

Ms. SCHRIER. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative NEGUSE. I cannot overstate what an excellent partner the gentleman has been to work with and to fight for managing our forests and for our firefighters.

Madam Speaker, we feel that appreciation for our first responders in our hearts, but that is just not enough. We need to find that in our appropriations as well. As my colleague, Mr. NEGUSE, just pointed out, the pay isn't high enough. These are high-risk jobs.

We have turned them into year-round jobs for forest management. That is helpful. We have gotten pensions and Federal benefits. That is helpful. Yet think about what they do. Think about what their families go through. Think about housing. How are they supposed to find housing when they don't know where the next fire is going to be and when they don't have a salary to support themselves.

There is a way to combine all of these efforts of higher pay, more recognition, and better benefits. Frankly, we should have a path to allow firefighters to buy into Medicare early, and I have cosponsored this. We can't expect people to fight fires until they are 65 years old. It just doesn't make sense. Just like we did for veterans, we also need to have some presumption that illnesses later in life likely came from inhalation of smoke.

I also mention that there is a real need to sort of complete the cycle. It is one thing to pull underbrush out, to bring small-diameter trees out of our forests in order to protect the forests, but then there are all kinds of uses for those. We need more small-diameter mills. We need guarantees from the Forest Service that those small-diameter, 8 inches or less, trees will go and be processed.

We can create cross-laminated timber that is strong enough that we could build housing and build it more affordably with materials grown right here at home. There is a cycle there.

We can use it for biochar. All of these Western States, they are dry, too. Biochar will hold moisture in the ground and can help complete this cycle. I have a business in my district that creates something called wood straw. It works better than regular hay or straw in stabilizing a hillside because it kind of sticks into that mud and allows seeds to germinate more quickly. We can use these products and complete that cycle and make it pencil out financially.

I also give a nod to a community in my district, the community of Roslyn. Roslyn, a small town, absolutely adorable, sits surrounded by forest. It is one road in, one road out. That is it.

This community is really just waiting for a disaster to happen, but they didn't just sit back and wait. They put in for community project funding and got a good chunk of Federal dollars so that they could manage the forests surrounding their town. That means that there could be a catastrophic wildfire,

but it would slow or, hopefully, stop by the time it got near the town.

The community got so involved and excited about this, the forest management, that they each took it upon themselves to firewise their homes, and this has become part of the culture, and it is what we need to do throughout the West to protect our forests and to protect our communities.

I don't believe I have any speakers left, and so I just emphasize that gratitude to our firefighters and my commitment to continuing to work for healthier forests, for the wood products industry, for good environmental stewardship, and for protecting the West and the entire planet from escalating and accelerating climate change.

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

SHOULD WE HOLD PEOPLE TO WHAT THEY SAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, I am going to try to do something a little backward tonight from what I have typically done.

One of my great frustrations here is sitting on Ways and Means, having the Joint Economic Committee economists as part of my team, and the number of times this place makes promises that the experts around us say: You know, they are complete fraud.

Then, somehow magically, we never sort of come back a couple years later and say: Hey, here is what you were promised when the Democrats did their Inflation Reduction Act. Here are the actual outcomes. Should we hold people to their own language?

There are a couple of things I wanted to do here. I am going to walk through a few boards and try to give some examples of how this place engages in theater that is mathematically void, and what is the term? Oh, yeah, we lie to you.

So how many remember a couple of years ago: We are going to put \$80 billion into the IRS. Yay. And we are going to collect money on those people making \$400,000 and up, and there were Members of this body, of the White House, and others saying crazy things.

The press—excuse me—the scribes who basically, in many ways, should have to file with the Federal Elections Commission because many of the press around here act more like a PR department for the Democratic Party, says: Better tax enforcement could raise \$700 billion over the decade. The White House in 2021.

Some of the others: Some Members of Congress think you can get \$1 trillion from finding and taxing delinquent rich people.

Okay. Wouldn't that be neat? Wouldn't that make our job so much easier in a Congress that is borrowing

close to \$80,000 every second? Remember, this was what you were told.

