

expand that authority to general infrastructure failures, which currently are not investigated in this way.

This is a smart bill that will ensure that we can utilize NIST's unique expertise to better understand any failures in roads, bridges, dams, and other infrastructure and, most importantly, develop best practices and guidances so that we can avert future tragedies.

This legislation builds off the authorities NIST received after 9/11 to conduct technical investigations of building failures and ensures these efforts do not impede on criminal or other law enforcement investigations.

I thank Ranking Member LOFGREN for introducing this bill along with Chairman LUCAS.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of my bill, the National Construction Safety Team Enhancement Act of 2024.

Last year, there was massive flooding along California's central coast, which left communities really across the State vulnerable. In my district, the Pajaro River's levee failed, forcing over 1,500 people to evacuate and putting thousands of homes at risk. Many of them were flooded.

In May 2023, I joined Representative PANETTA, Senator PADILLA, and the late Senator Feinstein in asking the Army Corps of Engineers to provide emergency assistance to help with the levee.

Last August, the Biden-Harris administration heeded our call to action and committed \$20 million to repair the levee and address erosion on the left bank of the Pajaro River. That has now been concluded, and these communities have been protected, at least with the emergency repairs.

As with this small rural community in my own district, the climate crisis continues to put massive strains on aging infrastructure across the United States.

While recovery and reconstruction efforts continue, we have to do more to understand the causes of destructive and life-threatening events, like the Pajaro River levee failure, to make sure it doesn't happen again. Unfortunately, there's no agency currently authorized to conduct thorough technical investigations of failure of general infrastructure, like levees, dikes, bridges, or dams.

When it comes to buildings, the National Institute of Standards and Technology has been charged by Congress with conducting investigations in order to improve the building codes and standards used to design and maintain them. The National Construction Safety Team, or NCST, dispatches experts to work alongside other agencies to investigate major building disasters, to improve the scientific understanding around these failures, and to prevent future catastrophes.

This bill expands NCST's existing authority to include investigations of general infrastructure failures. These teams will investigate incidents involving other structures that we also rely on every day in order to improve the safety and resilience of American communities.

The tragic destruction of the Francis Scott Key Bridge into the mouth of the Patapsco River in Baltimore underscores the immediate need for this legislation. The impact of that catastrophe is being felt all across the United States.

NIST needs the authority to investigate major infrastructure failures so that they may improve future engineering standards and building codes to guard against such failures in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS for his partnership on this bill and so many other things.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this timely and necessary legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS), my colleague on the Science Committee.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank again Ranking Member LOFGREN, particularly in light of her remarkable leadership in crafting and introducing this bill. I join both of my colleagues to shine a light on the deep and critical importance of H.R. 4143, the National Construction Safety Team Enhancement Act.

We all know that NIST is the little engine that could within our Federal Government, doing so much with little resources and showing the true benefit of where and how we invest taxpayer dollars for the greater implications of society and safety. We know that the National Construction Safety Team within NIST is modeled after the National Transportation Safety Team, both expert operations that get dispatched to the site of major building disasters to investigate the cause and identify preventive solutions.

However, the existing authority only extends to buildings, and it leaves out major swaths of our built environment, as the ranking member mentioned, like bridges and levees, which, just frankly, leaves our Nation vulnerable.

This legislation will expand the safety team's existing authority to better investigate those failures of infrastructure in structures other than buildings.

This really couldn't come at a more important time. I know this is deeply critical to residents in Michigan. We want to be in a place where we are creating resilient structures and recognizing some of the damaging impacts of climate change and rising sea levels. That is the extreme weather environment we are in.

I thank the ranking member and all on the Science Committee. I am proud

to be a cosponsor of this bill and eager to see it passed in the House of Representatives.

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

In closing, I am proud of this bill. If we make this the law, America will be safer, full stop. I am happy that we were able to do it on a bipartisan basis, and I am looking forward to quick action in the Senate.

I thank again the chairman of the committee, Mr. LUCAS, for his collaboration on this and so many other things.

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

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

This is a commonsense, practical policy that supports science and innovation to improve people's lives. I encourage my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation to ensure that NIST can utilize its unique expertise to conduct these technical investigations on major failures to our infrastructure.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KEAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4143, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1800

PAYING TRIBUTE TO LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPUTY ALFREDO "FREDDY" FLORES

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

Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise today to pay tribute to a peacemaker of California's 27th Congressional District who was taken from us too soon.

On April 20 of this year, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Alfredo "Freddie" Flores tragically passed away at the age of 51 after suffering injuries during a training exercise last October.

He is survived by his wife Maggie and his children, Nathaniel, Kayla, Victoria, and Adrian.

While our community is grieving this tragic loss, we were also blessed by his extraordinary life and the security

blanket that he provided us on a daily basis.

Deputy Flores lived a life of service to his family, community, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office.

Deputy Flores dedicated 22 years of his life to the safety, security, and prosperity of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, there is no greater form of love than being willing to sacrifice your own life in the defense of others.

While he is with the Lord now, Deputy Flores' legacy lives on with everyone who knew him and his family. He looks down upon us with great pride today.

RECOGNIZING TYLER MASTIN

(Mrs. LESKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute).

