

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish, pro-Hamas demonstrators who, amidst Passover, are wreaking havoc on campuses around the country and threatening violence against local Jewish communities and students.

Such violence is unacceptable anywhere, but to witness this at our universities is truly painful. Places of education are supposed to be of discourse and of learning and rising above, and all those who choose to attend deserve peace and respect.

My heart goes out to all of the Jewish students who no longer feel safe at American universities. They deserve better than this.

Mr. Speaker, the purveyors of anti-Semitism must be stopped. I ask my colleagues to join me in condemning these anti-Semitic protesters and continue the push to combat anti-Semitism and stand with our Jewish friends and neighbors.

#### RECOGNIZING ELIVIA PAPCUN'S EQUESTRIAN ABILITIES

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Elivia Papcun, an Iowa native, who overcame a severe injury to become a top-ranked NCAA equestrian recruit.

Just a short while ago, Elivia had an accident that shook her to her core. As she rode her beloved horse, a moment of misfortune turned into a nightmare as her horse stumbled, leaving Elivia critically injured. The severity of her injuries left her unable to move, her very future hanging in the balance.

However, Elivia refused to give up. With each passing day, she fought tirelessly to reclaim her strength and through grueling rehabilitation and unwavering determination, she defied the odds and emerged stronger than ever before.

Elivia has recently reentered and committed to Texas Christian University. This commitment is akin to being recruited to play football at Alabama or Georgia in the equestrian world. It underscores not only Elivia's remarkable talent and dedication, but also the recognition of her potential by one of the top programs in the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, let us commend Elivia Papcun for her remarkable journey and wish her continued success as she embarks on this exciting new chapter.

#### RECOGNIZING 911 OPERATORS AMY KEMNER AND KRIS DECKER

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Warren County 911 dispatchers Amy Kemner and Kris Decker for their 30 years of service to their community.

Despite the long shifts, difficult calls, and extended time away from family, Amy and Kris have remained dedicated to their work of ensuring the safety of Warren County residents.

While the average tenure of a dispatcher is only 7 years, Amy and Kris have taken pride in serving Warren County. Their long tenures, while an anomaly in their field, are a reminder

of the worthwhile pursuit of community service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Amy and Kris for their ever-present service to their community and thank them for being the front line of defense when emergency calls.

#### HONORING FIRE CHIEF GREG CHIA ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of Indianola Fire Chief Greg Chia, who recently announced his retirement, which is set to take effect on December 31, 2024.

Chief Chia originally began his career in 1985 as a firefighter in Des Moines, and throughout his tenure worked up the ranks to reach chief officer.

In May 2015, Chief Chia was appointed to become the first fire chief for Indianola and has since led the response to multiple crises with poise and gravitas.

Under his leadership, the Indianola Fire Department has served as an illustrative example of top-notch community safety, and his absence will be felt by many.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues today to join me in celebrating Chief Chia's incredible career and his commitment to safety and in wishing him the best on a well-deserved retirement.

#### IOWA CITY FARMERS MARKET

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the return of the Iowa City Farmers Market for its 52nd year on May 4, and to congratulate Bill Lane on being appointed director of the Iowa City Farmers Market.

In recent years, the Iowa City Farmers Market has become a cultural staple in town with the market welcoming tens of thousands of residents yearly. The market puts Iowa's rich agricultural history on display for everyone with countless local vendors, serving a wide variety of Iowa's best agricultural products.

With live music and activities for everyone to enjoy as well, the Iowa City Farmers Market is sure to enjoy another amazing year as a preeminent venue for residents to shop, dine, and enjoy time with friends and family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating this phenomenal Iowa City staple and, once again, congratulate director Bill Lane on what is sure to be another great year for the Iowa City Farmers Market.

#### AMERICA'S SOUTHERN BORDER IS NOT A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, America's southern border is not a social construct.

On a trip to the U.S.-Mexico border this past weekend, an academic from a

prestigious institution shocked our bipartisan group by stating that he teaches students the border is a social construct to facilitate the free flow of people and ideas.

What the heck, Mr. Speaker?

It is appalling, but it sheds light on the ideology guiding President Biden's border policy decisions. These decisions include: halting border wall construction, implementing a mass parole system, and failing to promptly expel noncitizens who illegally cross in between ports of entry.

This mindset ignores the fundamental importance of border security and the rule of law. By dismissing the border as a mere social construct, it undermines the legitimate efforts to protect our Nation's sovereignty and ensure the safety of our citizens.

We must reject such dangerous rhetoric and work toward policies that prioritize border security.

#### ACCESSIBLE FEDERAL CONTRACTING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, the hurdles facing America's small businesses in obtaining Federal contracts are unjustifiably high.

These businesses, the lifeblood of our economy, shouldn't require a legal team or extensive compliance infrastructure just to compete for Federal contracts. That is why I have introduced H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, aimed at simplifying the process for small businesses to secure government contracts.

I extend my gratitude to my colleague, Representative THANEDAR of Michigan, for co-leading this crucial legislation across party lines.