How come no one ever comes by on these microphones 2 years later and says: Okay, do we hold you to your language? You built budget documents. You built things on these numbers. Even when I go back to the CBO—and these are the updated numbers. Remember, CBO, the one we keep relying on, says: Hey, high of \$851 billion over the 10 years, and additional collections on those \$400,000-and-up rich people, and the low: \$390 billion.

This was one of the excuses the Democrats had for the trillion-plus—depending on how you look at some of the other CBO numbers, so you can see how accurate it is—almost \$1.9 trillion in the Inflation Reduction Act, basically how much of it was giveaways to big businesses, environmental groups, other things.

Okay. You told us this. Well, it turns out we are 2 years in now. We are 2 years in, so let's hold them to, okay, you are going to get their average sort of number that became refined as late as this February. We are going to get \$400 billion.

So, for the fun of it, because I am a pack rat, I saved some of the articles. Here is a fine scribe—I mean, excuse me, reporter: IRS says its hiring surge and funding boost could generate \$560 billion more than it thought, \$560 billion over the 10 years from their Inflation Reduction Act.

Then, 30 days later, the same reporter—that first one is February. This one is March—applications for revenue-generating IRS jobs are far below agency goals. Then, if anyone actually reads this stuff, oh, it turns out they had fewer revenue agents, tax collectors at the IRS than they did before because apparently, if you have a good accounting background and you are a tax lawyer and those things, IRS is really where you want to work.

The fact of the matter is that the beauty here is actually, in the very article, they actually went down—let's see if I could find the percentage. They had several or 8 percent fewer. This is after billions and billions of additional money was being given to the IRS.

Now, it started with 80. Remember, we used parts of the IRS money as pay-fors last year, so I think they are still sitting on about \$57 billion additional on top of their baseline budget for customer service and tax collections.

I saved these articles. Well, what would happen if, annually, the Treasury has to update: What are the real numbers? How are they doing?

Well, Madam Speaker, you might get a kick out of this. It turns out, over the 2 years, they have brought in an extra \$1.3 billion. That is a lot of money. Now, we are still trying to figure out how much of that money would have just organically, eventually come in. It might have come in slower, so they moved some of it forward.

If I take \$1.3 billion over 2 years and then divide that in half, multiply it by

10, what happened to the \$400 billion or the trillion dollars or the \$700 billion that the Democrats from those microphones were telling us they were going to get by going after the \$400,000-and-up rich people?

My point here is so often this place, because it is mathematically vacuous, builds these promises that are complete fraud. Now, do I think people who have high incomes should pay their fair share? Absolutely. Actually, it is not even their fair share. They should pay what the law tells them they have to pay. Okay, that is fair.

It turns out there were lots of articles that had been coming up saying it was a fraud, but no one around here was willing to pay attention to it, saying: The Department of the Treasury, IRS announces 1.3 recovery, high income. It is not anything close. Treasury raised nowhere near what Democrats expected from tax enforcement.

One of the reasons I am doing this sort of backward is I come behind this microphone week after week sort of showing, saying: Here is the scale of the debt. Here are the drivers of the debt. The drivers of the debt from today through the next 30 years are demographics. I get screamed at when I am home saying: David, stop telling us the truth.

From today through the next 30 years, about 75 percent of all the debt—remember, we are expecting, in 30 years, to be about 116, \$120 trillion in debt, and 75 percent of that will be functionally Medicare, and in 9 or 10 years, when the Social Security trust fund is gone, do we backfill that and have to use the general fund for it? That is math, but it doesn't have to be that way. You can't fix things if this place keeps making crap up.

The other thing I found—and I am just adding some irony to parts of this discussion because this is way back, June 26, so not that long ago. It turns out only 31 percent who called the IRS could get someone to answer the phone.

□ 1945

We gave them billions and billions and billions to do this. Is it time to stop attacking people like me who say that it is time for a revolution using technology?

The fact of the matter is, you could actually adopt the very technology, saying if I need some information, I am going to call—and, yes, I am talking to a ChatGPT, but it can stay on the phone with me. It can help me fill out my forms. It doesn't want to hang up on me. It can text me the video I need to help fill it out.

The fact of the matter is, the IRS is the second most unionized agency in the Federal Government. They don't like the fact that technology could really improve customer service.

