

The award does not ask a town to be perfect nor does every strong town look the same. This is because strong towns incrementally adapt to the conditions and challenges of their specific place from the bottom up.

Maumee, Ohio, which exists along the Maumee River, the largest river that flows into the entire Great Lakes, will hold a news conference this morning to formally accept this prestigious title. We in northwest Ohio couldn't be prouder of Maumee, Ohio. Onward, Maumee.

OUR BORDER IS A SIEVE

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, we have this gigantic problem with our sieve of a border. We hear all these ideas of how we can spend lots of money or the White House can't do anything about it.

Well, I remind you that President Trump had many pieces in place that were actually working and bringing the numbers down on illegal immigration into this country. All we have to do is put these pieces right back in place.

President Biden, by executive action, could put these eight ideas right back in place and not have to do anything with new expenditures or new legislation. We have the laws; we have the ability. He just needs to act.

To hear the President saying: I don't know if I have the authority. That is bogus. He has the authority. If he wants to take action, he can. These eight items right here on this poster could be something he could sign executive orders right away and stop a massive percentage of what is wrong with our border. It would make our country secure again, save money, save the wear and tear on our social programs and make the citizens of our country feel like their citizenship actually means something once again.

I urge President Biden to take these steps and put us back on the correct track.

AUTHORIZING WORK PERMITS

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to emphasize the need for the Biden administration to authorize work permits for those in our Nation who are long-term immigrants.

Yesterday, my colleagues and I sent a letter to the White House pushing for work permits for long-term immigrants, those that have been in our country for decades working hard, paying taxes, and contributing to our economy. We should also help the spouses of our military. We should also help deported veterans.

The last time we had meaningful immigration reform in this country, that

great Californian Ronald Reagan was President. To date, Congress has failed to deliver on a pathway to citizenship.

I ask Mr. Biden to use his pen, sign an executive order, give these hard-working immigrants a work permit.

CONGRATULATING JEFF MCLENDON

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

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Georgia's Jeff McLendon on the conclusion of his tenure as chairman of the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors.

This association is comprised of the companies that keep America moving while employing 6 million Americans, many of them Georgians, in high-paying, rewarding careers.

With Jeff's guidance as chairman, NAW expanded its educational opportunities for emerging leaders, enhanced its thoughtful leadership in a rapidly innovating world and continued to be an effective voice for distribution-friendly policies here in Washington.

NAW's success under Jeff's leadership shouldn't be a surprise to anyone, knowing Jeff's success in the business over these past 20 years leading Duluth, Georgia's, Specialty Building Products.

I had the opportunity to visit one of his facilities last year and to meet with him and members of his impressive team. Jeff is a humble leader and a man of faith who cares deeply about his employees, his community, and his country.

I, again, congratulate Jeff on his tenure as NAW chairman, and I appreciate his continued servant leadership in the Georgia business community.

□ 1130

A SMART AGREEMENT

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, later today on April 18, three Australian submariners are slated to graduate from the Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton. They are the first three submariners from Australia under the AUKUS security agreement who are gaining proficiency to operate a nuclear-powered submarine—again, a first for both countries.

After graduating from this course, they will be headed to Naval Station Pearl Harbor for assignment to United States Virginia-class submarines, and this, again, marks another first where they will be the first-ever Australian naval personnel assigned a U.S. Navy vessel.

Over the next 12 months, 100 more Australian Navy personnel will continue in this pipeline to implement the

AUKUS agreement, which is one of the smartest collaborations between the U.S., the U.K., and Australia to uplift their submarine capacity to work together for the three nations and rebalance the deteriorating security environment in the Indo-Pacific. I congratulate them all, or as they would say in Australian, good on ya.

GAZA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CISCOMANI). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise, Mr. Speaker, and still I rise. Today, I would like to do something just a bit different. I have stood here on many occasions and said that I love my country, that I salute the flag. I still love my country and salute the flag, and today what I would like to do is actually salute the flag. I just believe that any time is a good time, especially when you are in this facility, to salute the flag.

If you would indulge me, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move to another podium.

And still I rise, Mr. Speaker, proud to stand here in the well of the House of Representatives. One can but only imagine the great speeches, the oratory that is imitated from this area. However, today, I want to do something different. I just want to say the Pledge of Allegiance from this very almost sacred place.

