

the needs of our children. Also, more veterans rely on Social Security disability than they do on the VA.

That is why we have proposed Social Security 2100, which will enhance Social Security across the board for everyone. Let no one work all their lives and retire into poverty.

Currently, more than 5.5 million people who have paid into Social Security and worked all their lives get below-poverty-level checks from the United States Government. That is unfair. That is unjust. That is wrong, and Congress needs to take action.

If you just want to say how much you like Social Security, but you don't have a plan and you don't want to vote, then you are not doing anything for Social Security and you are content with its cuts.

If you want a study commission as some have said, what is it that you are going to study? What is it that you don't know about the last 51 years? People at home at their kitchen tables pretty clearly know that Congress needs to act and enhance Social Security and increase the benefits that haven't been given to them in more than 53 years. It is outrageous.

More Americans need to know about it, but Congress needs to act. The Ways and Means Committee has cognizance over Social Security. We should be taking this up.

If you have got a better idea than our plan to enhance Social Security, by all means bring it out. By all means, let's have a debate on it. For God's sake, don't we owe the American people a vote? Aren't they entitled to know where their Members of Congress stand and what their plan is?

Mr. Speaker, it might amaze you to know that over 193,000 recipients of Social Security are in your district, and that brings in \$324 million monthly to your constituents.

Where do they spend that money? They spend it right back in the district at the local pharmacy, at the local grocery store, paying for their rent, their mortgages, putting gas in their automobile. This is one of the best economic development programs that every Member of Congress benefits from and their constituents as well.

It is long overdue for the United States Congress to act. All we are asking for is to put out your plan and have a vote.

RECOGNIZING KERMIT WOMACK, A LEGEND IN ARKANSAS BROADCASTING

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

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a legend in Arkansas broadcasting who has decided to retire after more than 70 years of outstanding service to the industry, and the last nearly 45 years as the owner and operator of KURM Radio in Rogers, Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, he is not just a career broadcaster, he is my father, Kermit Womack, or "The Colonel," as we all know him.

Kermit grew up in rural Arkansas just outside the small town of Danville. It should be noted that on that little farm in the Ranger community, he didn't enjoy the modern conveniences of life: no electricity, no indoor plumbing, no car.

He picked cotton for mere dollars a day to earn money to buy school clothes. My dad knew what it was like to be poor.

Dad was a great speaker. Through the FFA organization, he competed in public speaking. It was that gift that gave him an opportunity to go to college, and it was in college that he joined the Army ROTC program.

Commissioned in 1957, the year I was born, my dad began a 36-year career in the National Guard. He also worked at the local radio station in Russellville to help support his family.

His broadcast career took him to Lexington, Missouri, for 5 years, then to Moberly, Missouri, for 11 years. It was there at KWIX/KRES in Moberly that he became the broadcast voice of the local junior college basketball team.

The Moberly Greyhounds, under Cotton Fitzsimmons, won two national titles during that time, both in 1966 and '67, with Kermit providing the description for the fans unable to make the trip. As sales manager, he practiced and he perfected the kind of radio that reflected the interests of his area.

In 1973, Kermit returned to Arkansas and became the general manager of the station where it all began: KXRJ, now KARV. There he brought true community involvement radio to that region. He was even the play-by-play voice for my high school football games. I cherish those recordings.

Soon Kermit began to yearn for his own station and in 1979, we founded KURM Radio in Rogers, Arkansas. On November 9, 1979, at noon, KURM took the air for the first time.

Mr. Speaker, in the last nearly 45 years, KURM has been the regional voice of northwest Arkansas, southwest Missouri, and northeast Oklahoma with its booming AM signal. In the early years, he added FM service as well.

Local talk shows like a free want-ad program "Dial-A-Trade," his personal talk show "Party Line," and his unique style of broadcasting covering local events, daily news, weather, and sports, with a special emphasis on production agriculture, has been so vital to our local economy. You would hear him, live weekly, broadcasting from the local cattle auction.

KURM was unique. No other station did what KURM did, but it was hard work and required dedicated people to perform such a unique service.

