

that pen, and release that \$40 million to the Haitians who can benefit from it.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, and we have a threat that is imminent and can, unfortunately, take its place across the gulf and find its home here in this country.

Injustice does not stay within the confines of any one border if it persists long enough. It is time for us to help the people in Haiti and release the \$40 million.

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

#### COVID LOCKDOWNS HARMED OUR CHILDREN

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

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, COVID-era school shutdowns were the most consequential political failure of at least the 21st century. We are finally starting to see some recognition of that, yet we still have not fully reckoned with the sheer breadth and scale of the harm that was done to so many people and to our entire country.

We haven't had nearly the level of accountability for those who were responsible for these decisions, and we certainly haven't seen the fundamental change to public education in this country that what happened ought to have catalyzed. Nonetheless, at least we are starting to see some recognition of the harm that was done and the mistakes that were made.

Here is an article from The New York Times: "What the Data Says About Pandemic School Closures, Four Years Later."

"The more time students spent in remote instruction, the further they fell behind. And, experts say, extended closures did little to stop the spread of COVID."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a few excerpts from this article.

It says: "Some schools, often in Republican-led States and rural areas reopened by fall 2020. Others, typically in large cities and States led by Democrats, would not fully reopen for another year."

"A variety of data—about children's academic outcomes and about the spread of COVID-19—has accumulated in the time since. Today, there is broad acknowledgment among many public health and education experts that extended school closures did not significantly stop the spread of COVID, while the academic harms for children have been large and long-lasting."

Dr. Sean O'Leary, a pediatric infectious disease specialist who worked with the current American Academy of Pediatrics, says: "There is fairly good consensus that, in general, as a society we probably kept kids out of school longer than we should have."

The article continues: "A growing body of research shows that pandemic school closures came at a steep cost to students. At the State level, more time spent in remote or hybrid instruction in the 2020-21 school year was associated with larger drops in test scores, according to a New York Times analysis of school closure data and results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. . . ."

"At the school district level, that finding also holds, according to analysis of test scores from third through eighth grade in thousands of U.S. districts, led by researchers at Stanford and Harvard. . . . Learning remotely, they fell more than half a grade behind in math on average, while in districts that spent most of the year in person they lost just over a third of a grade."

The article continues that "larger gaps remaining among students that lost the most ground to begin with. Students in districts that were remote or hybrid the longest—at least 90 percent of the 2020-21 school year—still had almost double the ground to make up compared with students in districts that allowed students back for most of the year."

"As districts shifted toward in-person learning as the year went on, students that were offered a hybrid schedule . . . did better, on average, than those in places where school was fully remote, but worse than those in places that had school fully in person."

In particular, Mr. Speaker, young people in low-income communities suffered the most. The Times notes that "the combination—poverty and remote learning—was particularly harmful. For each week spent remote, students in poor districts experienced steeper losses in math than peers in richer districts."

The article continues that "other things were also associated with worse student outcomes, including increased anxiety and depression among adults in children's lives, and the overall restriction of social activity in a community, according to the Stanford and Harvard research."

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the article notes that closing schools did not appear to significantly slow COVID spread.

By the fall of 2020, "there were initial signs that children were less likely to become seriously ill, and growing evidence from Europe and parts of the United States that opening schools, with safety measures, did not lead to significantly more transmission."

That was clear in the fall of 2020 at the time when so many schools remained closed.

Dr. Noble, who directed the COVID response at the UCSF emergency department, said: "Infectious disease leaders have generally agreed that school closures were not an important strategy in stemming the spread of COVID."

In addition to The Times' acknowledgment here, Mr. Speaker, we also

have a new study out of Stanford's Hoover Institution that shows that because of the reduction in lifetime earning potential for students because of the learning loss they experienced, it is going to have a truly staggering economic impact on our country.

The study finds that our Nation will lose some \$31 trillion—that is trillion with a t—\$31 trillion during the 21st century because of this catastrophic policy.

Now, while this Times article is collecting data 4 years later, this was all very clear at the time from nearly the beginning of the pandemic. I said so myself when our Governor, Gavin Newsom, in early July of 2020 ordered California schools to be closed for the coming school year.

I released a statement saying:

Today's decision elevates the appearance of safety over actual student safety. A growing body of evidence suggests school closures do little to flatten the academic curve while they are a calamity for kids.

I certainly was not alone in saying so. On June 29 of 2020, the American Academy of Pediatrics said it "strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school."

