

As terrorists, drugs, and weapons flow freely into our country, I believe that we should be putting the American people first, not playing political patty-cake.

DEVELOPING A BIPARTISAN, COMPREHENSIVE, AND FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE FARM BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MANN. Madam Speaker, this is a week that farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers in my State of Kansas have long awaited. The House Agriculture Committee will finally mark up a 5-year farm bill.

I will start by thanking Chairman G.T. THOMPSON for leading the committee and developing a bipartisan, comprehensive, fiscally conservative farm bill that gives our farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers the certainty they deserve.

Around this time last year, the chairman and I hosted a farm bill listening session next to a wheat field in my district. We heard from 150 Kansans about their priorities for a farm bill. They were clear: They need a farm bill that gives them certainty as they work day in and day out to feed, clothe, and fuel the world. The Farm, Food, and National Security Act does just that.

This farm bill strengthens the farm safety net and protects crop insurance. Agricultural producers in Kansas understand firsthand how important that is. In February 2021, Kansas had 13 consecutive days of below-freezing temperatures, which is a 40-year record. Our producers worked around the clock to protect their cattle and ensure they survived. Just last summer, drought and market conditions in Kansas caused producers to abandon the highest number of acres of wheat since World War I. Wheat farmers have seen a 35 percent decrease in production in the last year as a result.

Madam Speaker, the reality is Mother Nature is a very difficult business partner. One bad crop year could put the livelihood of our producers and their families at risk. This farm bill gives these hardworking individuals more certainty by strengthening the farm safety net, adjusting reference prices, and modernizing the Livestock Indemnity program, dairy supports, and Conservation Reserve Program.

The committee's farm bill also maintains American food independence and invests tax dollars in places we can see a return on those dollars. America is the freest country in the world, in part because we have never had to rely on another country to feed us. At the heart of that independence is agricultural research and innovation.

The Big First is home to some of the crown jewels of the animal health corridor: Kansas State University and the National Bio and Agro-Defense facility. These institutions give the Nation a scientific hub of world-renowned re-

search. Kansas State University is conducting groundbreaking research into areas, including new heat-tolerant wheat varieties and higher yielding sorghum. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's state-of-the-art NBAF in Manhattan will conduct research into serious animal disease threats to be an important backstop in protecting our Nation's food supply. This work, and America's continued ability to feed ourselves for generations to come, depend on a 5-year farm bill that prioritizes food security as national security.

Madam Speaker, this farm bill makes robust investments in the Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development programs that ensure our American producers remain in the international marketplace. It proactively addresses issues like deferred maintenance costs at land-grant institutions and the country's veterinarian shortage before that problem gets even worse.

I have been to this floor nearly 30 times to push for my priorities in this farm bill: to protect and strengthen crop insurance, to promote trade programs that help America remain competitive and secure, conduct rigorous oversight of the executive branch to fight Big Government overreach, and invest in agricultural research at America's land-grant universities. I am pleased that the Farm, Food, and National Security Act does just that.

We need to pass a 5-year fiscally conservative farm bill that is long enough to provide certainty and short enough for Congress to respond to market changes. Farm bills feed every corner of the Nation from New England to the islands of Hawaii, both our coasts, down to the Gulf, and even the heartland of this country, including Kansas. American agricultural producers and consumers are counting on it. The legislation we mark up this week will have ripple effects for years to come. This body and Congress must use this legislation to address the concerns we have all heard over the last several years.

When we kicked off our farm bill listening session last year, there were three combines parked behind us: John Deere, Case, and Gleaner.

When you grow up on a farm, you are born into loyalty to one of these trusted American brands. They have different styles and features, but they are all designed to do the same thing: harvest. Our listening session that day and the bill that House Agriculture marks up this week are no different. We all have different priorities and backgrounds, but we are all here to do the same thing: harvest, work hard, and effectively churn out a product, the farm bill.

America's farmers, ranchers, and ag producers deserve it, America's food and national security depend on it, and Congress must deliver it.