Those who would like to join me, you but only have to stand and as you would normally salute the flag, you may do so. If you choose not to, you don't have to. The greatness of America will not be measured by whether the AL GREENS of the world salute the flag. The greatness of America will be measured by whether the AL GREENS of the world would defend those who choose not to salute the flag, who choose not to say the Pledge of Allegiance, who choose not to sing the national anthem, who choose not to stand for the anthem.

I, today, will do what I will do, and that is salute the flag. To all of my friends who are here, we are about to say the Pledge of Allegiance, and for those who choose not to, you don't have to, but those who do, would you join me by standing. I place my hand over my heart when I say the Pledge of Allegiance. I shall lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate everyone joining me in this Pledge of Allegiance.

I wanted to do this because I believe the values that we have in this country we can export to the rest of the world.

I believe that the words in the Declaration of Independence, a founding document, these are words that we can export to the rest of the world: All persons created equal, endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These are powerful words. These words are words that we are in this country still trying to make real. It is a great and noble ideal, but we still have not gotten there yet. We are forming still our more perfect Union.

I think that as we do it here, I believe that these things can be exported to the rest of the country—the rest of the world, if you will—the notion that all persons are created equal, endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I want to focus for just a moment on life, this aspect of the Declaration of Independence. I want to focus on lives not just in this country because we do this quite often, so I have said a lot about the deaths that are taking place here, the mass shootings that are taking place here, yes, but I want to export this idea to another place.

I want to talk about this noble concept as it relates to Gaza and what is happening to the lives in Gaza. I want to do this because for too long the thousands that have lost their lives have been statisticized. The statisticization of their lives is a disservice to humanity. These innocent people, innocent men, women, and especially children, their lives should not be just simply statisticized. Their lives ought to be humanized.

Today, I would like to humanize the lives, and I also have a resolution commemorating innocent civilian lives lost in Gaza, especially children.

Let's export the great and noble American ideal in our Declaration of Independence, let's apply it to people on a global basis.

Now I shall move back to the podium where I ordinarily make my comments because I have some paraphernalia there that I will be introducing. Mr. Speaker, I move to the next podium.

This is a resolution that I am previewing. There may be some tweaking, but I am previewing it, and it will be filed either today or tomorrow. This resolution commemorates innocent civilian lives lost in Gaza, especially children.

Whereas, this resolution may be cited as the original resolution commemorating innocent civilian lives lost in Gaza, especially children.

Whereas, on October 7, 2023, Hamas conducted a heinous attack on Israel leading to Israel declaring war on Hamas—not Palestine, not Palestinians, but declaring war on Hamas. And I say this because, unfortunately, a good many people—too many, if you will—have concluded that the war is against Palestinians, against Palestine. The war was declared against Hamas, and the Prime Minister of

Israel himself has indicated that the war is against Hamas. He has also indicated that the Palestinians are victims, the Palestinians are victims. I concur. The innocent Palestinian men, women, and especially children are victims of this war. They are victims to the extent that they not only suffer from being in a war zone, but they also suffer by being harmed in various and sundry ways—and I will say more about this later—and they are losing their lives.

Continuing:

Whereas, both Palestinians and Israelis are in mourning. The country of Israel is still in mourning from the October 7 horrendous attack. Gazans, Palestinians, innocent men, women, and children are in mourning because of the thousands, the tens of thousands, who have lost their lives in this war.

Whereas, in 2020 the population of Gaza was over 2 million with approximately half being children under the age of 18.

Whereas, the pain, suffering, and deaths of innocent Palestinian men, women, and especially children, are too often reduced to statisticization.

Whereas, people of good will must do more than statisticize the pain, suffering, and killing of innocent civilian Palestinians.

Whereas, people of good will must do more to humanize the pain and suffering of Palestinians in Gaza with explanations of how they lost their arms, legs, eyes, ears, and lives.

Let me repeat this because this statisticization is something that is difficult to say but also something that we ought not attribute to persons who have lost their arms, legs, eyes, and hearing, as well as their lives. This is a very sad, sad circumstance to have to negotiate and deal with.

Whereas, because of the war, homes, schools, businesses, hospitals and, more importantly, their lives in Gaza have been destroyed.

