, but after hearing his version, one thing is clear: our President lives in an alternative reality.

We all know the problems:

Crippling inflation and soaring interest rates, making it harder to save money and do business;

An open border with nearly 5 million illegal crossings since this administration took office;

A drug and crime crisis harming our communities; and

A more dangerous world with feckless leadership out of the White House, from a botched Afghanistan withdrawal to an emboldened CCP.

The fact is that Americans know the real state of our Union every time they buy groceries, put gas in their tanks, can't find baby formula or medications, or lose a loved one to the fentanyl pouring over our border.

That is why Americans elected House Republicans last November to bring change back to Washington.

We have already got to work by passing legislation to defund 87,000 IRS agents, establishing a select committee to compete with China, halting the COVID vaccine mandate for service members, and ending the national emergency and fully reopening the Capitol to the American people.

We are just getting started. To use the words of President Biden: House Republicans plan to finish the job the right way for the American people.

PROTECTING THE SECOND AMENDMENT

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

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Speaker, the Biden administration continues their all-out assault on the Second Amendment as evidenced by the President's call just last night in this very Chamber for banning weapons he finds objectionable.

Madam Speaker, Democrats believe that the government should decide

your God-given constitutionally protected rights. Their new ATF rule published in the Federal Register further threatens the rights of law-abiding citizens.

It treats individuals who own pistols with stabilizing braces as if they possess illegal short-barrel rifles, and it forces them to surrender them to the Federal Government. If they don't surrender them, then they are retroactively declared criminals for what was then a lawful purchase, and they now face up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

This is just another example of the Washington-knows-best elites who are out-of-touch with everyday Americans.

So I introduced the PISTOL Act to block the ATF from redefining pistol braces as short-barreled rifles. My legislation provides a simple statutory definition of a pistol and would prevent the Biden administration from improperly classifying pistol braces or regulating them by decree or fiat.

The Second Amendment is not subject to bureaucratic interpretation, and we have got to fight to protect the God-given and constitutionally protected rights of all Americans.

SOUTH CAROLINA LEADERSHIP MEANS JOBS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, the wallets of South Carolinians and all Americans have been negatively affected by the destructive decisions of Biden and the Democrat-led Congress destroying jobs.

However, through the leadership of Governor Henry McMaster, with the largest Republican supermajority in South Carolina in 150 years, South Carolina has achieved a record surplus of over \$3.5 billion in unexpected revenue for the year.

Last week, in the State of the State Address by Governor McMaster, he stated that 2022 was the most successful year for economic growth in our State's history.

The Governor announced 12 projects valued at over \$10 billion creating 14,000 new jobs. Governor Jim Edwards recruited Michelin, Governor Carroll Campbell recruited BMW, Governor David Beasley promoted workfare programs, and Governor Nikki Haley saved Boeing.

South Carolina remains a shining example for America.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, who successfully protected America for 20 years, as the global war on terrorism continues moving from the Afghanistan safe haven to America.

Our support is for our appreciated ally Turkey, which has been so devastated by the earthquake.

□ 1215

REMEMBERING MAINI WOOD

(Mr. MILLER of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today in memory of a great Ohioan, Maini Wood, who recently passed away at her York Township homestead.

Maini lived an incredible life. She was born in Finland in 1930 and survived the Russo-Finnish War of 1939 and 1940.

As a young girl, she actually had to ski to school, wearing white robes to hide from the Russian bombers that flew overhead.

Maini immigrated to the United States in her early 20s, but she met her husband, Dee, aboard a ship during a visit to her native Finland. The couple eventually settled in York Township where they raised their children in what they described as—and I happen to agree with them—a beautiful, idyllic rural community.

We learned so much from Maini about survival, about taking chances, and about finding joy in life's simple pleasures.

Ohio and America are less with her loss.

My thoughts and prayers are with Maini's family as they grieve the loss of this amazing woman.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1402

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GUTHRIE) at 2 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.

TERMINATING CDC REQUIREMENT FOR PROOF OF COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR FOREIGN TRAVELERS

GENERAL LEAVE

MR. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the legislation and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 185.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 97 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on

the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 185.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1402

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 185) to terminate the requirement imposed by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for proof of COVID-19 vaccination for foreign travelers, and for other purposes, with Mr. KILEY in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the committee on Energy and Commerce or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) to begin debate.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 185, which provides another opportunity to recognize COVID-19 as an endemic and move our country back to normal.

Last week, we had a couple of bills dealing with COVID—one vaccine mandate for healthcare workers, which is the only CMS vaccine mandated for healthcare workers—and my bill to declare the emergency over.

President Biden actually did announce that the emergency is going to be over May 11, so we have a lot of work to do moving forward.

Now we move forward to ask for support for H.R. 185, which provides another opportunity for us to move our country back to normal.

H.R. 185, introduced by Mr. MASSIE, a member of the Rules Committee and a fellow Kentuckian, would finally put an end to the CDC's requirement for international travelers to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination before entering the United States through air, through flying to this country.

The bill would also prevent the CDC from implementing any similar mandates to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination to enter into the United States through air.

This policy is out of touch with the rest of the world. The U.S. is the only country in North America with this requirement, and most other countries have no testing or vaccination requirements at all. Also, the Biden administration fails to provide exceptions for religious or moral reasons.

As with other vaccine mandates, this requirement will not end on May 11,

and thus far, the administration has not indicated any plans to change it.

It is long past due to end this mandate. Doing so will align the United States with the rest of North America's COVID-19 vaccine policy for people coming into the country and recognize COVID-19 is an endemic rather than a pandemic.

Further, this will serve as an important check and balance against President Biden's overreaching policies by requiring the President to come to Congress in order to enact similar policies in the future.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in opposition to H.R. 185, which once again prioritizes politics over science at the expense of the health of the American people.

To date, COVID-19 has killed more than 1 million of our fellow Americans. Families have been changed forever. Fortunately, today we have vaccines, tests, and treatments that have put the darkest days of the pandemic behind us, but we can't forget that COVID still kills 500 Americans every day.

Variants of concern continue to emerge, and therefore we must be vigilant and data driven in monitoring any uptick in cases. We must follow the science and the guidance of our public health experts.

We are not done with COVID; or, rather, COVID is not done with us. Ending all of our protections and public health measures without a reasoned discussion is downright dangerous. Unfortunately, that is exactly what House Republicans continue to do week after week, bringing bills to the floor that are nothing but political stunts that put politics over science. This is the latest dangerous stunt.

H.R. 185 would terminate the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's order that requires proof of COVID-19 vaccination for foreign air passengers entering the United States.

Vaccination is protective against severe illness and death from COVID-19. It reduces the impact of COVID-19 on our healthcare infrastructure, including hospital capacity and healthcare provider staffing. That is why the CDC order was put in place and why I continue to believe that our public health experts are best positioned to make these kinds of determinations.

This bill would permit unvaccinated individuals to freely enter the United States, even as variants continue to emerge around the world, potentially increasing the risk of circulating new variants of concern. This could potentially stretch our healthcare resources just as our hospitals, providers, and public health infrastructure try to rebuild.

In addition, H.R. 185 would also prohibit the CDC from issuing any successor or subsequent orders to require COVID-19 vaccination for foreign travelers in the future as well. This is dangerous and ties the hands of our public