

and lay out his top policy priorities for our Nation.

Last week, I sent the White House a request that the national affordable housing and homelessness crisis be included as part of the State of the Union Address, and I was very pleased to hear this morning that housing will, in fact, be included in the address.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have a special guest. All the people of this country are my special guests today. I am speaking to them about this critical issue of housing and the need to take the people off the street.

Unfortunately, the homeless on the street and in tents and broken-down RVs will not hear this message tonight, but they expect their Members of Congress that they elect to office to speak up for them.

I speak for them, fight for them, and expect everybody, Democrats and Republicans, to fight for the people in America who are homeless and who are looking for better and decent housing.

While the Biden administration has helped our Nation achieve one of the strongest labor markets with record job creation and a record number of businesses forming, we simply cannot talk about the state of our Union without talking about the state of housing in this country.

Housing is a critical part of every person's well-being, the largest part of family budgets, and a major part of our economy. Yet, rising housing costs continue to make up nearly 70 percent of core inflation, outpacing modest wage gains.

To put it in plainer terms: Americans are making more money, but housing costs are so extreme that the extra money in their pockets still isn't enough. Indeed, more renters and homeowners are paying a greater share of their income on housing than ever before. Since 2020, home prices have skyrocketed by 47 percent. Rents have increased by 40 percent during that same timeframe.

It is no wonder that families in nearly every income bracket are feeling the pain of one of the worst housing and homelessness crises in our Nation's history.

Today, a record 653,100 people are experiencing homelessness nationwide as we saw a sobering 25 percent spike in the number of people who are experiencing homelessness for the first time in their lives, between 2022 and 2023.

I am talking about people we call our neighbors, family members, students, teachers, and frontline workers. Elderly Americans, who should be enjoying retirement, are one of the fastest rising groups of people experiencing homelessness.

This is simply unacceptable. While the state of our Nation's housing is bleak right now, this doesn't have to be our future. We know how to solve the housing crisis.

During the pandemic, Democrats secured unprecedented levels of housing relief through bills like the American

Rescue Plan Act, which promoted equitable economic recovery, spurred more development of affordable housing, and helped nearly 3 million people experiencing the risk of homelessness. Over 12 million people successfully avoided eviction or foreclosure thanks to these investments.

In short, Democrats proved what we can accomplish with substantial, targeted investments in housing, and we should use this as a blueprint to finally end this crisis.

During this Congress, however, people on the opposite side of the aisle, the Republicans, have tried to defund Federal housing programs and even passed a bill to make homeownership more, not less, expensive.

As the top Democrat on the House Financial Services Committee, I commit to press the fight in Congress to secure robust investments in fair and affordable housing.

I have introduced my groundbreaking housing bills, again, including the Housing Crisis Response Act, the Ending Homelessness Act, and the Down Payment Toward Equity Act. These bills would help create nearly 1.4 million affordable, accessible, and resilient homes and reduce housing costs, end homelessness, and revive the dream of homeownership for all.

I am looking forward to hearing President Biden's State of the Union Address, and I hope that housing is highlighted as a major policy and not just a passing mention.

Mr. Speaker, you are going to hear a lot about housing. I am not going to give up on housing. I am going to speak to every Member of Congress about voting for housing to end this crisis.

#### NO ARMY MONEY TO UKRAINE

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

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I was so furious, but not surprised, when I saw the Bloomberg News report that the Biden administration is now considering draining \$200 million out of Army reserves to send more money to Ukraine.

The move would target reserve funds that this House has authorized and appropriated for this particular purpose, a purpose that is worthy, certainly more worthy than continuing involvement in the conflict in Ukraine that could lead to a tragic escalatory accident.

I can't even believe this is a controversial view to take on this floor, but I believe that the U.S. Army reserves should actually be for the U.S. Army.

By the way, it is not as if we don't have needs for our Army. How about the families of our soldiers?

