

serving students of color to ensure all students are prepared to meaningfully participate in public life.

By creating high-quality learning experiences, the Democracy Schools Network helps foster informed, active, and equitable civic engagement among young people. On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I do want to thank the Illinois Democracy Schools Network for nurturing the foundations of our democracy.

Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of our democracy. It is why I cosponsored and am cosponsoring several pieces of legislation that protect and expand ballot access, as we just talked about.

I do want to go into H.R. 11 a little deeper. Expanding voter registration and voting access prohibits voting roll removal, establishes election day as a Federal holiday, and enacts other voting rights and election reforms.

H.R. 14, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, strengthens voting rights by expanding and strengthening government's ability to respond to voting discrimination.

Defending the right to vote is defending our communities. Let me say that again. Defending the right to vote is defending our communities. Therefore, I will continue resisting and challenging any attempt from extremists in our government to undermine our democracy and erode our rights.

We all have a role to play. I encourage us all to get engaged: register people to vote, serve as election judges, combat misinformation. We have to fight for the democracy that we deserve.

There is an organization that has been doing this work around the clock, defending democracy, and that is Midwest Voting Rights Program of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights.

This vital initiative focuses on ensuring fair access to the vote and upholding election laws. Through their Election Protection program and litigation, they provide critical resources on election day. They partner with incarcerated and returning community members to expand voting rights. They ensure racial equity in redistricting. They defend civil rights and advocate for equitable election laws in Illinois and Indiana.

A notable leader in this work is Clifford Helm, senior counsel for the program and a proud constituent of Illinois' Third Congressional District. I thank Clifford and Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights for their dedication to eliminating barriers to voting and enhancing civic participation, especially in marginalized communities.

We also need organizations that create and provide citizens tools to hold our officials accountable, and that is why I am proud to recognize Indivisible, a grassroots movement dedicated to strengthening our democracy through education and civic engagement.

Through Indivisible Civics, they provide invaluable resources, training, and tools to empower local groups and activists, including to engage with their local elected officials and hold them accountable.

Since the beginning of 2019, Indivisible members have made 73,625 calls to Congress and have organized over 2,000 grassroots events in all 50 States. Their focus on building civic knowledge and skills helps individuals become effective advocates and informed citizens.

In Illinois' Third Congressional District, active Indivisible chapters in Illinois and civic leaders like Dianne McGuire, Deborah McCoy, Kathy Tholin, Geri Kahn, Patricia Graham, and Denise Poloyac are working tirelessly to engage their neighbors in the civic process. I thank Indivisible for their commitment to fostering a well-informed electorate and a stronger democracy.

While extreme Republicans demonstrate which Americans they believe should have access to vote and who they believe shouldn't, I am honored to recognize the nonprofit Chicago Votes for their efforts in fostering civic engagement among the next generation of leaders in our city.

Their Unlock Civics program works to increase democratic participation from justice-impacted adults, from registering over 5,000 voters in Cook County jail to advocating for legislation to make the jail the first in the Nation to serve as a primary election voting location.

Chicago Votes also works to engage young people in local civic processes, from their regular parade to the polls to creating nonpartisan voting guides to support educators around civic curriculum.

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Their fellowships and leadership development opportunities for youth and justice-impacted individuals, including their Democracy Corps, build stronger leaders for a stronger, more informed democracy. I thank Chicago Votes.

I also want to acknowledge the work of organizations like the Latino Policy Forum. The Latino Policy Forum is doing the work to protect our multicultural, our multiracial democracy from attempts to scapegoat, silence, criminalize, and persecute our Latino and our immigrant communities.

Through their efforts in coalition, the forum has engaged Comunidades Latinas in the civic process of our democracy.

Whether by expanding participation in the Census or access to multilingual and culturally competent educational voter material, the organization is fighting to ensure equitable representation and fair investment in our communities.

The work has been possible thanks to the efforts of its staff and its president and CEO of the Latino Policy Forum, Sylvia Puente, who after 16 years of service, announced her well-earned retirement.

Her unwavering leadership has been instrumental in driving positive, meaningful change for our communities.

In the face of the cruel policies that are looking to hurt our communities, I thank Sylvia for inspiring us with her leadership. "Gracias por luchar por nuestra comunidad contra viento y marea." "Thank you for your fight for our community against all odds."

