

I wish my daughter a happy birthday. Happy birthday, Taylor.

END HUNGER NOW

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, the Biden-Harris administration recently announced nearly \$1.7 billion in new commitments as part of the White House Challenge to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities.

In 2022, when President Biden hosted the second-ever White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, I told those in attendance that the event could not be a one-off. We couldn't gather in D.C., pat each other on the back, and not deliver on our ambitious goals.

These new bold commitments from 141 stakeholders from across the Nation, including health systems, insurers, nonprofits, philanthropic groups, academia, and local elected officials, show that we are not taking our foot off the gas to meet the President's goal of ending hunger and reducing diet-related diseases by 2030.

I want to thank President Biden; my good friend, Chef Jose Andres, from the President's Council on Sports, Fitness, and Nutrition; Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack; Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra; and everyone who is playing a part big and small to end hunger once and for all.

A THWARTED FLEECE

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, a Biden agency called PBGC wanted to fleece the taxpayer of \$127 million by funding pensions for dead participants.

Let me repeat: \$127 million for dead pension participants.

Only after repeated calls by the Committee on Education and the Workforce for PBGC to correct its work has it decided to claw back those funds. Thanks to the tireless work of the committee, PBGC is being held accountable.

Accountability and fiscal responsibility were once shared, bipartisan values.

A former Republican Senator has been famously quoted as saying: "A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you are talking real money."

This Senator's colleague, William Proxmire, notoriously presented the Golden Fleece Award to the government organization that had fleeced the American taxpayer the worst on any given week.

The American people are tired of being fleeced. President Biden has already misspent billions in fraudulent COVID payments. I say not a dollar more.

TRUMP AND HIS EXTREME MAGA RETROGRESSIVE AGENDA

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

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, this Women's History Month, we find ourselves confronted by the regressive forces of Donald Trump and extreme MAGA Republicans. This faction seeks to propel our Nation backwards at the sacrifice of centuries of progress and the well-being of American lives for their own self-serving interests.

Their agenda aims to strip women of their reproductive freedoms nationwide, slash Social Security and Medicare, rip healthcare away from millions, and funnel even more wealth to the already wealthy through massive tax breaks for big corporations and billionaires. This radical agenda is something everyday Americans, including Virgin Islanders, who continue to receive the brunt of inequity in benefits and access to resources, simply cannot afford.

Extreme Republicans and the former President attack not just the American people, including veterans and elected officials, but as we saw January 6, the democratic institutions that are a bedrock of our Nation when things don't go their way. Their actions are an unequivocal declaration of war against our democracy.

Madam Speaker, Republicans must secure and defend our Republic and secure the rights and safety of all Americans, especially American women.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). The Chair reminds Members to refrain from engaging in personalities toward presumptive nominees for the Office of President.

SCHOOLCHILDREN SUFFER FROM DISPARATE POLICIES

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. As I traveled through the airport, I could sense the degree of excitement of many of the students who were traveling on spring break.

As I entered the Capitol, it was a joy to see so many classes and families enjoying the wonderment of democracy in this great place, the citadel of democracy.

Nonetheless, I rise today to talk about America's schoolchildren and particularly to talk about those who are impacted by disparate policies such as the policies in Barbers Hill.

I want to acknowledge the Congressional Black Caucus and the advocates who have supported and surrounded Mr. George. Mr. George is a young man who is isolated in a classroom, who has been going to school with no academic teaching, no ability to fraternize with his fellow students, no ability to eat in

the lunchroom, and no expectation of any kind of spring break.

Madam Speaker, you ask: Well, he has obviously misbehaved.

No. He has over a 3.0 grade point average. He is an excellent student, but he is being there because of his hairstyle. I need the Secretary of Education to help this young man and go to his classroom.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Save him from this isolation and prison-like environment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman's time has expired. The gentlewoman is no longer recognized.

CHEROKEE GIRLS BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

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

Mr. EDWARDS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Cherokee High School Girls Varsity Basketball team for winning the North Carolina High School Athletic Association's 1A State Championship title for the first time since 1996.

The Cherokee Lady Braves defeated their opponent by a dominating 42 points, making the final score 74-32.

The entire team contributed to a historic State championship with every player on the Cherokee roster making an appearance in the game.

The Lady Braves showcased the very best high school athletics, and I am confident that their determination, leadership, and perseverance will prepare them for success on and off the court.

Fans tuned in at home and across the country, including Shaquille O'Neal, who shared his congratulations on Instagram.

Congratulations to the Lady Braves on a remarkable victory. They have made western North Carolina proud.