Whereas, because of the war many businesses have been decimated.

Whereas, hundreds of thousands of innocent civilian men, women, and especially children, in Gaza have suffered through the loss of mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters while starving and suffering the mental anguish associated with war.

Whereas, civilians in Gaza live in constant fear of sudden loss of arms, legs, and life; and

Whereas, tens of thousands of innocent civilians, including thousands of children, have been brutally killed in a war beyond their control.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the House of Representatives commemorates the tens of thousands of innocent civilian lives lost in Gaza, especially those of children. The lives lost should be viewed as more than mere statistics, the humanity, the pain, suffering, and deaths of the tens of thousands of men, women, and especially children, must be commemorated and memorialized.

The killing of innocent men, women, and especially children, in Palestine must cease immediately with all possible haste.

All hostages must be returned immediately—and we are talking about hostages that are Israeli, as well as any that may be Palestinian, but we know that Israeli hostages were taken.

And finally, because the United States' largess has contributed to the purchase of munitions used by the Netanyahu administration, the United States must do everything it can to address the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza perpetrated by the destruction of homes, infrastructure, schools, hospitals, and, also, I would add, the loss of human life.

Now, I would like to give you some graphic indications of what this is all about. There is an article from *The New Yorker* that I would like to read, dated March 21, 2020. I will go through it, and then I will show you some pictures of what has happened. But first, let's start with this representation.

□ 1145

This is a representation of persons who are in mourning, and they are doing what people do when they are suffering. You can see persons who are screaming and crying out.

The language reads: "Of the thousands of Palestinians killed in Gaza, about 70 percent have been women and children."

That is quite a large number. About 70 percent have been women and children.

This representation is of persons who are making an appeal for food. You can see in their eyes a sadness. You can see, with their hands extended, a plea for food.

The language reads: "The catastrophic levels of hunger and starvation in Gaza are the highest ever recorded on the IPC scale, both in terms of number of people and percentage of the population," the highest ever recorded of hunger in Gaza.

Now, this picture is a representation that tears at your heart as well but perhaps even in a more profound way because this young lady that you see, this baby, she is without her left leg. She is on a playground, so one would conclude that she is not in Gaza. You would be correct. You would be incorrect if you assume that this injury occurred in some place other than Gaza because that is where it occurred. As I read this article from *The New Yorker*, which I alluded to earlier, you will get a better comprehension of where she is and what happened to her.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very sad story, but we have to humanize these thousands of people. We can't just allow them to just become numbers. If they are just numbers, it is easy to dismiss them as just casualties of war.

They are more than numbers. These are human beings who have suffered. These are human beings who have relatives that are suffering. These are

human beings whose lives are never going to be the same. There is a good likelihood that they won't have what we have in this country, and that is the medical assistance to help them recover, those who survive, as well as the medical attention for mental illness that they may suffer.

Mr. Speaker, these are human beings. Some mother cried because of what happened to this child. Some father is crying because of what has happened to his child in Gaza. We cannot allow them to be dehumanized and reduced to statistics. We have to humanize these persons.

Mr. Speaker, I have chosen this baby as the example for us to give some thought to.

This article in *The New Yorker* is styled "The Children Who Lost Limbs in Gaza." The subtitle reads: "More than a thousand children who were injured in the war are now amputees."

Mr. Speaker, some things bear repeating; I say this quite regularly. It reads: "More than a thousand children who were injured in the war are now amputees."

This baby is more than one in a thousand.

What do their futures hold?

This article was published on March 21, 2024. It continues. This is the photograph that accompanied this article. The excerpts read: "Gazal was wounded on November 10, when, as her family fled Gaza City's Al-Shifa hospital, shrapnel pierced her left calf."

That would be the leg that she lost, and this is what will break your heart: "To stop the bleeding, a doctor, who had no access to antiseptic or anesthesia, heated the blade of a kitchen knife—no antiseptic, no anesthesia, heated the blade of a kitchen knife—and cauterized the wound."

Now, cauterization means that he took that hot blade without any anesthesia, without antiseptic, and he placed this hot blade on the skin of this baby—a hot blade—to save her life.

Can you imagine the screams? Can you imagine the heartache that the parents felt as they saw this happening to their baby? But they knew this was necessary. This is a lifesaving technique, a hot blade—"heated the blade of a kitchen knife and cauterized the wound."

