

I hope that he will address the importance of our country's energy independence, our fight against China, and a strong Second Amendment.

The list goes on and on.

When the President joins us here tonight, he has the opportunity to share with Kansans and Americans his plan to tackle these challenges head-on.

Mr. Speaker, I am optimistic that our greatest days are yet to come. Those days require us to get America back on track.

HUNTER BIDEN AND IMPEACHMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. Garcia) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, House Republicans have finally decided to have Hunter Biden testify in public on their sham impeachment inquiry into President Biden.

Now, the American people will soon see what we all saw behind closed doors: that there is zero evidence—zero evidence—of any wrongdoing by President Biden who had no involvement in any of Hunter's business dealings. Absolutely none.

We will continue to call out these lies.

Let's take a look at the star witnesses that the House majority has brought forward in this political stunt impeachment.

We have Alexander Smirnov, who we know is an indicted Russian asset. He has been indicted for lying, by the way, and working with Russian spies. We have another who turned out to be a spy for China, who actually sold weapons to Iran. The third witness right now is serving a 14-year sentence in prison for fraud.

You can't make this stuff up.

We also, of course, have recently learned about another disgraced con man who colluded with the Trump campaign. They are all-star witnesses of the Republican majority. Of course, we shouldn't forget Rudy Giuliani and his grand conspiracy theories, which is all the House majority is left with.

Now, the GOP insists on impeaching President Biden at whatever the cost, all to help Donald Trump get reelected.

Now, Donald Trump was impeached twice for his crimes and faces 91 felony charges, and he is desperate for revenge. If there is anyone we should be investigating, it is the Trump crime family and Jared Kushner's \$2 billion deal from the Saudi Government, which he received just weeks after leaving the White House. The one person that was in charge of the Middle East—the Middle East envoy—then receives \$2 billion into an investment fund. We know that the Saudis spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in Trump properties. That is a real scandal and should be investigated.

It is time to end this impeachment scam and get back to work for the American people.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOSE SAMANIEGO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Jose Samaniego, who passed away in 2017, far too early at the age of 33.

Jose was a firefighter for the Golden Ranch Fire District and will be remembered for his passion for community service.

Jose Samaniego also served on the board of the North Tucson Firefighters Association, Local 3832, working to better the community through fundraisers for local foster families.

Jose began his career as a wildland firefighter and member of the Avra Valley Fire District before going to Raytheon Missile Systems.

In 2012, Jose went to work for Golden Ranch, where he became a member of the special operations team.

Beyond his firefighter achievements, Jose was a devoted husband to Serena and a loving father to four children: Andres, Alysha, Adam, and Annabella, who I had the pleasure of meeting recently and was impressed with their drive and their dedication. They have bright futures ahead of them, knowing that they proudly carry the legacy of their dad.

In honor of Jose, the North Tucson Firefighters Association started the annual Jose Samaniego Memorial Archery Shoot and BBQ Challenge. I was honored to attend this event this past Saturday on March 2 and had the opportunity to meet his entire family and experience firsthand why the event is a fitting tribute to the passion that Jose had for his community and also his fire family, as well as his love for the outdoors.

Jose Samaniego remains a true hero in the hearts of the greater Tucson community and the residents of my district. We extend our gratitude for his dedicated service and are eternally thankful for his contributions.

MI NIDITO RESTAURANT

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mi Nidito and its owners, Jimmy and Ernie Lopez.

Mi Nidito, the Lopez family's restaurant, has been a staple in Tucson for 72 years.

Jimmy and Ernie's grandparents, Ernesto and Alicia Lopez, first opened the restaurant doors in 1952. Since then, the Lopez family has tirelessly upheld Mi Nidito's legacy for three generations.

Arizonans and visitors from across the country and around the world have stood in line for hours to get a taste of their renowned chile rellenos and enchilada-style burritos, as well.

Over the last seven decades, Mi Nidito has also had some notable guests, including then-President Bill Clinton, who visited the restaurant in 1999.