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 2 o'clock and 11 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1530

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HILL) at 3 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Avery M. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

EMBASSY CONSTRUCTION INTEGRITY ACT OF 2023

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6306) to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to prohibit the acquisition or lease of a consular or diplomatic post built or owned by an entity beneficially owned by the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6306

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Embassy Construction Integrity Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. RESTRICTIONS ON CONSULAR AND DIPLOMATIC POSTS BUILT OR OWNED BY CERTAIN ENTITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State (in this section referred to as the "Secretary") shall take such steps as may be necessary to avoid or minimize—

(1) acquiring or leasing a covered building—

(A) with respect to which a covered entity performed covered construction on or after January 1, 1949; or

(B) in which a covered entity has an ownership interest; or

(2) entering into or renewing a contract or other agreement with a covered entity to perform covered construction with respect to a covered building.

(b) NOTIFICATION OF INCONSISTENT ACTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall notify the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate—

(A) not later than 7 days before entering into an acquisition, lease, or agreement after the date of enactment of this Act that the Secretary is aware is inconsistent with the restriction under subsection (a); and

(B) not later than 7 days after becoming aware of an acquisition, lease, or agreement occurring after the date of enactment of this Act that is inconsistent with the restriction under subsection (a).

(2) DETERMINATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY INTEREST.—The notification required under paragraph (1) shall also include, to the extent applicable—

(A) a determination of whether the inconsistent acquisition, lease, or agreement is in the national security interest of the United States;

(B) an identification of the interest advanced by such inconsistent action;

(C) a detailed explanation for such determination; and

(D) any action the Secretary has taken or intends to take to mitigate national security vulnerabilities that may be posed by such inconsistent action.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED BUILDING.—The term "covered building" means a building that is used or intended to be used by personnel, or for a function, of a consular or diplomatic post located outside of the United States.

(2) COVERED CONSTRUCTION.—The term "covered construction"—

(A) means any construction, development, conversion, extension, alteration, repair, or maintenance performed with respect to a building; and

(B) includes the installation or maintenance of electrical, plumbing, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, communication, fire protection, and energy management systems with respect to such building.

(3) COVERED ENTITY.—The term "covered entity" means an entity with respect to which the Government of the People's Republic of China, or an agent or instrumentality of the Government of the People's Republic of China, directly or indirectly, including through any contract, arrangement, understanding, or relationship—

(A) owns or controls a significant percent of the ownership interest; or

(B) otherwise exercises substantial control.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) and the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. WILD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLS), the author of this bill.

Mr. MILLS. Mr. Speaker, the Embassy Construction Integrity Act is very simple: America's adversaries must not be involved in building our diplomatic and consular posts.

This, in my opinion, is a common-sense bill, or at least it should be. Last year, Congress was made aware that a Chinese state-owned enterprise was involved in the construction of a post in south Asia.

Despite all of the bureaucratic red tape the State Department goes through to establish these posts, somehow checking whether the Chinese Government controls the companies constructing the building didn't quite make the list.

The Chinese Government has established a pattern of leveraging its state-owned enterprise to serve dual functions during and after construction to spy on sensitive facilities.

Chinese-owned companies built the African Union headquarters. Like many things, they can't just build something, they have to build it with Chinese characteristics. In this case, those Chinese characteristics were spyware that was utilized to quietly siphon enormous amounts of data every night for the Chinese Government.

According to a study by Joshua Meservey, an expert in African geo-

politics, Chinese companies have built nearly 200 government facilities in Africa, a number that is sure to have only increased since the study was published.

I am not telling other countries who they can or cannot employ to construct their buildings. My bill is simple, however, that when our adversaries show us how they operate, that we should believe them and take steps to mitigate those risks.

Specifically, this bill requires the State Department, before establishing a new diplomatic or consular post, to identify the beneficial owners of the companies involved in the construction and maintenance of those buildings.

Further, this bill prohibits the State Department from entering into contracts or agreements if the beneficial owners of the companies are affiliated with the Chinese Government.

Finally, if inconsistent actions are discovered, the Secretary of State would be required to report it to Congress within 7 days.

Briefly, it is important to address the fact that it would be impossible for the State Department to operate in China if they weren't allowed to contract with some of these companies. The bill is carefully crafted to avoid stifling the important work of the State Department in China or the limited other locations where inconsistent measures may be the only option. However, even in these cases, Congress should be notified so that we do our job and have proper oversight for all of these activities.

Aside from those extraordinarily limited circumstances, the State Department must conduct greater due diligence to secure the integrity of our embassies and other consular posts around the world.

I express my sincere gratitude to Chairman MCCAUL, Ranking Member MEEKS, my bipartisan colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee who unanimously voted in favor of this bill during its markup, and each of their staffs who worked with me to secure it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 6306.

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6306. Over the past 3 years, our country has made critical headway in expanding the United States' diplomatic footprint, including opening new, strategically located facilities in the Indo-Pacific region. Our Nation has always been at its best when we engage intensely in diplomatic efforts to defend and advance both interests and ideals around the world, and that is why it is so critical that we equip our diplomats with the resources they need.

As part of this work, the State Department works regularly to open, renew, or modernize its facilities around the world so that U.S. diplomats can effectively advance our interests around the world. I am proud