She is more than a statistic. She is a human being, and she deserves to have someone recognize her humanity.

"Within days, the gash ran with pus and began to smell." She suffered the hot blade, and now the gash is smelling, running with pus.

"By mid-December, when Gazal's family arrived at Nasser Medical Center," which has been rendered dysfunctional now, I believe. If it is not, it has been brought back online, but it was.

Gazal's family took her to this medical center. It was, at the time, the largest functioning healthcare facility, but when they got there, gangrene had set in.

First, she is wounded. Then, she suffers a hot blade. Now, she has gan-

grene, necessitating amputation at the hip.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the baby in this picture. Let's humanize her.

"On December 17, a projectile hit the children's ward of Nasser," meaning this hospital. "Gazal and her mother watched it enter their room."

Here is the mother with her daughter, having suffered cauterization with the blade of a hot kitchen knife, now in the hospital, and they witness the projectile coming into the ward where the baby is. A projectile hit the ward.

"Gazal and her mother watched it enter their room, decapitating Gazal's 12-year-old roommate and causing the ceiling to collapse."

This is a baby who has suffered more than any human being should, and now, while in the hospital, a projectile comes into the ward where she is. This projectile decapitates her 12-year-old roommate.

We have to humanize, not statisticize.

This caused the ceiling to collapse.

"Multiple news reports have described the event as an Israeli attack. The IDF claimed the incident could have been caused by a Hamas mortar or the remnant of an Israeli flare."

This is what *The New Yorker* is quoting, someone with the IDF, the Israeli Defense Force. This person is indicating that it could have been a mortar from Hamas, or it could have been the remnant of an Israeli flare.

"Gazal and her mother managed to crawl out of the rubble. The next day, their names were added to the list of evacuees who could cross the border into Egypt and then fly to Qatar for medical treatment."

This is her now in Qatar. Her mother got her out.

"Gazal's mother was 9 months pregnant."

The mother, whose daughter has suffered incalculable pain, was 9 months pregnant. She gave birth to a baby girl while awaiting the airlift.

All of this time, this mother was pregnant—while having her daughter suffer the blade of a hot knife to save her life and then taking her daughter to a hospital where a projectile enters the room and decapitates another baby—12 years old—in that room.

Now, this baby sees all of this. She is a witness to this. Can you imagine what her life will be like, the trauma she will suffer?

Mr. Speaker, we have to humanize these lives. This is not just another casualty of war. This is a human being.

UNICEF estimates that 1,000 children in Gaza have become amputees. This baby represents one of a thousand—probably more than that now.

This baby has to be humanized.

This article indicates: "This is the biggest cohort of pediatric amputees in history."

This is happening in Gaza, the biggest cohort of pediatric amputees in history. We call these casualties of

war. This baby is just another casualty of war—the biggest cohort in history. She is more than a casualty of war. She is a human being.

I now move to another story that should be humanized. This one is from CNN, a fairly reputable news source. The style of this article is: "At least 13 killed, including 7 children, after strike on Gaza's Al-Maghazi refugee camp."

Mr. Speaker, 13 killed, including 7 children. This didn't happen a month ago. This didn't happen 2 months ago. This happened on April 16.

□ 1200

That is in the very recent past. "At least 13 people, it reads, were killed, including 7 children, and more than 25 injured after a strike targeted Al-Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza on Tuesday, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital officials."

"Graphic video obtained exclusively by CNN from eyewitness Nihad Owdetallah, shows several casualties scattered on the floor, including children, with blood streaming around the area."

This was Tuesday. This was the Tuesday sometime after what happened in Israel as it relates to Iran. This happens in Gaza as the Netanyahu administration is planning a response to what happened with Iran.

How do you think these people feel? What about them? Are we now going to just forget them? We will just go on to the next fight, and these thousands, tens of thousands, over 30,000, just sort of put them in the past? I will not.

There has to be some justice for these children. What is happening to them is an injustice. You cannot, in the name of justice, create an injustice and call it justice. An injustice in the name of justice is still an injustice. This is an injustice, and it is continuing after Prime Minister Netanyahu has indicated that he wants justice for what happened to Israel. How can we just let this become a thing of the past? I refuse to allow it to be a thing of the past.