Mr. Speaker, times have changed. The habits of consumers have changed. As time has marched on, the respon-

sibilities fell more and more on The Colonel and very recently at 89 years of age, health issues have begun to catch up with him.

So, come Monday, this Monday, July 1, The Colonel will sign off for the final time, and KURM, the last of a vanishing breed of stations, will retire with him. It will mark the end of an era, and it will most certainly leave a void for his listeners.

Today, Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart but a grateful heart that I recognize and congratulate my dad, Kermit Womack, for his contributions to the broadcast industry and the communities he has called home. It will be sad not to hear his signature signoff: Agree or disagree, we are still going to be friends. You take care. Have yourselves a great day. We love you.

The Bible says in the Book of Matthew: "Well done, good and faithful servant." That is a fitting Scripture for a man who has given more than 70 years of his life to his community and Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I will say to my dad: Colonel, we are proud of you. We are going to miss your service to your country and your fellow man. May God richly bless you in retirement.

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FAIRNESS IN REDISTRICTING

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

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, last week, I joined the All Veteran Group to raise awareness and draw attention to my bill, the FAIR MAPS Act, by skydiving from 14,000 feet in Cumberland County, North Carolina, just outside of Fort Liberty. I was proud to elevate the issue of partisan gerrymandering to new heights and call out the need for fair maps in North Carolina and across the country.

My bill, the FAIR MAPS Act, combats partisan gerrymandering by establishing independent, nonpartisan redistricting commissions in every State. The FAIR MAPS Act has the potential to double the number of competitive House seats. If signed into law, that is a big deal.

In North Carolina and across the country, partisan gerrymandering has been used as a tool by politicians to manipulate the outcomes with surgical precision. Gerrymandering disenfranchises voters and leads to hyper-partisanship. It is the main reason we are on track to be the least productive Congress in our Nation's history.

It is simple. Voters should choose their politicians, not the other way around. While my name won't be on the ballot this year, I am not giving up or going out quietly. I am going to do everything I can to fight for fair maps, end partisan gerrymandering, and protect the right to vote for every single North Carolinian.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, this week was the second anniversary of the ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which overturned *Roe v. Wade* in an extreme attack on women's rights in America.

In North Carolina, the aftermath of the *Dobbs* decision has been devastating. In July 2023, North Carolina's Republican majority general assembly enacted a law prohibiting abortion after 12 weeks with few exceptions and mandated in-person, State-directed counseling 3 days before the procedure.

Other States have outlawed abortion and similar reproductive health services altogether. In Alabama, a State Supreme Court ruling has effectively stopped access to in vitro fertilization, or IVF.

I am pro-choice and a committed member of the House Pro-Choice Caucus. I want my daughter to grow up in a world where she has the same rights that her mother and grandmother had for the last 50 years. I will continue working in Congress to restore and protect the right to choose by codifying *Roe v. Wade* into Federal law.

DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, former President Donald Trump recently told wealthy donors and CEOs that foreign nationals who graduate from U.S. colleges and universities should automatically be given a green card. After doing nothing on immigration reform for 4 years, he is a bit late to the party.

Unlike the former President, I believe that diversity is our strength. That is why I introduced the bipartisan Keep STEM Talent Act in September to provide permanent resident status to international students who have completed advanced STEM degrees from U.S. educational institutions and are interested in continuing their work in the United States. They should automatically be given a green card.

To remain at the forefront of cutting-edge scientific and technological innovation, we should ensure that international students who come to North Carolina for higher education can stay in the United States once they graduate.

This commonsense effort will help ensure that America retains its position as the world leader in science and technology by retaining talented workers in the STEM workforce. Let's get this done in a bipartisan way and move it through this Congress.

ACCESS TO SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, more than 343,000 households in North Carolina spend over half of their monthly income on rent, leaving too little for other expenses like healthcare, transportation, and groceries. Access to safe and affordable housing is essential to the well-being of working families and individuals in North Carolina and throughout the country.