Right now, childcare is a real problem. We have Army soldiers who are driving 1½ hours or more each way just to drop off their kids at childcare. We could invest that money in our military families.

Mr. Speaker, I could take you to the Army town of Crestview, Florida, in my district, where the school counselors are still helping Army families deal with the lingering effects of deployment after deployment after deployment. They could use more resources. They tell me: Congressman, if we had more resources for these Army families, they could improve quality of life and improve mental health.

Not for nothing, but the Army was taking a leading role in hypersonics for our country. We have fallen behind China. If we have an extra \$200 million laying around the Army, how about we invest in making sure that, with hypersonic weapons, we can hit a moving target—I don't know—like China can? Instead, we see this attempt to drain resources away for Ukraine.

When Joe Biden talked about campaigning for the soul of the Nation, I just assumed it was our Nation and not Ukraine.

Moreover, Ukraine is no Garden of Eden for democracy. Senator LEE pointed out in a report that the CIA had to directly confront Zelenskyy about his own personal corruption.

In Ukraine, they have canceled the Presidential elections. Call me old-fashioned, Mr. Speaker, but I actually prefer democracies that hold elections rather than canceling elections.

While there were many concerns about the death of Navalny, appropriately, people forget the fact that Zelenskyy jailed a journalist, Gonzalo Lira, and that journalist died in a Ukrainian prison.

□ 1100

Tonight, you will hear President Biden come into this House, and the one thing that President Biden has in common with the American people is that both were far better off four years ago, Joe Biden physically, and the rest of us economically.

Now, as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I will call for an investigation of any efforts to drain U.S. reserves to fund the war in Ukraine, and I would invite my fellow members of the Armed Services Committee to join me.

What this reminded me of is when all the Democrats were crying alligator tears about President Trump using DOD money to fund the wall. My colleagues may accuse me of hypocrisy now because I supported President Trump in that endeavor, but I don't like the Biden administration going beyond what we set forth with our Article I powers.

However, at least if I am being a hypocrite, I was doing so for the defense of America's borders and America's interests to stop an invasion that is killing hundreds of thousands of people through the introduction of fentanyl and an invasion that is diminishing the economic prospects of working people in this country.

When my Democratic colleagues are hypocrites, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues

on the other side of the aisle serve as hypocrites and fund the pensions of government workers in Ukraine. It is not for nothing, but it wasn't that long ago that we found a person connected to the defense industrial complex in Ukraine exiting the country with a million dollars in U.S. cash in a shoebox.

The corruption is real. America's interests are illusory, and we should never drain \$200 million out of our Army that should go to military families, that should go to soldiers, and that should go to America's capabilities. It is America's capabilities that will define whether or not we hold the high ground, not which guy in a tracksuit is running Crimea.

#### BIDEN WEAKNESS ON THE WORLD STAGE

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

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Speaker, there are real concerns throughout our Nation about the violence in our streets. There has been a failed social experiment on the part of the left that has resulted in high levels of crime.

Leftwing officials, Mr. Speaker, have defunded and discredited police forces across the country, as well as appointed liberal prosecutors who are not prosecuting.

The facts don't lie. Here in Washington, D.C., the city has cut \$100 million from the Metro PD's \$600 million budget since 2017, and the prosecution rate of arrests in the Nation's Capital has been around 30 percent in recent years. Whereas a short time ago, it was upwards, near 70 percent. Therefore, it should be no surprise that violent crime is soaring in Washington, D.C.

Carjackings, for instance, were up more than 100 percent from last year, which was at an all-time high. Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, they are all the same. Crime has gotten so out of hand in New York City, the Governor just deployed 1,000 National Guardsmen to help secure the subway system.

However, it is not just in the cities. Radical ideology has expanded into the suburban communities, and crime has come along with it. Just this week, I met with members of the Fraternal Order of Police. They shared with me their concerns about the rising antipolice sentiment and detailed the skyrocketing violence against law enforcement officers.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, tragically, 378 police officers were shot in the line of duty, 46 of whom were killed, and this was up from 323 officers shot in 2022. It is disgraceful.