The video shows several casualties spread on the floor, including children with blood streaming around the area.

"Dozens of people appear to be running around in panic, screaming and trying to count and carry the dead bodies. A foosball table covered in dust is seen among the dead bodies."

The witness, who lives in the camp, told CNN he heard an explosion around 3:40 p.m. local time on Tuesday around 30 to 40 meters away from him. This is his quotation: "I immediately walked to see what happened and found dead bodies thrown on the ground. People screaming, kids screaming. Kids dead on the ground. They were just playing foosball, and they were martyred."

"Footage shot for CNN from inside Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital shows a continuous flow of casualties and injured people being ushered in, as the emergency room is crowded with patients,

including several wounded children, crying out on the floor"—children.

Let's go back to the style of this article: "At least 13 killed, including 7 children, after strike on Gaza's Al-Maghazi refugee camp."

"The emergency room is crowded with patients, including several wounded children, crying out on the floor. Family members are seen crowding over their loved one's dead bodies, kissing them, holding onto them and sobbing."

These are human beings. They do what human beings do when they suffer these kinds of tragedies.

"Video from inside a morgue at the hospital shows families trying to identify their loved ones among the deceased. Fatmeh Issa points to a white body bag with a young boy's bloodied face exposed, telling CNN, 'This is my son.'" A young boy's bloodied face exposed in a white body bag, "This is my son," she says.

"Another man cries out, 'They have nothing to do with anyone. They are civilians. Have mercy on us.'"

These people are pleading, appealing to us. I say "us," because our fingerprints are all over this. The munitions being used are in some part related to the largesse that we send to the Netanyahu administration. That largesse is the link to us, and we have to do something about it.

"Have mercy on us. You are killing children. You are not killing an army or fighters. . . ."

Remember earlier, I said the war was declared on Hamas, not Palestinians, not Palestine? Here is a validation of the thinking of the people in Gaza. These people understand what is going on. "You are killing children. You are not killing an army or fighters; you are killing children who were peacefully playing in the street."

They are children playing in the street. One moment they are children running and doing the things that children do, laughing. The next moment, seven are dead. You are killing children who were peacefully playing in the street, not an army, not fighters.

"Video shows him handing a young girl's dead body to another man, both men crying out Quranic verses and sobbing. The man who receives her body is seen placing her on the ground, and covers her body with a jacket, telling CNN she is his daughter."

Human beings dying and suffering, suffering and then dying and those left behind suffering.

This war has to cease. It has got to stop. We ought to be among the first to say it has got to stop.

Do you think history is going to be kind to us? Posterity is not going to be kind to the Netanyahu administration. We will be seen as persons who were eyewitnesses by way of television to a great human tragedy and did not do what we could to prevent it.

Remember, the war was not declared on children. It wasn't declared on women. It wasn't declared on innocent

people. It was declared on Hamas, but we know that more than 30,000 Palestinians have lost their lives, some of them in horrific ways.

There seems to be a means by which the mind can process a person dying as a result of an explosion from one of the bombs that we helped pay for. There seems to be a means by which the mind can process that and see that as something that is not as horrific as if you do it in many other ways. It was just a bomb. The person was just a casualty of war, just another number, that is all. We need to move on.

My fear is just that, that at some point, Prime Minister Netanyahu will decide enough is enough, and we will then say he has now moved on.

Do you think this baby will have moved on? Do you think her parents will have moved on? Do you think the people who are suffering now will have moved on? This is a rest of their lives incident.

Incident? What a kind way to say it. This is a rest of their lives tragedy. This is a rest of their lives slaughtering of human beings. Do you think they can just move on?

At some point on this infinite continuum that we call time, we are all going to have to account for our time. Somebody is going to have to account for this and the thousands of innocent people who lost their lives. It won't be simply: Well, I just cast a vote. I didn't do it. There is a connection. We have our fingerprints all over this, and we ought to do what we can to prevent it from continuing.

The man who has said this is his daughter, he indicates: "This is my oldest daughter . . . her name is Lujain. She is 9 years old."

This man has lost his 9-year-old daughter. It goes on to indicate: "A strike hit them while they were playing out in the street. They are all just children."