As Jimmy and Ernie begin a well-deserved retirement, Laura and I want to

thank them and the entire Lopez family for their contributions to our community.

SALPOINTE GIRLS BASKETBALL

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Salpointe girls' basketball team for winning the 4A State championship.

In an exciting game, they secured victory over Gilbert's Mesquite High by a score of 59-49.

This marks the Lancer's second State championship in the last three seasons. Their hard work and perseverance over the past season has been truly commendable.

I am proud to represent such dedicated student athletes, determined coaches, and supportive parents.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Coach Joseph Luevano and this talented team for a well-earned title.

RECOGNIZING MICHAEL HYATT

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize retiring Border Patrol agent, Michael Hyatt.

Mr. Hyatt currently serves as the agent in charge at the Brian A. Terry Station near Naco, Arizona.

He will retire later this month, ending a 28-year career with Border Patrol.

After joining in 1996, Michael spent the majority of his time with Border Patrol in Arizona, with 11 years at the Naco Station.

His work as agent in charge has been praised by Cochise County residents, specifically for his tireless community outreach and strong relationships with ranchers.

As Michael prepares for a well-deserved retirement, I personally thank him for all his hard work.

□ 1030

WELCOMING CASSIE SMITH TO THE CAPITOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, at the young age of 109, Cassie Smith voted on the first day of this year's primary and was among the first in North Carolina to do so.

Ms. Cassie, also known as Ma Cassie by neighbors and friends in her Battleboro community, is a living and walking symbol of our democracy. I am honored to welcome her to Washington, D.C., as my special guest to the State of the Union.

When I visited the Smith home to invite her, in response, Ma Cassie smiled brightly and said: I am blessed. I thank God every day.

Her faith drives her, and she wholeheartedly believes in the importance of fulfilling her civic duty. What a reminder as we commemorate Bloody Sunday.

Ms. Cassie traveled by airplane, which was the first time she has flown, and she said this was an item on her bucket list. At 109, why not?

I am glad to let eastern North Carolina and the American people know that Delta flight 5310 has landed, and Ms. Cassie is here in Washington, D.C., safe and sound with her son, Frank, and caretaker, Faye. Ms. Cassie can check that one off her bucket list.

From working on the farm, turned maid, and now special guest at 109 years old, what an American story and inspiration. Her presence at our Nation's Capitol embodies the very essence of why we have the opportunity to assemble and our democratic values.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed with great honor I share Ms. Cassie Smith's story.

ON THE TESTIMONY OF FORMER CHIEF OF BORDER PATROL RAUL ORTIZ

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROSE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I was troubled to recently hear that former chief of Border Patrol, Raul Ortiz, never spoke to either President Biden or the Vice President and so-called border czar KAMALA HARRIS in the 2 years he headed up security at our southern border.

In a recent interview, Chief Ortiz said he never had a single conversation with either of them. He went on to say: "That is a problem," given that he commanded 21,000 border patrolmen.

I would argue it is more than a problem. At the very least, it is an indication that border security was never and has not been a priority for our Commander in Chief.

It is a bit like abandoning a soldier on the battlefield, Mr. Speaker. Because of the policies of the Biden administration, Ortiz had to endure an unprecedented surge of illegal immigration month after month. In his 2½ years at the helm, there were more than 5 million illegal immigrant encounters and 1½ million got-aways during that period. His patrolmen seized more than 50,000 pounds of fentanyl at the southern border by the time of his retirement at the end of last June.

When asked about whether the White House was sending mixed messages to Mexico, Central America, and beyond, he said, without hesitation: Yes.

That mixed messaging was heard loud and clear when President Biden was on the campaign trail in 2019 and said that the United States could take another 2 million immigrants "in a heartbeat." That message got even louder after he took office. In no time, he halted Border Patrol activity, wall construction, and ended the successful remain in Mexico asylum policy.

It is also important to consider that Ortiz was at the helm when title 42 was lifted. All of the experts warned that an unprecedented surge in illegal immigration would follow if that authority was lifted. Nevertheless, the Biden administration fought tirelessly for its end.