As I wrap up here, I want to thank all my colleagues who join tonight's Progressive Caucus Special Order hour. I want to end with this: I am the product of community organizing. I am the product of a movement that continues to fight for what is right even when the attacks just keep coming and coming and even in the face of fear, even in the face of loss and hardship.

We are and have been a nation at a crossroads. We say we are facing an existential crisis, but the truth is that we have been facing this crisis for a very long time. This country has consistently faced a crossroad to choose fear or to choose hope, to choose love or to choose hate, to choose bigotry or to choose equity, to choose oppression or to choose justice.

We face those all-too-familiar crossroads again. Will we choose democracy or will we submit to dictatorship?

Democracy is a grand experiment of collective experience, and it cannot be taken for granted. It is precious and fragile, and it requires that we strive to be the best of ourselves.

I am encouraged that each time this country faced a crossroads, organizers were there bending the arc of history towards justice; fighting like hell.

We fight like hell for our communities. Our communities have always been the target of injustice. We also know that we fight like hell for our children and the future. We fight like hell against Trump and MAGA Republicans and Project 2025, as they are a fundamental threat to our children.

The people want big money out of politics. The people want us to reform the Supreme Court. The people want us to protect the integrity of our elections. Our democracy will be repaired, strengthened, and preserved when we fight for democracy.

I believe that the people united will never be defeated because we have something to fight for. I fight for my husband, a Dreamer. I fight for my nieces and nephews. I fight for every Latino who aspires to public office. I fight for the movement. The fight ahead is worth it.

There is no greater honor to fight alongside you, to protect, preserve, and expand democracy.

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

FOREIGN POLICY

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days 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 Utah?

There was no objection.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, it is always lovely to be lectured about democracy from the party that refused to certify the 2005 and 2017 elections. If this place didn't run on double standards, I don't know what fuel would be there. It is fascinating to literally hear this rhetoric. I am sorry to totally take you off point for just a moment, but, again, if the double standards didn't exist, there would be very little for this place to run on.

As we begin tonight's Special Order, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the 23rd anniversary of the attack on September 11, 2001.

Today, we remember a pivotal moment in our Nation's history and the profound loss our Nation endured, the courage we witnessed, and the resilience that we have shown as a Nation in the face of adversity. Nearly 3,000 lives were taken on 9/11 and countless families were forever changed.

Today, we honor the heroism of the law enforcement officers, servicemembers, firefighters, and medical professionals who answered the call of duty on that fateful day.

Today, we also recognize its lasting impact on our country's foreign policy and national security interests. The events of 9/11 revealed vulnerabilities in our national security apparatus and underscored the necessity for a robust and proactive approach to safeguarding our Nation.

Since the attacks, we have worked to rebuild our national security in a new period of great power competition with countries like China, Russia, and Iran, but since President Biden and Vice President HARRIS took office, their failed foreign policy of appeasement has diminished our standing on the world stage and emboldened our adversaries.

It goes without saying that strong foreign policy is the key to a strong nation. House Republicans are advancing several bills this week as part of our "China Week" that will bolster our national security and defend against our adversaries.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee also released their report on the Biden-Harris administration's failures during and after the catastrophic withdrawal from Afghanistan. I will speak more on that later.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mrs. KIM).

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative MOORE for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, last month marked 3 years since the Biden-Harris adminis-

tration's catastrophic withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

This administration rushed the withdrawal of troops, playing politics instead of preparing a plan to get Americans and Afghan partners to safety and to ensure stability in the region.

The results were horrific. The Taliban pulled the rug out from under the Biden-Harris administration, quickly taking control of Afghanistan, and undoing the gains Americans and our allies made over years in just a matter of days.

Meanwhile, 13 American servicemembers were killed in the line of duty, Americans and Afghan partners who supported our troops were stranded, and girls and women were swept under the rug.

The President said he owed no apologies.

The American people, our Gold Star families, and veterans beg to differ.

As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I am working to conduct congressional oversight, demand accountability, and restore America's leadership on the world stage. The world is watching us. Xi Jinping, Kim Jong-un, Vladimir Putin, and the Ayatollah are all watching us, and our allies and partners around the world are watching us. We must promote peace through strength.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California for her remarks. Peace through strength, that is such a simple concept, and it has evaded us over the last few years.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LOPEZ).