It turns out that technology could actually be fairer, more accurate. You don't run into the Lois Lerner problem. That is way back. If you don't know

the name, Google it. You can audit an algorithm. You can audit AI. You can audit those things and see if it is being bias and chaste.

I can't audit a leftist IRS employee who is going after certain conservative groups. You want a fair tax system. You want an efficient tax system. They are sitting on \$57 billion 2 years in, and it is still not working.

I chaired the Oversight in Ways and Means. I meet with some of the IRS officials. They actually have some competent people over there, but I can't figure out what is going on when these things just aren't happening.

I want us to understand that I can't fix the math if we are going to keep lying about it.

Here is another article I just grabbed from Politico, and I think it was from yesterday.

As part of the Democrats' Inflation Reduction Act, which is a completely Orwellian named bill because you have all seen the articles. It did just the opposite to the economy. It extended the inflationary period. "How politics hung up a \$42 billion Biden internet build-out."

Here is the thought experiment, and, once again, when I am done saying this, tomorrow there will be lobbyists in my office angry that I actually talked about this.

Remember, everything in Washington, DC, is actually about the money. It is. Let's be brutally honest about it.

Here is \$42 billion that was supposed to help bring broadband to rural America. Come with me some time to my Navajo Nation in northern Arizona, which is bigger than some of the States back here in the East Coast. I have chapter houses and communities out there that have been waiting decades to get a broadband line. Yet, if you take a look, there have been millions and millions and millions and millions spent, in this case, billions were appropriated.

If I came to you and said, if we really want to have telehealth, if we want to have digital health, if we want to have the living classrooms where the greatest science teacher is available to the entire country because you are doing it through the internet, broadband is moral.

Is it moral waiting decades? Is it moral subsidizing and subsidizing and subsidizing and somehow that bit of fiber, that wire, never gets there.

Hopefully, everyone around here is smart and said: We can't keep doing this. What would you do?

Here is a crazy idea: Go out to the middle of nowhere and put this little satellite dish and then a couple repeaters around that provide WiFi, and guess what? Forty-eight hours later, boom, you have broadband at a fraction of the fraction of the fraction of the fraction of the cost.

Welcome to this century.

Oh, we hadn't thought about that. Well, I have proposed it. It is never

going to move forward because the other side makes lots of contributions, lobbies around here. It is another example of trying to burn into this place to join this century of technology.

Unless it is better off to keep subsidizing, subsidizing, subsidizing, and then waiting a couple more decades so you can get broadband to your rural community, or you could have it this week at a fraction of the cost to the U.S. taxpayers.

I have a whole presentation. Some of you have seen it before where one of the things the Democrats did 2 years ago is, we are going to lower insulin prices. You know what they actually did is, they functionally took \$16 billion, handed it to Big Pharma, the very pharma they attack all the time, and said, wink-wink, nod-nod, we are going to attack you—you give us contributions, of course. Wink-wink, nod-nod, here is \$16 billion to buy down the price of insulin.

They didn't actually lower it. What they did is, once again, the Democrat theory is everything is up for subsidization. Subsidize your way because it makes the receivers of that cash beholden. They are rent seekers.

All of a sudden, you notice that all these folks that are receiving these subsidies happen to keep showing up supporting the left. What was immoral about that is 75 miles from here, there is something called Civica RX. Anyone who is crazy enough to watch something like this, look it up. There are three types of generic insulin. It is a co-op. It is a co-op with, I believe, the California Medicaid system, some private insurance companies, some healthcare providers, some hospitals, and they are selling those three generic insulins cheaper than the \$16 billion subsidized.

Why wouldn't this place have done something saying, these things are off-patent. We can actually incentivize groups that want to come together and make them cheaper, better, faster, more available. What a crazy idea to want to lower drug prices, create competition, but make everyone compete against each other. Make those companies that want the cash subsidies say screw you, we are going to actually encourage the co-ops to make it. I have made these proposals. I get stared at and told, no, DAVID. You don't understand. We are Democrats. We do subsidization.