Imagine overseeing the border and not getting a single call from those

undoing years of border policy. Imagine the stress, the staffing challenges, the human trafficking and drug crime, all happening with the stroke of a pen and without your input.

Under the Biden administration, we have seen an unprecedented abuse of parole authority, resulting in more than 1 million immigrants being allowed to enter the United States. The President clearly kept that 2019 campaign promise, and it appears he kept his border officials in the dark in the process.

Ultimately, a phone call won't solve this crisis, and we don't need new immigration laws to solve the invasion at the southern border. Don't be fooled by the Democrats and the President calling for new legislation and resources. What we need is a President willing to enforce existing law and one who will prioritize the men and women who protect our borders over those crossing them illegally.

The main need for new legislation is to force the President to enforce existing laws and to complete the border wall. The House passed that legislation, the Secure the Border Act of 2023, almost 10 months ago, only to have it sit idly on the Senate side and be ignored.

WELCOMING FAT JOE TO THE STATE OF THE UNION

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BARRAGÁN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my guest for the State of the Union. He is a leader in the fight to make healthcare more affordable and equitable.

Fat Joe is a Grammy-nominated artist, entrepreneur, and philanthropist. He is also a partner with Power to the Patients, to advocate for healthcare price transparency.

Confusing health information, language barriers, and lack of insurance are challenges that make our healthcare system difficult to navigate, especially for communities of color.

Because of high out-of-pocket costs, insured patients can still face enormous medical bills, and uninsured patients are more likely to face unnecessary hospital fees.

Healthcare is the only service where someone does not know the cost until after you purchase it, until after receiving the healthcare services. We must remove barriers that restrict families from getting care, including knowing your costs up front.

This builds upon the work of President Biden and House Democrats to put people over politics, to lower the cost of healthcare coverage and lower drug prices.

Fat Joe's work to highlight the need for price transparency is necessary to reduce healthcare costs for American families. I am proud to welcome him back to the Capitol as my guest.

FULL FUNDING FOR WIC

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud and support the full funding of WIC in the fiscal year 2024 budget.

For 50 years, WIC has delivered quality nutrition benefits and breastfeeding support for almost 10 million American families, including almost 1 million pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and children in California.

As chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I hear stories every day of how essential WIC is to Latino families in America, with more than 6 million Latino women and children enrolled.

Last year, the Hispanic Caucus joined the Congressional Black Caucus and the Democratic Women's Caucus to send a letter to congressional leadership to urge them to fully fund WIC.

For months, House Republicans insisted on harmful funding cuts, which put women and children's health at risk. House Democrats worked tirelessly for a \$1 billion funding increase to meet the basic needs of the program.

This week, House Democrats were successful in our efforts. Moms and their babies and pregnant women who rely on WIC can breathe a sigh of relief. Their access to their benefits will continue.

House Democrats will continue to keep up the fight in Congress toward an America where no one goes hungry.

RECOGNIZING CARMEN TAPIO

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a leader from our district who has created jobs and changed lives, all while growing the largest African-American-owned business in the State of Nebraska and the largest private mixed-use development investment in North Omaha.

Carmen Tapio is currently the CEO of North End Teleservices, which has soared to the Inc. 5000 list of fastest growing companies for the last 4 years, injecting over \$306 million into Nebraska's economy.

She established Forever North Real Estate to help reimagine North Omaha and set it on a promising path where a community can work, live, and play. Her leadership is helping to reduce poverty, unemployment, and is changing the trajectory of families for generations to come.

Through developing the only Department of Labor registered apprenticeship in her industry, micro credentialing, and bringing people up through the organization, she is growing her own workforce and leadership.

Wanting to empower Black women across the State, Carmen ignited the formation of Nebraska Black Women United with a few phone calls, her own humble take on its formation. Today, over 800 women belong to the purpose-driven organization and continue to fan the flames of growth and support for Black women.