I did a survey of my district at the time. This is June and July of 2020 heading into the 2021 school year. Mr. Speaker, 6,028 people responded, and over 80 percent said they wanted an in-person learning option to start the school year; yet, our Governor, like many others, did not abide by their wishes. He shut down schools across the State.

However, tellingly, he sent his own children to in-person private school at the exact same time that he was expelling millions of less fortunate kids from California public schools.

That tells us everything we need to know about the fact that he knew that his policy was the wrong thing to do.

While California was the very worst State in the country, dead last out of all 50 States in getting kids back to school, many States in this country reopened their schools far too slowly.

Although many did, in fact, open for the fall of 2020, and their children experienced very little learning loss. That is further evidence of what the data made very clear at that time.

Now, the Biden administration, for its part, was complicit in all of this. The administration, for example, had all of the wrong priorities. He went after the Governors who refused to do child mask mandates rather than criticizing the Governors who refused to open schools.

The Education Department even sued the Biden administration. They even sued States that opted not to do child mask mandates—mandates, by the way, that flew in the face of all available evidence and ran directly against what the WHO recommended in some cases and our counterparts in Europe.

The administration sued Governors for refusing to enforce child mask mandates, and, yet, would not criticize Governors who refused to open schools.

I asked the Secretary of Education about this myself at a hearing last year.

I said: Did you ever criticize Gavin Newsom or Governors like him for refusing to open schools?

Did you ever encourage them to open schools?

He could not give me a single example of when he did so.

The blame for this disastrous set of policy decisions lies first and foremost with the State leaders who made them, but the Biden administration was very much complicit in the harms of something that are going to be with our country for a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, why is it important to still focus on this now that we are through the pandemic and kids are back in school?

In one infamous article in *The Atlantic* the writer proposed that we have a pandemic amnesty, we just forget everything that happened, and we avoid revisiting the mistakes that were made. However, I think that is exactly the wrong thing to do for a few reasons.

The first is that it is an insult to the millions and millions of kid across this country who have suffered so much, who suffered dramatic learning loss, whose learning, lives, and careers are now going to be held back, who suffered from a mental health perspective, from a social development perspective, who weren't able to play youth sports and who suffered so many other things because of what political leaders, people in power, knew to be the wrong decision.

What is more is this harm is still ongoing, the harm that kids suffered and the learning loss that they suffered. They have not regained the ground that was lost, and, frankly, we have not done nearly enough to try to provide the support that is needed to help students regain those losses more quickly.

Finally, what happened during the COVID era provided a window into the broader failures in public education in many parts of this country. California, for example, even before COVID ranked last out of the 48 States, in the continental U.S., second to last out of all 50 States when it came to education outcomes in low-income communities. Then, lo and behold, California also had the worst COVID policies with the longest school shutdown.

Those facts derive from the same underlying cause which is that our public education system simply is not about the kids. We see that right now in the ongoing attacks on charter schools where this administration has tried to cut grants for charter schools, where California has made it much more difficult to open and to replicate high performing charter schools, and where just last week, the second largest school district in the country, the Los

Angeles Unified School District voted to restrict the operation of charter schools in what is largely a failing district.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have a long way to go to fully come to terms with what happened in education during the COVID era in this country and certainly a long way to go to make the necessary reforms to ensure that every child in this country gets the education they deserve, but at least the acknowledgement we see here is a start.

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#### RECOGNIZING SHIGERU OCHI

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize a truly remarkable veteran and community member in my district, Mr. Shigeru Ochi, for his 100-year milestone birthday.

On February 26, in Folsom, California, Mr. Ochi celebrated a century's worth of life experiences and history, which included many notable events and personal accomplishments, as well as much adversity and hardship.

Mr. Ochi was born in 1924 and was raised in east Los Angeles, where he experienced the economic downturn of the Great Depression. Less than 2 months before he was to graduate high school, World War II commenced and was underway.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Mr. Ochi and his family were ordered to an internment camp in Inyo County due to their Japanese ancestry.

After being released from the internment camp 1 month after his 19th birthday in 1943, he went on to pursue higher education at Macalester College in Minnesota. He was able to complete 1 year at the college before being drafted by the U.S. Army.

Despite the challenge of living through incarceration in an internment camp, Mr. Ochi recalls being eager to show his loyalty to the United States by serving in our military.