This farm bill is something our ag community can be proud of. It puts

dollars in places where Americans can see a good return on their investment. It tightens budgets and reins in reckless spending that doesn't serve taxpayers. Most importantly, this bill ensures that American farmers, ranchers, and ag producers can continue to keep us all fueled, fed, and clothed. The Farm, Food, and National Security Act is the first step in the right direction, and I look forward to this week's markup.

REMEMBERING U.S. AIR FORCE LIEUTENANT GENERAL EUGENE D. SANTARELLI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CISCOMANI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember U.S. Air Force Lieutenant General Eugene D. Santarelli, who passed away on September 21, 2023, at 79 years old.

Lieutenant General Santarelli was a highly decorated three-star general who commenced his military career following his graduation from the University of Notre Dame in 1966.

A remarkable pilot, instructor, and mentor, he was qualified in and flew a dozen different aircraft types. Over the course of his career, he accumulated approximately 3,600 flying hours, including 901 combat hours.

He commanded a numbered air force, an air division, and three flying wings in his 32-year career. General Santarelli is survived by his spouse, Kay Santarelli; sister, Paula Anthony; and brother, Francis.

His dedication and service to our country did not go unnoticed. During his lifetime, he was awarded the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medals, Aerial Achievement Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, and Combat Readiness Medal.

General Santarelli was at his best when teaching, mentoring, or leading through his own example. In the hearts of the Tucson community and AZ-06, Lieutenant General Santarelli remains a true hero. We extend our gratitude for his dedicated service and are eternally thankful for all his contributions.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA'S WILDCATS FOR PAC-12 CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. CISCOMANI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Arizona baseball team for clinching the PAC-12 conference championship after defeating Oregon State.

The Wildcats lost their first two games and were in a must-win game on Saturday night. In Arizona fashion, they had a walk-off double, scoring two runs and winning the game, 4-3.

Head Coach Chip Hale has a current season record of 33 wins and 20 losses and conference record of 20 wins, 10 losses. He is the first coach in conference history to be named PAC-12 Player and Coach of the Year.

I met Coach Hale a year ago at Hi-Corbett Field and know that he will continue to do great things for this program.

As a former Wildcat, I know he has what it takes to take this team to the college world series.

Lastly, I recognize Dawson Netz, a former intern in my Tucson district office, who is a team captain and pitcher. He was voted PAC-12 Preseason All-Conference player and is currently eight games away from being the all-time leader in appearances for Arizona baseball. I am excited to see what the future holds for these athletes and wish them good luck in the PAC-12 tournament. Bear down.

HONORING TALENTED ART STUDENTS FROM
COCHISE COLLEGE

Mr. CISCOMANI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize a group of talented Cochise College art students for the mural they painted in the city of Sierra Vista.

The mural depicts the beauty of the San Pedro River and the wildlife in Cochise County, serving as a reminder of our connection to nature and the need to steward it wisely.

Through its Neighborhood Partnership Initiative Grant program, the city of Sierra Vista provides funding for projects like the mural and inspires community members to help beautify the city. The mural, which wraps around the Oscar Yrun Community Center, is a passion project of Cochise College art instructor JenMarie Zeleznak and her students and is a testament to the creativity of our Sierra Vista community.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. Zeleznak and her students for their work and for making Sierra Vista an even more beautiful city.

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HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE
OF LEE COVINO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life of Lee Covino, a friend, a U.S. Army veteran, and a Staten Islander who dedicated his life to making our country and community a better place for those who served.

Lee served our country in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam war. After his service, he attended the College of Staten Island on scholarship from the GI Bill. It was here that his passion for veterans' affairs flourished. He became a peer counselor for local veterans and, almost a decade later, began working as an intervention counselor for the VA's Vietnam Veterans Outreach Center, assisting nearly 1,000 Vietnam-era and combat veterans across Staten Island and Brooklyn.

In July 1990, Lee was appointed to the cabinet of Staten Island Borough President Guy Molinari, where he

served as the veteran affairs adviser and director of contracts and procurement. His service to our borough continued for another two decades, extending his tenure at Staten Island Borough Hall through the administrations of James Molinaro and James Oddo until his retirement in March 2014.