Mr. LOPEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

As we all know, today is September 11, and we all recognize and remember what happened to our Nation on that day. For most Americans, it is the day that terrorism was brought on to our shore, and it was the beginning of America fighting against terrorist attacks.

I want to talk today about what happened on August 26, 2021. That is the day of the unpardonable and disgraceful failure that was the Biden-Harris administration's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan.

When we look at what happened that day, as a veteran I watched and saw a Commander in Chief abandon America's sons and daughters. That is not a Commander in Chief. A Commander in Chief stands tall and never leaves a soldier behind, never leaves an American citizen behind. Yet, that is exactly what that administration did.

Who is lower than a thief who steals the honor of his countrymen?

Who is more abhorrent than a man who betrays their friends and gives comfort to his enemies?

President Biden and Vice President HARRIS fled a country we freed for two decades and left it in the grasp of merciless terrorists.

Why did we have to lose 13 brave American servicemembers? We didn't.

We lost them because there was no real plan on how to get out of Afghanistan. Any real, true Commander in Chief would know that you must plan accordingly, that you must plan every single step to make sure that there is no one left behind. When you don't have that experience, when you don't understand the conflict that you are in, you will fail like this administration did.

They say that if you want to test the character of a person, give them power. Well, we know the character of our Commander in Chief on that day, and truly the character shows that it was more important to deal with the optics politically than it was to protect the men and women in uniform.

I am here to tell you that I firmly believe, a lot of Americans believe, and a lot of veterans that I know, friends, sons of my fellow brothers and sisters that served, they truly believe that the blood of these Americans is on the hands of the President and Madam Vice President.

I talk to veterans that served in Afghanistan, and they talk about when they saw what was going on, when they saw it on the TV, it was a gut-wrenching thing to see because they had been there for years. They had deployed more than once or twice to stand tall and protect, and to see what happened tore them apart.

It is difficult to encourage the young men and women to serve in our military when we have a Commander in Chief that abandons them.

Billions of American taxpayer dollars in the form of advanced military weapons and equipment fell directly into the hands of terrorists to be used to target our allies and our troops, yet, they don't want to talk about that. They don't want to talk about the billions of dollars that were left behind.

And worse was the fate of our Afghan allies who dedicated their lives to the betterment of their country, only to be brutally murdered when we pulled out, and the Taliban came to power. I know individuals that helped America, and their families were left behind, and they asked me: Why did this occur? How can America allow this to happen?

I wish I had an answer for them, but the only thing I can tell them is it happened because we had a lack of courage.

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It happened because we had no foresight. We had no means to understand what we were doing, and so we must change that.

Many of those Afghan allies and their families are dead today, and, once again, we know whom to blame for that. I watched the debate last night, and when the question was asked: Are there any regrets? there was silence on that question.

I am here to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I understand why there is silence. It is because they don't have the courage to not only stand in front of those

family members who lost their sons and daughters, look them in the eye, and apologize for the mistake they made.

You see, Mr. Speaker, true leadership recognizes when mistakes are made. True leadership stands tall and makes sure that it never happens again. However, silence leaves everyone wondering: What will they do the next time that situation arises?

I hope that should there ever be another time, that we will have a different Commander in Chief, someone who truly understands how to protect, how to defend, and how to make America proud again when we send our sons and daughters into the battlefield.

Those mistakes will make America look weak on the world stage, and we know that they have. Our credibility with our allies and everyone we have ever made promises to has been severely damaged, emboldening our adversaries around the globe. Shamefully, our chaotic withdrawal has weakened the morale of our servicemembers and rightfully so.

When I served, I wore my uniform with honor. I wore it proudly because I believed in America, and I believed that the Commander in Chief would always have my back.

Today, I question that. I question where the loyalty is of those individuals who made those decisions on that day. You see, Mr. Speaker, those perilous days in August in 2021 will always remain a stain on that administration's legacy for the lack of leadership.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker. It is a stain on our flag. It is a stain that we must all endure only because they didn't have the courage and the understanding to do the right thing.

How do you explain to the family members that they lost their loved ones for no real reason?

How do you explain that?

This is why they refuse to even acknowledge the family members, because there is no explanation. President Biden and Vice President HARRIS cannot undo the damage and the pain that they caused, but they could speak honestly to the American people about the facts of this failure.