Mrs. LESKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize someone whose service has been instrumental in the lives of constituents in Arizona's Eighth Congressional District, Tyler Mastin.

Tyler's service to the Eighth District began in August of 2022 as a constituent services representative in my Surprise, Arizona, District Office.

During his tenure, Tyler has expertly navigated casework for over 300 constituents who had encountered difficulties with various Federal agencies. As a result of his efforts, he directly saved constituents over \$547,000. This is an incredible achievement that made a huge difference in the lives of constituents and their families.

Tyler also displayed leadership abilities by managing both the Congressional App Challenge and the Congressional Art Competition and has been an invaluable member of my district team.

I would like to thank Tyler for his leadership and service to our district. His dedication and determination were critical to the success of our constituent service programs and improved the lives of those in the Eighth Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Tyler.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL SOCK OUT CANCER DAY

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

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Sock Out Cancer Day, which will take place on June 2.

Cancer affects millions of families from all walks of life, and Sock Out Cancer Day reminds us that we are all alike in facing this formidable foe.

The Sock Out Cancer organization has captured this message by selling pairs of multicolored socks which symbolize over 25 different forms of cancer.

With the proceeds, the organization has helped survivors and families pay for food, transportation, and housing

so they can focus their energy on healing and recovery.

Mr. Speaker, Sock Out Cancer has become a beacon of hope for those facing the fight of their lives. I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in recognizing this June 2 as National Sock Out Cancer Day.

IT IS THE MATH

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

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, we are going to do something this evening. Unless you want to sort of geek out a bit, I am not sure you want to hang out watching this, so maybe there is something good on Netflix.

I am going to walk through a couple of financial debt concepts I tried sharing last week just to help people sort of get their heads around something. Then we are going to actually just go through a couple of top lines on the Social Security actuary report. Now, I have to admit, I haven't finished it. We have only just gone through some of the very top line. It is going to take me a week or two to work out all the math. We want to make sure—because some of the headlines, I believe, were misleading on just, still, how difficult these numbers are.

Then we are going to go through sort of understanding the scale of the problem. Then we are going to do a little bit of talking about optimism, and we are going to do some discussion about AI, artificial intelligence, in government, and some of the bills we have actually already introduced to disrupt the cost of this government.

We keep hearing sort of the nasty and horrible noise that the world is coming to an end. I am going to argue that if we get artificial intelligence right, we can make a difference in government.

So let's first walk through the first concept.

Mr. Speaker, how many of you remember a little while back—I think it was S&P or was it Moody's—it may have been Moody's, downgraded U.S. debt?

We have had two downgrades. Of the three largest rating agencies, we have been downgraded twice.

Now, I know every Member of Congress and all of our staff read every word of it, but if you actually read it, Mr. Speaker, there is an entire report about why they would downgrade U.S. debt. It was more of a downgrade of future horizons. One of the number one reasons on that downgrade was governance.

Now, the fact of the matter is the debt picture is off the charts. I am going to show one chart here where I think we have now had our fourth day in the last couple of weeks where we

went over \$100,000 per second of borrowing.

Mr. Speaker, do you screw with your bankers?

Because this is my passion, I try to convince my brothers and sisters here in Congress: You have to act like an adult. Have fights here. Actually know your math. Bend the cost of government, but don't do stupid things and then turn around.

That is because this week, understand, Mr. Speaker, this week, I believe, the Treasury is going to market for about \$125 billion. Our interest rates are actually slightly down this week compared to last week, but the fact that those interest rates bounce up and down this much lets you know sort of how nervous the debt markets are.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago a lot of the fancy financial markets were writing stories about how U.S. debt is getting harder to sell. This week it looks like it is easier to sell.

That is fragility. I know that is a big word, but it is the only one I have for this. Don't play a game here. We will pay \$1.2 trillion in interest this year. Interest for the United States in this fiscal year will be the second biggest expense in government. Social Security will be \$1.450 trillion. Interest will be \$1.2 trillion. Medicare is almost \$1 trillion. Defense is \$960 or \$980 billion. Think of that, Mr. Speaker. Defense is now the fourth biggest expense in government. It is no longer the first or second.

Part of that concept is—this one is a little more for those folks who like to think of themselves as sort of monetary policy folks, think about what the Federal Reserve has been trying to do. They have been raising interest rates, they have been pulling liquidity, they have been holding back on buying bonds and doing just the opposite, letting their portfolio roll off. They are trying to pull liquidity out of society to squeeze inflation out.

However, this place has actually made it that much harder to do. It is craziness how much we spent in the Inflation Reduction Act, which is singularly the most Orwellian-named piece of legislation in modern history. You do realize, Mr. Speaker, in the Cloakroom a moment ago, I was trying to do this math off the top of my head. I think it is like \$2.8 billion a day that we pay in interest. We pay that in interest. The U.S. Government pays that to bondholders every day.

So here is what you have, Mr. Speaker. We are borrowing about \$8 to \$8.5 billion a day. We are paying out \$2.8 billion a day in interest.

The question is: Is government borrowing really good for productivity in this society?

Does government borrowing actually make us a wealthier society, a more prosperous society?

Now, some borrowing is historic. You are going to do that.

However, at the scale we are consuming, we are consuming much of the