One piece of legislation to address these issues is my Holding Prosecutors Accountable Act, which has been endorsed by the National Police Association. It would force ideological prosecutors to do their jobs by mandating

they prosecute at least 67 percent of violent crimes. If they don't, their jurisdiction will lose access to Federal DOJ grant funding.

It would also require prosecutors' offices that serve highly populated jurisdictions to publish their prosecution rate data. Americans deserve to know if their elected prosecutor is deliberately releasing violent criminals back onto the streets.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, this ideological social experiment starts at the top. Joe Biden and Vice President HARRIS have not shown support for law enforcement. It is that simple. Just look at their criticism of the border agents that were on horseback, who they accused of whipping migrants, despite knowing that that was categorically false.

These border agents were doing their jobs. There was no whipping that took place, and when the truth finally came out, there was no apology from the White House. Also, when Vice President HARRIS had the opportunity to disavow the defund the police movement during an interview on "The View," she refused to answer, showing an utter lack of support for the brave men and women who protect and serve our communities.

This is, Mr. Speaker, in stark contrast from the former President, who would speak strongly in favor of police officers and backing the blue. President Trump sent a clear pro law enforcement message, but now, under President Biden, we are dealing with rampant smash-and-grab situations, crimes, migrant crime due to our open borders, out-of-control violence in our streets, and gangs riding around on dirt bikes victimizing innocent citizens and small businesses.

We have a serious issue before us that has been created over the last 3 years. Therefore, as a society and as elected officials, we need to come together to correct course, or the American people must elect those that will make national security and public safety job one.

Mr. Speaker, under the past Trump administration, there was no invasion of Ukraine, there was peace in the Middle East, and there was less tension between China and Taiwan. As well, the terrorist state of Iran was defunded because of the strict sanctions on their oil exports.

However, today, Biden's weaknesses on the world stage have plunged the world into chaos. We are now dealing with the horrific invasion by Putin into Ukraine. The Middle East went from peace to chaos, with hostage taking, massive slaughters, and death. Additionally, many parts of our neighboring country, Mexico, have turned into gangland due to the border policies from this administration.

Further, our relationship with China is one of disrespect, not respect.

Plus, Iran is now enormously well funded and responsible for the bulk of terrorism that exists worldwide, from

Hezbollah to the Houthis to Hamas. Despite this, we have an administration that has an irrational affinity for gaining some sort of deal or agreement with the terrorist state of Iran.

In addition, perhaps what is worse, Mr. Speaker, there is no plan to take corrective action. Once again, it is just more of the same, and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are asking the American taxpayer to fund the results of the Biden administration's disastrous geopolitical policies.

As former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo put it, this is an America that is on its back foot. Our friends don't trust us, and our adversaries insufficiently fear us.

Mr. Speaker, I could not agree with him more.

#### RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 6 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BERGMAN) at noon.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

God of all creation, bend Your ear toward the Earth and hear the cries of Your people imprisoned by their adversaries, stolen from their lives and loved ones, and held captive by hatred.

There are countless men, women, and children across the globe who are victims of heartless cruelty, but on this day, we lift up those who remain held hostage in Gaza after 5 months, especially our own countrymen: Edan Alexander, Itai Chen, Sagui Dekel-Chen, Omer Neutra, Hersch Goldberg-Polin, and Keith Siegel.

Ever-present one, we pray the Acheinu with their loved ones and their communities, asking that You have mercy upon them and bring them out of their suffering to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption, now, speedily, and soon.

And may the righteous memory of those who have died at the hand of their captors, be a powerful testimony to remember, that in atonement all the ends of the Earth will turn to You, O Lord, and bow before You.

O Lord, be not far from us. You are our strength and the deliverer of all those who endure the interminable wait for the return of these our brothers.

In Your merciful name we pray.  
Amen.