That is why I am proud to introduce the Keep Housing Affordable Act. The Keep Housing Affordable Act is a cru-

cial solution that incentivizes developers to maintain the affordability of homes for a long time to come.

My bill will bolster and expand the low-income housing tax credit, which currently only requires affordable housing units to remain affordable for 30 years. My bill will provide incentives for units to remain affordable for decades to come.

This will help boost the affordable housing supply, enhance home quality, and create long-term stability for low- and middle-income communities across North Carolina's 13th District. I will keep working to put forth commonsense ideas and solutions to lower housing costs and increase the supply of affordable housing.

HONORING JOHN WILEY WROTEN, JR.

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

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John Wiley Wroten, Jr., Texas' Third Congressional District's Service Academy Nomination Board chairman, upon his retirement after 33 years of service to our nomination board.

John Wroten began his life of service as a member of the Naval Academy class of 1965, and after a 13-month tour of duty in Vietnam, he completed his military service as a captain in the Marine Corps. John became a vice president at H. Ross Perot's Electronic Data Systems, where he also met his wife, Leahray.

Throughout his life, John has made considerable contributions to our district and State by leading the development of the Legacy Town Center, by serving as chairman of the Plano Chamber of Commerce, and by serving as a board member of the Plano and Allen campuses of the Texas Health Resources Hospital.

Of particular note is his service as chairman of the McKinney National Airport. John was instrumental in transforming it from a small, local airport into a significant economic driver for McKinney.

Additionally, John served as a board member for the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City where he spearheaded the museum's mission of preserving and interpreting the culture of the American West.

Mr. Speaker, 33 years ago, John accepted the responsibility for chairing the Texas Third District Nomination Board. Three consecutive Congressmen have depended on John's wisdom, experience, and commitment to excellence as they endeavored to select and guide young men and women aspiring to serve our Nation in the United States' service academies.

John's dedication to his community and country exemplifies the best of American patriotism and service to others. With great respect, I commend

John Wiley Wroten, Jr., for his 33 years of exemplary service, dedication, and effective contributions. I extend my deepest gratitude and best wishes to John and Leahray as they embark on the next chapter of their lives. May God bless them both for their selfless service and dedication to our community and country.

RECOGNIZING SERVICE ACADEMY APPOINTEES

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute our soldiers of tomorrow, the service-bound academy students of the Third Congressional District of Texas. This district of Texas is home to some of the best and the brightest young people, and it is always an honor to recommend such fine students to our Nation's service academies. I am confident that they are ready to join the premier service academies and ultimately serve with the best of the United States Armed Forces.

This year, Texas' Third District is going to send six cadets to the United States Military Academy, two midshipmen to the United States Naval Academy, four cadets to the United States Air Force Academy, three midshipmen to the United States Merchant Marine Academy, two candidates to the United States Military Academy Preparatory School, one candidate to the United States Military Academy Civil Preparatory School, one candidate to the Naval Academy Preparatory School, and two candidates to the United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School.

To these 15 appointees and 6 preparatory candidates, God bless them. God bless America. I salute them.

To the United States Military Academy: Jack Alexander Clutter, David Ross Graham, Chelsie Son, Samantha Jean Tillson, Jayden Prescott Walker, and Nicholas David Yarad.

To the United States Naval Academy: Pope Akanna and Duncan Keith Sullivan.

To the United States Air Force Academy: Jonah Rae Aron Bowman, Julia Chang, DeSean Caleb Davis, and Jalen Joshua Davis.

To the United States Merchant Marine Academy: Timothy Maximilian Koepl, Rhett Ownby Sawyer, and Parker Lenwood Tinsley.

To the United States Military Academy Preparatory School: Nathan Ooreoluwa Adejokun and Khristian L. Turner.

To the United States Military Academy Civil Preparatory School: Blake Ryan McKenna.

To the United States Naval Academy Preparatory School: Nickole Sophia Rios.

To the United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School: Taylor Rae Carroll and Corbin Benzi Glass.

I congratulate each of them.

HONORING TERRI LEGIERSKI

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