

that served nearly 62,000 families, including direct homeownership assistance and rehabilitation of homes; assisting more than 25,500 individuals to find permanent employment or to keep full-time jobs they were at risk of losing through economic development activities; improvements to homeless facilities that served more than 52,000 people; and operating costs of homeless and HIV/AIDS patient programs, senior services, food banks, services for the disabled, youth services, transportation services, and general health or mental health services that assisted more than 5.4 million Americans.

HUD requests that grantees report on leveraged funds as well as public-private partnerships to demonstrate local investment. Grantees reported that CDBG investments leveraged an average of \$5.02 for every \$1 of CDBG grant funding during 2022, amplifying the program's return on investment with \$4.9 billion in other resources.

The 50th anniversary is now an opportunity to commemorate this milestone and commit to strengthening the CDBG program with additional funding and programming improvements.

My legislation, the CDBG Improvement Act, would permanently authorize the CDBG program, increase funding to offset inflation and account for the increase in the number of entitlement jurisdictions since 1974, and authorize housing construction as an eligible program activity, among other purposes.

As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, with jurisdiction over the CDBG program, I congratulate the CDBG champions and advocates and look forward to working together on this mission.

ESTABLISHING REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT FOR IVF EXPENSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill to establish a refundable tax credit for expenses incurred through in vitro fertilization, or IVF.

For many, including some of my own family members, the struggle with infertility has been profoundly heart-wrenching. While IVF presents its own challenges, it offers a vital opportunity for pregnancy and parenthood that should be accessible to all families facing these difficulties.

With the U.S. birthrate declining and IVF contributing to 2 to 3 percent of births, it is crucial to support families seeking to grow.

As a physician, I value every life, and as a mother, I understand the importance of empowering families to expand on their own terms and their own timelines.

This measure will provide a fully refundable tax credit for IVF-related medical expenses up to \$30,000 over a

lifetime. It will cover essential costs, such as transportation, egg retrievals, counseling, and medications.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, making the dream of parenthood more attainable and reaffirming our commitment to helping families.

HORRIFIC ACTS IN GAZA STRIP

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today disgusted by the horrific acts which have taken place in the Gaza Strip. This brutal execution of six hostages taken by the Hamas war criminals is nothing more than the most recent development in a campaign of terror with one goal: the extermination of the Jewish State of Israel.

One of these hostages, an American man by the name of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, was enjoying the Re'im music festival when this band of thugs turned this peaceful day into a living hell. During the attack, Mr. Goldberg-Polin's arm was blown off by a grenade. He spent the next 330 days terrified that he would never see his family again. On August 31, 2024, they executed this badly wounded American music lover.

I recently visited the families of some of the hostages in Israel as well as here in the United States. I saw firsthand the unimaginable hope and strength these families have lived with for the past 11 months.

Hope for Goldberg-Polin's family has run out, but strength remains as they mourn their loss.

The thoughts and prayers of the American people will continue to be with the Israeli people. May God be with them.

HONORING KIDS FOR VETS

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank Kids for Vets, which raised over \$10,000 through lemonade stands for veteran causes in the Quad Cities.

As a 24-year Army veteran, it warms my heart to see America's youth so deeply concerned about our service-members.

Kids for Vets partners with amazing nonprofit organizations, such as the Quad Cities Outreach Center and SEAL Family Legacy, to provide support to Gold Star families, food banks, job placement, housing assistance, and so much more for America's heroes.

Because of the outstanding work of Kids for Vets and their partners, veterans in the Quad Cities and greater eastern Iowa have a support system that puts their essential needs first.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the amazing work of Kids for Vets, and I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting and thanking this incredible organization.

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CONGRATULATING MATT STUTZMAN

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Matt Stutzman of Fairfield, Iowa, for winning the gold medal in archery in the 2024 Paralympics. Matt is a distin-

guished athlete who has overcome the immense obstacle of being born without both arms to set the new Paralympic record of a score of 149 points out of 150 points possible.

In admiration of his father, Matt developed an interest in bow hunting. Upon noticing his interest in hunting, Matt's father bought him his first bow at age 16. From that point on, he was passionately dedicated to enhancing his skills. His first achievement came in the form of an Olympic silver medal in the 2012 Paralympics.

Next, in 2015, he set a new world record by hitting a target from 283 meters away, a record previously held by an able-bodied athlete.

Matt is a testament to the will and determination of Iowa's First District, and we expect further great things from him in the future.

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA'S SPACE TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AND EDUCATION PROJECT

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the \$1.5 million in Federal funding secured for a space technology innovation and education project at the University of Iowa's department of physics and astronomy. This funding will be used to build state-of-the-art space equipment to help train the next generation of cosmic leaders.

I was happy to visit the university shortly after securing these funds to speak to students and faculty about the impact this will have.

The University of Iowa is already a leading school for researching the skies above, and this critical investment will further the University of Iowa's standing as a leading university in the development of space instruments for NASA and for America's astronauts.

Our country is in dire need of leaders in the astronomical field, which is why I am proud to secure this funding for one of America's leading educational institutions. With that said, I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing the best for the University of Iowa's future astronauts.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CURT MEEKS

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I extend the warmest birthday greetings to a most amazing man and life partner, my husband Curt Meeks.

JUSTICE FOR DR. SEIF FATEEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DELBENE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to demand justice for Dr. Seif Fateen, an MIT-educated professor who has been unjustly detained in Egypt since 2018.

Dr. Fateen served in Egypt's Ministry of Education before the government was overthrown in a coup in 2013. His home was later raided without a warrant, and he was arrested.

For the last 6 years, he has been held without a trial date despite an Egyptian law that sets a 2-year maximum

for pretrial detention. Dr. Fateen has experienced various forms of mistreatment, torture, and near-total isolation during his detention, and he continues to be denied basic due process.