As part of his service, he graduated from the Military Intelligence Service Language School and was deployed to Hiroshima, where his family originated, to support his fellow soldiers and assist in post-war efforts.

Following his service in World War II, he completed his degree. Then, in the spring, the Graduate Record Exam was administered nationally for the first time, and he received a perfect score in math. This score, in addition to his excellent academic record, earned him a full scholarship to MIT for graduate school, where he graduated at the top of his class in 1951.

Throughout his life, Mr. Ochi has continually exhibited the qualities of determination, resilience, and perseverance, and he is known by all who know him for his devotion to his family, community, and country.

I had the privilege of meeting Mr. Ochi at his 100-year birthday celebration. It was truly a wonderful experience. He is such an inspiration, and I

am honored to represent exemplary individuals like him in the U.S. House. He embodies the American spirit of patriotism and is an inspiration to our entire community.

Therefore, on behalf of California's Third Congressional District and the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize Mr. Shigeru Ochi for his centennial birthday, and I wish to express our Nation's gratitude for his heroic and invaluable service.

#### RECOGNIZING DANIEL C. HOLLER

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the retiring town manager for the town of Mammoth Lakes, Daniel C. Holler, for his years of service to the Mammoth Lakes community.

Mr. Holler has served the people of Mammoth Lakes for more than a decade with an overall career of public service of over 36 years. Mr. Holler began his government career in 1987. Throughout his career, he worked for many different municipalities, including the city of Glendora, the city of West Covina, Douglas County in Nevada, and, lastly, the town of Mammoth Lakes.

During Mr. Holler's tenure as Mammoth Lakes' town manager, he successfully managed the town's budget and 106 full-time employees; assumed a leadership role in four disaster declarations, including extreme weather events and COVID-19; promoted housing projects and programs; invested in parks and recreation amenities; improved recycling programs; and enhanced overall services in the town of Mammoth Lakes.

Mr. Holler achieved a wide diversity of accomplishments to improve the quality of life and experiences for residents, businesses, and visitors of Mammoth Lakes. One particularly noteworthy accomplishment was his leadership in the development, funding, and partnership supporting a new community recreation center, home of the LA Kings Ice at Mammoth Lakes and the Mammoth Rec Zone.

It is because of the commitment of people like Mr. Holler that Mammoth Lakes is such a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

I personally saw how effective he was when Mammoth was hit by really unprecedented extreme weather and storms last year. The task of clearing the streets, making them drivable, and the million other challenges that this weather presented were incredibly difficult to deal with. Yet, he managed them ably. The snow was cleared from the streets in time. You wouldn't even be able to believe how quickly he and his entire team was able to do that. It tells you a lot about the caliber of his leadership.

I am confident that the legacy he built of hard work, resilience, vision, and service will continue in the town of Mammoth Lakes for many years to come.

#### RECOGNIZING U.S. SERGEANT MACIEL HAY

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize U.S.

Army Sergeant Maciel Hay, who recently made history as the first woman on Active Duty to graduate from the United States Army's sniper course.

Sergeant Hay grew up shooting guns on her family's ranches in California and Oregon, with the ability to quickly find targets earning her the nickname "Sniper."

However, her interest and motivation in becoming a sniper didn't begin until she attended a local community college in my district, Sierra College. Defying odds, she completed basic training while qualifying as an expert with the M4 assault rifle and then went on to graduate from Airborne School.

To attend Sniper School, Sergeant Hay went through a scrupulous selection process, meeting numerous mental and physical requirements and demanding exceptional marksmanship skills and a high level of fitness, discipline, and concentration.

Once at school, her skills in marksmanship, the art of stalking and concealment, observation and intelligence gathering, survival skills and land navigation, and urban sniper operations were tested and developed. Through her determination, resilience, and sacrifice, Sergeant Hay successfully completed the training, living up to her childhood nickname and becoming the first female Active-Duty Army sniper.

I commend Sergeant Hay for her incredible capabilities, motivation, drive, and teamwork skills, and I am confident that her achievement will inspire many others toward their goals.

On behalf of California's Third Congressional District and the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize Sergeant Hay for this historic accomplishment, and I wish to express gratitude for her heroic and invaluable service to our country.

#### RECOGNIZING SHERI MERRICK

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the outgoing COO of the Folsom Chamber of Commerce, Sheri Merrick.