Mr. Speaker, I can't let it go. I am sorry. I can't. I wish I could, but I can't. These are babies. I can't let it go. I refuse to be a participant in this any longer. I have done it too long already. Too many babies have been killed. It has got to stop.

Don't expect me to continue to fund this. Say what you want about me, but I am not going to continue to fund this killing of babies and then making them mere numbers.

At some point, we have to come to our senses. Don't you see what we are doing to ourselves and our image in the world?

□ 1215

Don't you see what Mr. Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, is doing to Israel's image in the world?

Israel had the moral high ground. It is losing it. Some would say it has lost it.

Nonetheless, we are quick to return it if something happens in Israel. We are quick to return it: You now have it again.

I refuse—I refuse—to continue to fund this kind of atrocious behavior.

Voltaire was right: Those who can make you believe absurdities—actually, it was: Those who can cause you to let's just say believe absurdities, there is another way he put it, but those who can cause you to believe absurdities can cause you to commit atrocities. That is not the exact word.

We now believe the absurd notion that it is all right to kill innocent men, women, and especially children, if in that process we are trying to get to a dastard who is hiding behind these innocent men, women, and children.

I refuse to continue to be part of this unbelievable killing of men, women, and children before our very eyes that we are funding. Now, someone would say: Well, the war in Ukraine, you are funding that.

We might remember that Ukraine is defending itself in a war where there has been an invasion.

I don't want war anywhere. Ukraine's innocent men, women, and children are being killed as well, but Russia is funding that. Russia has their fingerprints all over that, and I don't approve of what Russia is doing.

That is easy for us to say in this country. It is easy for us to condemn Russia for what Russia is doing. We do it without hesitation and without equivocation. We do it with no consternation—just Russia, we can do it.

Why?

It is because it is easy to look through the window of life at someone else and say: What you are doing is wrong. It is not so easy to look into the mirror of life and see the wrong that you are doing yourself. At some point we have to confess to what we are seeing in the mirror of life. If we don't, then we will still be judged. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, history is not going to be kind to us for what is happening in Gaza.

There are going to be people who are going to wonder: What was wrong with them? They saw it. They had evidence of it, and they still forged forward to get it over with. Finish it, they say. Finish it.

Finish this?

Get this over with?

Mr. Speaker, do you think that will be over for her?

I refuse to continue to support this.

Now, there will be some who say: If you can't do this, then you ought not be there because we expect you to cast the votes to do this.

Mr. Speaker, all I can say to that is: My conscience will dictate what I do. I will do what I must and let others do what they may.

Do what you will. I have not suggested to one of you that you have to vote a certain way. I am just telling you how I am going to vote. I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, that history is not going to be kind to all of us, and that includes me.

I voted for over \$50 billion to go to the country of Israel. Not that very

long ago we voted more than \$3 billion. I have been a supporter. I am still a supporter of the people. I am not a supporter of the Netanyahu administration. I support the people, not that administration, because what they are doing to the people of Gaza is ungodly. It is shameful. It is disgraceful. I will not support that.

Let others do what they may. If there are people who believe so strongly about this in the Ninth Congressional District that they want somebody who will tolerate this and go along with this, then send them on up here and take me out because I don't go along with it. I am not going to go along so that I can get along, not when it comes to this.

By the way, I am not a saint. I don't claim to be a saint. I just claim to be a person whose conscience dictates that I shall not support this kind of behavior.

Mr. Speaker, I will close with this: Notwithstanding all that I have said, I still love my country. I am an American. I believe I am of African ancestry. I have not checked my bloodline to find out, I don't know, but I love this country. It means something to me to say to people that I am an American.

I love it more than it has loved me. It segregated me. The rights that the Constitution recognized for me my friends and neighbors in the South took away from me, but I still love my country.

How can you love your country when your country has treated you the way it has: the back of the bus, balcony of the movie, step off the sidewalk when people come by, separate line for you at the grocery store, and colored water fountains, how can you love it?

It is because I love what it stands for and its noble ideals, the ideals of liberty and justice for all as extolled in the Pledge of Allegiance that we said at the genesis of this message. I love the ideal in the Declaration of Independence that all persons are created equal and endowed by their Creator with these inalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

This is why I have said that because I love these ideals, I believe we should export them to other people, but not export them in the sense that we want them to simply obey them and treat other people right, I think that is a good thing to do, but in the sense that we ought to respect her life, her liberty, and her desire to pursue happiness. We ought to respect her life. Export that to people across the globe, especially people who are trapped, trapped in Gaza and who can't get out. They have no place to go and are told to move from one place to another.