They don't actually want competition. They don't actually want lower prices. They want people beholden to them. Then they could take part of that cash, part of that \$16 billion and go—I will give you a company name, but I believe there is multiple firms doing that.

It is Vertex. Read the articles of what they are doing for type 1 diabetes. They apparently have a number of folks who have actually been cured of type 1.

Isn't the cure the morality? Instead, this place is fixated on maintaining

your misery. It is immoral, but that is not what this place does.

I believe the intellectuals around here somehow need your misery. They need you to be attached to the system. If 33 percent of all U.S. healthcare is diabetes, why isn't literally every other speaker behind these microphones talking about how we are going to save our brothers and sisters?

I accept there is type 2, type 1, autoimmune, but the concept and the discussions if you actually read the academic papers, what would happen if just a fraction of that cash went into actually pursuing a cure. The cure is the morality.

Let's actually walk through a bit more of my rage. Please forgive me, Madam Speaker. In some ways, this is my therapy because I get so angry all day long listening to crazy and folks that are a decade out of date and what they think they know, and I am just saying, but there is a solution.

"Economy could be \$29.5 billion larger if all opioid deaths since 2018"—that is functionally 6 years—"were avoided."

Anyone that is following me right now, if you are the opposition researcher for the Democrats who want to just beat the crap out of me, if you think it is moral, go look up fentanyl vaccine. I think it is going into 2A trials very shortly. Apparently, it is a protein attacher. It makes it so it can't go through the brain-blood barrier.

In the last 6 years, 390,000 of our brothers and sisters have died of fentanyl. I think one of my boards here is going to say 345,000 prime age Americans died of fentanyl. That is the morality of this place. Let's give some more money to doing the same things we have been doing over and over. Think of it as everything from border security policy to the firefighter who is just trying to save someone who gets exposed.

In my county, I had someone tell me that, at least in my city of Phoenix, there may be two or three dead people every single day from fentanyl.

What would happen if I came to you tomorrow and said they think they actually have—it would be once or twice a year. It is not a traditional vaccine. That is just the language if you look it up. It basically has your body attach to the protein so it can't pass the brain-blood barrier.

For a number of narcotics, apparently, this type of technology appears to be working. Take a little bit of that money and help bring it to market. We could save people's lives. We live in a country where we may be about to have the fifth year in a row where prime age males are dying younger. In 14 or 15 years, America has more deaths than births.

Six years, 390,000 of our brothers and sisters are dead. How many times have you seen someone come behind this microphone and even talk about it? If you want to think like an economist, just think about what you can do to

grow the economy. You see the theme I am trying to sell here.

You are going to have the Democrats come behind these microphones and say—maybe even in the debate tonight—we need rich people to pay their fair share, those people over \$400,000.

This was a factoid I got from VIRGINIA FOXX a little while ago and it screamed in my head. If I came to you and said: The student loan forgiveness that the administration is desperately pushing because they desperately need the votes—remember, it is vote buying. It is functionally pay-for-play. Here, now vote for us. Madam Speaker, 750,000 of those individuals make over \$312,000, yet every dime of this is borrowed money. You are going to take working-class people, many of them that did not have the blessing like I have had and others in this body to go to school, to university, to go to grad school, things like that, you are going to ask working people who don't make anything close to 300-plus thousand dollars to subsidize. This is the morality of this place, but it is great vote buying.

Now we are going to do some of the financial. Over 14 percent—the actual real number is 14.48 or something like that. Over 14 percent of the entire Federal Government's spending this year is interest on the U.S. debt.

Once again, this is important. Social Security, number one spend. It is self-funding at least for a little while. Remember, when we say self-funding, most of it comes in as the FICA tax, the 12.4 we all pay. The employer typically pays half, you pay half, and then a little portion where the Treasury has to go sell debt to pay back the money they have borrowed from the Social Security trust fund.

In 9 years or so, that money that the Treasury has borrowed is all gone and now we have got to figure out how we are going to keep our Americans from having a 17-plus percent cut, doubling senior poverty.

Madam Speaker, 14.5 percent of all of our spending today is just interest. Social Security, number one. This year, I believe, it is \$1.460—80 billion in interest. If you do total interest, interest we owe to the trust funds, interest we owe to anyone that bought one of our bonds, whether it is your union pension fund, our nice family on the other side of the world, that is actually the number two expenditure in this government. Interest is number two.