I urge them in the strongest terms to do that because the American people deserve the real truth.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for his remarks. He is an individual who has had a short time here and is respected in just a few short months. He has been one of the most studious and one of the most thoughtful Members that I have seen in my 3½ years, and I hope to be able to continue to find a way to serve with him. I am sincere about that, and I appreciate his heartfelt comments here tonight.

Again, I thank my colleagues for being here and taking time to speak on some of the most pressing issues facing our Nation.

Yesterday, Speaker Johnson posthumously awarded the Congressional

Gold Medal to the families of the servicemembers killed in a barbaric act of terrorism at the Kabul Airport in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021, including Staff Sergeant Taylor Hoover from Utah.

President Biden's decision to abandon Bagram Air Base and its equipment forced our troops into the impossible task of securing an urban airport while also conducting an impossibly complex humanitarian operation, all under an unreasonable timeframe and without coordination from our allies. The aftermath gave our enemies a window of opportunity of which they took full advantage. Three years later, the Taliban are in control of Afghanistan and are building stronger diplomatic ties to China, making deeper overtures to Iran, and they have enabled the resurgence of ISIS-K in their backyard.

I may be accused of regurgitating this information too much or we need to move on, and I still remember committing to a memorial service that a marine was lost from Utah to never forget and to always remember. That wasn't just a bad mistake. It had second, third, and fourth order consequences that we are going to be facing for decades to come.

President Biden has often said that our number one priority was to make sure that Afghanistan could never again be used as an operating base from which to plan terrorist attacks on the American homeland. The current situation, however, heavily indicates that we are failing in this objective.

I commend Chairman MCCAUL and his committee for their work on the report released this week that details key failures of the Biden-Harris administration during and after the catastrophic withdrawal from Afghanistan and its aftermath. Americans deserve answers for how this administration mishandled this crisis, and I am grateful for the committee's diligent work.

Additionally, we should all agree that the China challenge is not a partisan issue. Ensuring our competitiveness with China should unite lawmakers from both sides of aisle. This is the all-encompassing policy fight of our generation. It is not just a faraway foreign policy issue, but rather is one that directly impacts our economic prosperity and shapes the livelihoods of every American.

To that end, yesterday I joined Congressman WENSTRUP, Congressman PFLUGER, and Chairman GREEN in releasing a request for information to solicit feedback on policy solutions to strengthen and enhance domestic medical supply chains.

Congress has the responsibility to ensure the safety and security of our Nation and ensure our medical supply chains are free from dependency on foreign adversaries.

I am looking forward to working with my colleagues on this important issue and supporting my colleagues who have been sitting on the Select Committee on China and advancing

valuable legislation out of this Chamber.

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

THE PASSING OF SHELTON "SHELLY" GUREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great respect and admiration remembering the life and works of Sheldon "Shelly" Guren, a remarkable man whose legacy will forever be woven into the fabric of our northern Ohio community.

Shelly Guren's 99 years of life were a brilliant tapestry of excellence and service. Using the GI Bill, he had a distinguished career, but that followed his work in law school at Harvard University. He was an esteemed leader in the Cleveland area, and his contributions have been extraordinary.

He was brilliant. His investments in iconic sports franchises and his stewardship of the Great Lakes Towing Company demonstrate his far-reaching impact and deep commitment to his community. Most important, his word was his bond.

Beyond his professional achievements, Shelly was known for his integrity, generosity, and unwavering love for his family and friends. It was a joy to know him. When you met Shelly, Mr. Speaker, you knew you had met someone extraordinary. He taught Sunday school and was an outstanding leader in Cleveland's Jewish community.

His passing leaves a void in the hearts of everyone who knew him, but his legacy of leadership and dedication will continue to inspire us all.

To his beloved wife, Bonnie; his son, Michael; and his entire family, please accept our heartfelt condolences. Shelly's remarkable life and enduring accomplishments will remain a beacon of inspiration for years to come.

May he rest in peace.

SHELTON GUREN OBITUARY

Sheldon "Shelly" Guren, 99, died Aug. 16, 2024. He was born to Nate and Rose Guren on Oct. 25, 1924.

Shelly grew up in Cleveland Heights where he excelled in school and athletics. He graduated high school at age 16 and went on to Western Reserve University, now Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. After World War II, he used the G.I. Bill to go to Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Mass.,