Let's give them the benefit of these noble words: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I will do so in every way that I can. I believe in this country, and I love it to the extent that I believe we ought to make that noble ideal real for people in this country

and without this country, especially the people who are in Gaza.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud Member of this Congress and a proud American in the sense that I love my country because of its great ideals, I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to look at three major issues. Sometimes with the minor day-to-day issues one forgets to analyze the major issues that I think are going to determine the fate of our country.

In the last week, one more time, we got the results on the number of people crossing the southern border. While the results keep pouring in month after month, it is, in my opinion, and I think in most people's opinion, the most significant issue that Congress has to address.

In March of 2024, and these, of course, all are estimates, we believe 220,000 people crossed the southern border and stayed in the United States. This has something in common with every other month this year, and it goes up and down depending on the time of year; one more time, we hit an all-time record of the number of people coming into this country by that month.

In March of 2024, it was 220,000. In March of 2023, it was 130,000. In March of 2022, it was 166,000. In the final year of the prior administration, it was 11,000. One more time, we see the increase from 11,000 people coming here in a month to 220,000 people coming here in a month.

We recently had a hearing on the border in a subcommittee related to the Oversight and Accountability Committee, and on that committee, the sheriff, Sheriff Waybourn, pointed out that right now about 25 percent of the Venezuelan prison population dropped by 25 percent.

This is consistent with concerns raised by the Border Patrol that in addition to just plain taking people we can't afford to take, other countries are dumping their undesirables into this country.

Does President Biden care that the number of people in Venezuelan prisons has dropped by 25 percent?

That by itself should be a banner headline.

The next thing to look at in addition to that drop is an anecdote from Sheriff Waybourn from Texas. He points out that someone asked a member of the cartels: Do they care about the fentanyl coming into this country and all the people who are dying?

His quote was that they were okay as long as the fentanyl was killing Americans.

Now, think about that, Mr. Speaker. This is consistent with what we think

the worst possible motive for bringing fentanyl into this country is. They want to destroy the United States. China itself is playing a role in the amount of fentanyl coming in this country.

The young people of this country may feel they are not involved in a war. They never enlisted in the Army, and they never enlisted in the Navy.

Be that as it may, like it or not, you are involved in a war. As a matter of fact, more people are dying in the war that you have signed up for than in any of the wars that our armed services have fought in, about 108,000 people a year.

They are dying in a war because the Mexican drug cartels and foreign countries that produce the fentanyl do not wish the U.S. well. They apparently like to see young Americans die, and young Americans have to realize that there are people gunning for them.

We talked about those 110,000 people. That is about twice the number of people every year who die in the war on drugs compared to the number of people who died in Vietnam.

Think about that, Mr. Speaker. I am old enough to remember Vietnam. People were dying all the time. Headlines said that people are dying in Vietnam. Twice as many people die every year as died in 12 years in Vietnam. It is just unbelievable.

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Now, there are some people who get confused and think, well, we just have to take these people coming here illegally because we are, otherwise, cruel and not allowing enough people into the country.

Here is something else that we ought to be talking about a little bit more. The number of people who come into this country or are sworn in as legal citizens goes up and down from year to year.

First of all, the last year available, a total of 969,000 new people were sworn in as immigrants in the United States. If you break it down in 4-year increments—things go up and down—at least back to the year 1910, there has never been a 4-year period when so many people from other countries were sworn in, in the United States. There is no reason to feel guilty if we turn these people around because, right now, a record number are coming here.

In that 4-year increment, there are a little bit over 800,000 people every year being sworn in. It is kind of interesting. If we go back and look at the 1960s, which I remember well, normally you were around 110,000 to 120,000. Therefore, we have gone up in the 1960s to swearing in about 110,000 new Americans, and now we are well over 800,000.

That is before we add in new people who are becoming citizens by birth-right citizenship. This is a new thing that barely existed in the 1960s or 1970s, but in which you may have mothers fly over here from China, have the baby in San Diego, and fly back, and that is another citizen, as well. We are kind of