Before working with the local small business community, Sheri started her career in the dental industry as an office manager and bookkeeper. In that position, her passion for the dental industry grew, inspiring her to expand her education in the dental field.

She went on to attain over 19 years of managing experience and teaching whole-body health education with a focus on the connection between the mouth and the rest of the body.

Through innovative marketing approaches and educational tools, she helped many dental offices thrive in a down economy. From there, she established her own consulting and community engagement company and worked closely with the Folsom Chamber of Commerce.

In 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, she took up her passion for small business full time by joining the Folsom Chamber of Commerce team. During that time, she played an instru-

mental role toward helping many organizations face and overcome the challenges surrounding the pandemic.

For almost 7 years as a whole, Sheri devoted her time and talents to Folsom businesses. Through my own experience working with Sheri, I can attest to the ambition and enthusiasm with which she performed her role. I commend her for the lasting contributions she has made toward promoting the business environment, economic vitality, and quality of life in Folsom.

It is because of remarkable people like Sheri Merrick that Folsom is such a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

While she will be greatly missed in Folsom, I am confident that her breadth of knowledge, experiences, and abilities have uniquely positioned her for her new role as the executive director of the Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce and that she will continue to make a very positive impact.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize Sheri Merrick for her hard work and dedication to the Folsom business community, and I wish her the best of luck in her new role.

#### RECOGNIZING HOUSE EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to applaud the House Education and the Workforce Committee's passage yesterday of my resolution under the Congressional Review Act to nullify the Biden administration's new independent contractor rule.

The resolution passed the committee yesterday. It now has over 60 cosponsors and has a companion measure led by Senator CASSIDY in the Senate.

The Biden administration's rule is one of the most harmful regulations that we have ever seen issued in this country. It is explicitly modeled on California's disastrous law known as AB5, which has cost people their livelihoods in over 600 professions and led to heartbreaking story after heartbreaking story of people who lost their careers, who lost everything.

A recent study out of George Mason shows that AB5 in California led to a 10.4 percent decline in self-employment and a 4.5 percent decline in overall employment.

Now, the Biden administration is threatening to do the same damage to our entire country. Tens of millions of freelancers and independent contractors will be affected by this new rule.

Just to take one example, there are hundreds of thousands of truckers who could be taken off the road, throwing our supply chains into chaos. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that the livelihoods of millions of Americans are now at risk.

The administration's new rule, which not even the administrator of the Wage and Hour Division could give us any answers as to how it will be applied at a recent hearing of my subcommittee that I convened, is so overreaching that it has already prompted four sepa-

rate lawsuits on procedural grounds, statutory grounds, and constitutional grounds.

To add insult to injury, the administration has, of all people, brought in to enforce it Julie Su, who was the labor secretary in California and, in that role, was the architect of AB5 and ruthlessly enforced it to such devastating effect.

Ms. Su remains unconfirmed. For over a year, she has been in an acting capacity, and the Senate returned her nomination to the President last year amid bipartisan opposition. Yet, the administration has kept her in that role, apparently one of the main reasons being so that she could enforce it in the exact same damaging way that AB5 was enforced in California.

Of course, I am continuing to call on President Biden to do the right thing, to withdraw Ms. Su's failed nomination and to withdraw this disastrous new independent contractor rule. Barring that, Ms. Su and President Biden should, at the very least, put the rule on hold, suspend it until the ongoing litigation's outcome is clear. The business community and millions of workers across this country will otherwise be in a state of great and highly damaging uncertainty.

In the meantime, I will continue to build support and work with folks on both sides of the aisle to pass this resolution under the Congressional Review Act so that we can spare millions of American workers from the same fate that folks have suffered in California and to protect the right to earn a living in this country.

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

#### PREVENTING GENOCIDE IS ACHIEVABLE GOAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) for 30 minutes.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I know a man, a decent man, who said that preventing genocide is an achievable goal, a goal that requires a level of government organization and engagement that matches in its intensity the brutality and efficiency required to carry out mass killing. Too often, these efforts have come too late, after the best and least costly opportunities to prevent them have been missed.

The man who said that was then-Vice President and now-President Joseph Biden, and he was right.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to say that such a time is now. As we speak, in this moment, 1.1 million innocents in Gaza are at famine's door, a famine that is being intentionally precipitated through the blocking of food and global humanitarian assistance by leaders in the Israeli Government.

This is a mass starvation of people, engineered and orchestrated, following the killing of another 30,000, 70 percent