In 2002, Mayor Michael Bloomberg appointed him to the city's Veterans Advisory Board, where he served until April 2015, retiring as the board's vice chairman.

During his time at the borough and city halls, Lee played a major role in bringing the vet center and the Veterans Affairs clinic to Staten Island and obtaining a Staten Island bus link to Brooklyn's VA Medical Center.

This week, New York City also will celebrate its 36th annual Fleet Week, a show of appreciation for our Nation's Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard teams. Lee was instrumental in helping coordinate local activities and events for this grand recognition of our Armed Forces. He also worked tirelessly to expand veteran services to minority-based areas and assist veterans with resume development and learning computer skills so that they could find employment and readjust to civilian life.

Lee's dedication to New York City veterans did not end with his official duties. After his retirement, he continued to serve as an invaluable resource for many elected officials, including myself, where he helped our office organize our veterans' roundtables and became reliable counsel for veteran-focused legislation and ideas.

Because of the profound impact he has had on our community, Lee was installed into the College of Staten Island Alumni Hall of Fame in 1989 and was set to be inducted into the New York State Veterans Hall of Fame later this year.

He was a member of the VFW, The American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America, Catholic War Veterans, AMVETS, New York City Veterans Alliance, the 369th Veterans Association, and he served as treasurer of the United Staten Island Veterans Organization, which sponsored our borough's annual Memorial Day parade.

Here we are at the Staten Island Memorial Day parade in 2021, which Mayor de Blasio had originally canceled, citing COVID, until Lee's advocacy and leadership made the mayor reverse his decision, and we marched together honoring our fallen.

On Monday, Memorial Day, we, the community, will march again, and Lee's absence will be noticed and his presence immensely missed.

Lee was a true American patriot who dedicated his entire life to the service of others, and I know I speak for our entire community and city when I say his commitment to fighting for our veterans is extremely appreciated.

My office sends its deepest condolences to his daughter, Mariel, and three grandchildren, Melina, Michael, and Samantha, as they grieve this tre-

mendous loss. They should rest assured that, today, they are in the history books of the United States Congress and that his legacy of service and dedication will inspire us all as we continue to advocate for the rights and well-being of our veterans.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF BILL
REYNOLDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MIKE GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend, a war veteran, and a real hero of California's 27th Congressional District who was taken from us way too soon. Mr. Bill Reynolds crossed into Heaven and joined the Lord on January 11, 2021, a couple of years ago.

As a young man, Bill crossed oceans and fought for this Nation in the jungles of Vietnam. He fought in some of the war's fiercest battles while in Vietnam, including the Mekong Delta, where he was wounded but continued fighting alongside his brothers, the famous and heroic Boys of '67.

Bill earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his extraordinary bravery, but he never forgot his brothers who made the ultimate sacrifice, those who didn't come home, and he never stopped serving our Nation when he returned home.

Bill Reynolds dedicated himself to fellow veterans in California's 27th Congressional District and around the country. His work led to the establishment of the Veterans Memorial Wall in Newhall, California, and he personally documented the stories of countless veterans to ensure their service and sacrifices will be remembered for future generations.

I am proud to say the endless service and sacrifice of Bill will now forever be etched in the heart of Santa Clarita, as well. Right in the middle of my district, today we celebrate the official renaming of the Valencia post office to the William L. Reynolds Post Office Building, an honor that has been signed into law by the President of the United States.

This commemoration is a fitting tribute to a man who dedicated so much of his life to this beautiful Nation, both on the battlefield and in our communities. It should be noted, and frankly a fitting tribute, that about 63,000 postal workers themselves are veterans, so this is very apropos.

Bill was a devoted husband to his beloved wife, Meg, who lives in Santa Clarita, a loving father and grandfather, and a friend to thousands. His legacy not only lives on in the medals he won and the landmarks that bear his name, but in the lives he touched and the community that he strengthened.

Bill left an indelible mark on me personally, and he continues to inspire me