□ 2000

Medicare is number three. Defense is actually number four. The next time you are with your liberal relatives and they say to just cut defense, remind them the thing that is in the Constitution is now number four.

In some of the projections over the next 10 years, that number almost doubles on interest because we have this insatiable appetite, and I need to keep showing some of these numbers so they make sense.

This one seems to hit home. Think of this. In 2024, the fiscal year we are in right now, gross interest comes in at \$1.14 trillion. Madam Speaker, 45.68 percent of every income tax dollar—so when you pay your income taxes, almost half of it, a little less than half of it, is just paying interest.

Think about that. When you are out working your heart out, and you see that income tax bill you have on your paycheck. A little over 45 percent of that is just paying the interest of this government.

How many times have you seen people come behind these microphones and talk about this? Remember, interest is the fragility.

If the bond market gets cranky because we do something stupid and interest rates spike up, I can make you an argument that, over the next few years, you want to know who really runs this government? It is not us. It will be the bond market because you want things.

I need to show the next board. This is this year's budget. Madam Speaker, 26 percent, the blue, I get to vote on, yet we are borrowing 30 percent.

Every dime a Member of Congress votes on is borrowed. Medicare or anything in the red is on autopilot. That is what we call mandatory. It is earned benefits.

Some benefits you get because you are part of a certain Tribal group, you fall below a certain income, but this is on autopilot. This isn't voted on.

Remember, I showed a board a second ago that over 14 percent is just interest? Well, think about that. If 26 percent is what we call discretionary and defense spending, next time you are at home talking to your voters and they say: I want to you balance the budget today, okay. I can do it, but are you ready to get rid of all the defense of this country?

It is a constitutional obligation, but we will just get rid of it. How about all of nondefense discretionary? That is the Park Service. That is the State Department. That is the FBI. It is all gone. Tell me what part of mandatory spending you want us to get rid of.

There seems to be this lack of understanding of the reality, both on where is the spending and the danger, the fragility, this country has from the debt.

Tonight, I had only half an hour, and I have a stack of these things where particularly the 2 years the Democrats ran this place, they didn't tell the truth. They made up fake numbers. We haven't hit anything close to that, and CBO seems to be sometimes months, if not years, behind on telling us the truth on how we make the numbers work.

There are ways you can make this another American century, but you have to do it through a calculator. You have to stop trying to legislate around here by people's feelings.

Yet, if you want to be on television tonight, say something theatrical, say something over the top, say something

that is a great dopamine hit. If you want to save the country, learn the damn math.

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

NEVER FORGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. D'ESPOSITO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Madam Speaker, on this date 23 years ago, 246 people went to sleep ahead of their morning flights; 2,309 people went to sleep in preparation for another routine day at the office; and 343 of New York's bravest, 71 of New York's finest, and 8 paramedics went to sleep not knowing what their next shift would bring.

Yet, that Tuesday morning, those of us who were in New York on that day remember one of the clearest, bluest, most magnificent skies we have laid eyes on.

When you reflect back on the morning of September 11, 2001, one can't help but think about that what seemed a perfect morning. There was a beautiful blue sky, the temperatures were perfect, and people were beginning their day to what they thought was going to be one of beauty.

In seconds, that changed because we witnessed one of the greatest attacks on American soil in our history. At that moment, not only did downtown Manhattan change, not only did the State of New York change, not only did the United States of America change, but the world changed. We haven't been the same since, nor will we ever be.

At that moment when we were attacked and so many people ran away from the danger, there were men and women who stood in the lobby of those buildings, who stood in the surrounding areas, who hopped on rigs in firehouses throughout the city of New York, who jumped in patrol cars and ESU trucks and made their way to downtown Manhattan, running toward the danger, the same way first responders did just miles away at the Pentagon and at that field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

They ran toward danger, running up the stairs of our beloved World Trade Center, not realizing that they were rising up those stairs only to get closer to Heaven because that is where they were headed.