With over 33 million small businesses in America, only a small fraction secure Federal prime contracts. Many entrepreneurs cite the complexity of government procurement processes as a major deterrent. The language used in contract solicitations is often ambiguous and unnecessarily complex, deterring small businesses from even attempting to bid.

A study by the Naval Postgraduate School revealed that less than 3 percent of DOD contract solicitations are written in plain English. This complexity drives small businesses away from Federal contracting, eroding competition, and harming our economy.

My bill mandates Federal agencies to use clear language in contract solicitations, fostering greater accessibility to contracts for small businesses.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation, recognizing the pivotal role small businesses play in our Nation's economy.

Let's pave the way for a more accessible Federal contracting process for all businesses. Doing so benefits small businesses, the Federal Government, and its taxpayers.

□ 1215

## FIGHTING FOR FAIR ELECTORAL MAPS

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

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, in a time when public trust in government is declining, the American people deserve a fair and transparent redistricting process that ensures that every voice and every vote is heard and accounted for.

The number of truly competitive districts is also declining in the U.S. Congress. We are seeing more polarization and less willingness to work across the aisle to do what is right for our country.

Unfortunately, in North Carolina and across the country, partisan gerrymandering has been used as a tool by politicians of both parties to manipulate electoral outcomes with almost surgical precision.

Some people in North Carolina have seen their district lines and their Representative in Congress change four times in the last 10 years because of gerrymandering by the North Carolina General Assembly. Courts threw out electoral maps drawn by Republican legislators three times in the past decade due to gerrymandering: in 2016, 2019, and 2021.

We recently, though, had a brief moment of relief. In the last election, North Carolina voters sent seven Democrats and seven Republicans to the U.S. Congress under fair court-drawn maps for our 50/50 State. North Carolina's 13th District, which I am proud to represent, is a true swing district.

In 2023, our constituents had to suffer through yet another unprecedented redraw, resulting in yet another partisan gerrymander for North Carolina. The maps are again being litigated in the courts.

This story isn't unique to North Carolina, and the problem isn't just with the current politicians in our State legislature. History has made one thing clear: Politicians can't be trusted to fairly draw their own maps. That is why I introduced the FAIR MAPS Act. The FAIR MAPS Act would combat partisan gerrymandering by establishing independent, nonpartisan redistricting commissions in every State.

The Duke University Quantifying Gerrymandering team recently found that if we end gerrymandering, there could be 37 to 42 additional competitive House seats around the country, which would double the number of competitive seats in Congress compared to the under 40 that are available today.

That is a big deal. Competitive districts are where we can have a real debate about the best ideas and elect Representatives willing to work across the aisle to get things done. My bill, the FAIR MAPS Act, would help make that a reality, and it would strengthen our democracy.

By ending partisan gerrymandering, we can restore fairness and ensure that voters are the ones choosing their politicians; not the other way around.

This is something that has been tried and has worked in a handful of States already. In Arizona, Colorado, and others, independent and nonpartisan redistricting commissions have drawn electoral maps that are more responsive to the will of the people than maps drawn by politicians in other States.

Voters should choose their politicians; politicians shouldn't choose their voters. While my name will not be on the ballot in 2024, I am not giving up or going out quietly in the fight for fair maps and an end to partisan gerrymandering. I will continue to fight with every ounce of my energy for an end to partisan gerrymandering and to protect the right to vote for every single North Carolinian.

## CONGRATULATING THE UAW ON HISTORIC CONTRACT AGREEMENT

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the hardworking men and women of the UAW in my home State of North Carolina. UAW workers reached a historic new agreement with Daimler Trucks, which included a record wage increase, profit sharing for the first time ever, a cost-of-living increase, and much more.

Right now, support for unions is near an all-time high, and we are seeing this momentum pick up in North Carolina and across the South. I am proud to stand with the new generation of workers as they exercise their collective strength and make their voices heard.

Unions built our middle class, and I will always stand with the men and women of labor at the local, State, and Federal levels.

Once again, I congratulate the UAW on this historic contract agreement.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARL) at 2 p.m.

## PRAYER

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

God, our guide, we look to You and ask for the strength only You can provide. On this day and the week ahead, may we seek Your face always.

We pray that we, individually and corporately, would try hard to live rightly. Together, with pure hearts,

may we trust You and walk in faith, love, and peace.

Dissuade us from fruitless and foolish arguments, lest they descend into destructive disputes. As Your servants, may we avoid quarreling and show kindness and patience with each other.

When we know we are right, may we be gentle with those who disagree. When we realize we are wrong, may we, with humility, seek to advance the truth.

It seems so simple to ask, but even our best intentions can get ensnared in our pride and prejudices. Guide us, then, in Your truth through the complex influence of these contentious times.

It is in Your mercy that we dare to pray.

Amen.

## THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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.

## 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 2 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1529

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas) at 3 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.

## 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.

## INVESTING IN ALL OF AMERICA ACT OF 2023

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and