I thank Dr. Fateen's family, who live in Redmond, Washington, in my district, for bringing his case to my attention.

I recently met with the Egyptian Ambassador to advocate for Dr. Fateen, and I will continue to demand justice so that he can be reunited with his family as soon as possible.

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of National POW/MIA Recognition Day, which is commemorated on the third Friday of September every year. This past weekend I joined the Vietnam Veterans of America in my district to bring attention to the more than 80,000 American servicemembers who were prisoners of war and those still missing in action.

My community of Staten Island, New York, recently learned from the Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency that the remains of U.S. Army Air Forces Second Lieutenant Francis E. Callahan of New Brighton were identified after 80 years. Lieutenant Callahan and 10 other servicemembers were killed in action during World War II when their plane was shot down by an enemy combatant during a bombing mission to Brunswick, Germany.

At the time, the crash site could not be located by Allied forces or Army investigators. However, in 2015, an independent research group, Missing Allied Air Crew Research Team, contacted the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency historians with new information related to a possible crash site near Wistedt, Germany.

The agency's investigators were able to find the location and recovered various pieces of wreckage between 2021 and 2023.

Following extensive laboratory analysis, anthropological and dental analysis, along with the available circumstantial evidence, an association between the remains and Callahan was established. Now Second Lieutenant Callahan will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery to rest with his brothers.

Sadly, 3 of the 10 members of Callahan's crew still remain unaccounted for. They are among the tens of thousands of other servicemembers who remain missing. As a nation grateful to those who served and those who made the ultimate sacrifice, we must continue to raise awareness of this issue and work toward the repatriation of all our POW/MIA and bring closure to their families and communities.

The identification and repatriation of Lieutenant Callahan, along with Private First Class Raymond Smith of Brooklyn, whose remains returned to New York City in 2021, 71 years after he went missing in action during the Korean war, give us renewed hope that our Nation will fulfill its promise and commitment to return every single American who served our Nation on foreign land.

As the POW/MIA flag states, these heroes are not forgotten, and we will do everything we can to honor their memory and bring them home.

SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address and speak about the Nation's number one antipoverty program for the elderly and the number one antipoverty program for children, and the program that more veterans rely on for disability than the VA. Of course, I am talking about Social Security.

What the public doesn't know, but should, is that Congress hasn't acted to enhance Social Security since 1971. That is 53 years. A lot has transpired and happened over 53 years, and with 10,000 baby boomers a day becoming eligible for Social Security, it is long overdue that Congress acts.

We have a proposal. Our proposal is called Social Security 2100, and this is exactly what it does. It makes sure that no one can retire into poverty. We have over 5 million Americans who have paid into Social Security and get below-poverty-level checks.

Nobody gets wealthy on Social Security. The average is \$18,000 per male and \$14,000 per female. As I said, 5 million of our fellow citizens are getting below-poverty-level checks on a commitment they made to their government to get the insurance.

That is what we are talking about here. It is insurance. Social Security also is one of the most efficient government programs. Its administrative costs are under 1 percent. There is no other agency that does that and services over 70 million people.

I would also like to remind my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that Social Security is important because it impacts your district directly.

Mr. Speaker, for example, you have 134,536 recipients: 95,000-plus are retirees; 15,000 are disabled; 8,756 are widows; and 9,942 are children. That is not the most critical thing though. The critical thing is: How much money comes into your district on a monthly basis?

In California's 23rd District, it is \$213 million a month, and that hasn't been adjusted since 1971.

What do these people do with this money when they get it?

They spend it right back in their district at the local grocery store, at the

local pharmacy, to pay for their heating and cooling, to put gas in their automobiles. It, therefore, is a direct economic development plan for the people in this Nation who need it the most.

For more than 40 percent of Americans, Social Security is the only benefit they have. They don't have benefits like the Federal Government has or like the United States Congress has. All they have is that very simple policy and a commitment from their government that they would make it actuarially sound. Instead, what they get is doubt and fear and the fact that the trust fund will be cut 20 percent now by 2033 if Congress continues to do nothing.

It is long overdue.

Why is it, citizens must ask, that Congress can't come together to take care of the very citizens whom they are sworn to serve on an insurance plan that is the most efficient in government operating under at 1 percent administrative cost.

Mr. Speaker, you can't find another agency in the private sector, and I hail from an insurance capital, to administer insurances anywhere from 15 to 26 percent. In government they do it for under 1.

Act, Congress.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING SERGEANT MAJOR JUAN OGO BLAZ, A PROUD SON OF GUAM

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

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and honor Sergeant Major Juan Ogo Blaz, a proud son of Guam who sadly passed away on September 3, 2024.

Sergeant Major Blaz served with the 82nd Airborne Division in Vietnam where he experienced intense combat and served gallantly. During a 1969 incident, Sergeant Major Blaz' platoon came under attack, instantly incapacitating the platoon leader. Sergeant Major Blaz took immediate command of his unit and moved to drag other wounded men into positions of safety.

While evacuating the wounded, Sergeant Major Blaz himself was injured in his right shoulder but refused medevac at that moment. The platoon continued receiving fire from enemy bunkers, and when close air support arrived, they struggled to place rockets on target. Despite his injuries, Sergeant Major Blaz made a series of solo charges at enemy positions marking them with smoke for attack by aircraft. Only once these enemy positions were neutralized did Sergeant Major Blaz accept medical care.

Based on these actions, Sergeant Major Juan Ogo Blaz has earned himself a place among the pantheon of Guam's heroes. His life and military career stand as an example of patriotism and the people of Guam will always be proud of his legacy. Although in his