When those buildings collapsed in downtown Manhattan, again, the world changed. Thousands died, but while we

saw the very worst in humanity as our country was attacked by terrorists, we also saw some of the best of the United States of America.

If you think to the days following the September 11 attacks, you couldn't walk into a store and find an American flag because they were sold out.

People lined the West Side Highway in Manhattan, cheering for first responders as they made their way to Ground Zero. People were patriotic. People were rooting for the United States of America.

Just this past weekend, I stood in my district, the Fourth Congressional District of New York, on Long Island. I stood with former Congressman Peter King and our town supervisor there, Don Clavin, dedicating a street to a gentleman by the name of Bob Beckwith.

He became an icon in the days following September 11 because he was the gentleman, the city firefighter, who stood on the pile with President Bush when President Bush grabbed that megaphone and told the first responders on the pile, the ironworkers on the pile, when President Bush said to them: "We hear you. The world hears you."

If we think back on those now 23 years, a lot has changed. Tonight and tomorrow are an opportunity for us to remember and reflect and to think about our friends and our loved ones, our neighbors who died that day. It is also an opportunity to honor them.

Nearly two decades ago when I took my oath to become a member of the New York City Police Department, I swore to protect and defend the city of New York. I also made a promise in my heart, and it is the same promise that many first responders make to themselves when they take their oath, and that is to never forget—never forget our brothers and sisters who made and paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Yet, 23 years later, people are forgetting, and that is why I thought it was so important this evening to have this Special Order and to invite colleagues from both sides of the aisle to talk about not just the horrific events of September 11, 2001, but the last 23 years.

An NYPD detective by the name of Lou Alvarez called the Fourth Congressional District home. He was a decorated member of the NYPD, a member of the bomb squad. He served our great department during 9/11 and spent months on that pile, digging for brothers and sisters and survivors.

He contracted 9/11 cancer. Instead of spending his final days at home surrounded by loved ones and family, he spent some of his final days here on Capitol Hill.

He was with his family, his friends, his brother and sister police officers and firefighters, but he spent it here on Capitol Hill, advocating and knowing that in just days, he probably was going to pass from this life on to Heaven. He spent his final days here, fight-

ing for funding of the 9/11 healthcare bill.

That is really one of the things that I want to focus on today, and I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle do the same and realize that on September 11, 2001, there were 343 members of the FDNY who died that day.

Since September 11, 2001, there have been over 343 more members of the FDNY who have died from 9/11-related illnesses.

On September 11, 2001, 23 of my brothers and sisters from the NYPD died that morning. Since September 11, 2001, over 375 more have died.

You see, this is no longer what was probably referred to 20 years ago as a New York, New Jersey, Northeast issue. There are people dying from 9/11-related illnesses in every State of this country.

There is no reason that 23 years later, heroes like Lou Alvarez need to be spending their final days walking the Halls of Congress, demanding funding that they deserve.

This is not a partisan issue. I have had the honor to work with Congressman GARBARINO, Senators SCHUMER and GILLIBRAND, and our colleagues from New York and New Jersey to continue to push for this funding.

□ 2015

Years back when the funding was first proposed, there were people from the budget office, actuaries who said the funding that was provided would carry us well to the end of the century.

They were wrong. They were wrong because more and more people die every single day. When I hear from some of our colleagues and staff saying, well, year after year, there seems to be less and less of these 9/11 survivors coming here to fight for the funding. Yes, there are fewer because they are dying. They are dying because they were told on the days following September 11 that the air was safe to breathe. It wasn't safe to breathe, and they are continuing to die.

Unless Congress acts, the World Trade Center Health Program will have to announce in 2027 that responders and survivors who suffer from an illness from their heroic service to our country will not be able to apply for the program. Unless this body does something, in 2028, the program will bar new enrollees and make other anticipated cuts in services.

Tonight, I am not just here to talk about the events of September 11. We all know what happened. We know who attacked the United States of America. We are thankful for the men and women who not only served this body but men and women throughout this country who left the comforts of the United States of America to defend our democracy and to fight terrorism.

Tonight, my plea is that we join together. If we all want to say that we never forget, well, then, let's never forget, and let's work together to fully fund the 9/11 healthcare program.