

instead of making the tough arguments and having the tough discussions with their voters decided to go along to get along on the path to financial ruin or will you be one of the people who stands up and says: This is unsustainable. We must stop it. I will not engage in a fake fight. I will not be part of this political theater.

Will you stand your ground?

Will you be one of those people?

I hope you will.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on the continuing resolution with the fake shiny object attached to it.

□ 1030

HONORING LINDA RONSTADT

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

Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California. Madam Speaker, this Hispanic Heritage Month, I pay tribute to a legendary Latina singer who crossed genres and generations, Linda Ronstadt.

Utilizing her distinctive voice, she brought delight to fans of pop, country music, folk, light opera, and, of course, Latin music.

She was incredibly proud of her Mexican heritage. When she told record executives that she wanted to record an album all in Spanish, they told her it would ruin her career. She went ahead anyway, releasing “Canciones De Mi Padre,” which stands as a best-selling non-English language album in American history.

Selling over 100 million albums, Linda has 12 Grammys, an Emmy, and, in 2014, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

A passionate advocate for the arts, in 2013, she was honored for her work by President Barack Obama with the National Medal of Arts.

She announced her retirement in 2011. She revealed having a neurodegenerative diagnosis that left her unable to sing aloud. She is a personal favorite of mine. My favorite song of hers is “Blue Bayou,” and I will always honor her love of music and people.

This Hispanic Heritage Month, Linda is someone I will uplift and support. Her musical achievements will be remembered for a long, long time.

A WARNING TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California. Madam Speaker, I rise to warn the American people about one of the greatest threats we face as a country.

A shadowy network led by a billionaire businessman is working to threaten some of our most important values. This businessman attacks immigrants from far places and mild-mannered journalists here in our country. The shadowy network seeks power at all costs.

No, I am not talking about Lex Luthor and his legion of doom, but

Donald Trump and his authoritarian and dictator friends who threaten our very democracy and world peace.

I am here to raise the alarm about the massive foreign interference of our politics at the highest levels. We know that, recently, The Washington Post reported allegations that the Egyptian President, seen right here, may have tried to transfer \$10 million to the Donald Trump campaign for President in 2016. We also know that other foreign governments have also tried to buy influence from the Trumps and the Kushner family.

We know that Jared Kushner colluded to collect \$2 billion from the Saudi royal family for his investment fund just 2 months after leaving the White House job.

We also know the Trump Organization has collected, at a minimum, \$7.8 million in foreign payments from multiple countries during his Presidency, funneled through The Trump Organization and his hotel properties.

Madam Speaker, we cannot delay more accountability or an investigation. Donald Trump has made dangerous allegiances with enemies of the United States of America and our allies. They do not stand for truth, justice, and the American way.

I have raised this alarm over and over again, and we should not stop.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members to refrain from engaging in personalities toward nominees for the Office of President.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MADELYN CONNOR

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

Ms. LETLOW. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Madelyn Connor.

There are very few times in life when you meet a person and leave the conversation inspired to do more, but that was Maddie.

Madam Speaker, she was a dreammaker. She had a vision for her community, a dream in her heart, and a drive to see it through to completion.

Earlier this year, I received a request to visit a new charter school opening its doors in northeast Louisiana. I knew very little about the school named the Academy of Collaborative Education, also known as ACE. I only knew that it would serve students from our region who had received an autism diagnosis.

On the day of my visit, Maddie swung open those school doors, and I was met with her contagious smile and a huge hug. As she sat me down to explain the origin of the school, I noticed that her passion for the kids who would benefit from this program shone through the most. It came from one of the most genuine and fiercest of places: a mother's heart.

She explained that her son had received an autism diagnosis, and she

was left with disappointment and frustration when she realized the curriculum at her local public school would not suffice for his needs. She sat down with his speech pathologist, Joellen Freeman, one day to share her concerns, and it was there that a dream and a plan was born: to start a charter school aimed at supporting children with autism.

The journey to start this school was riddled with obstacles and heartache, but Maddie never gave up. That was her nature. Nothing was going to stop her from giving these kids an opportunity to learn in a supportive environment.

It took 2 years and an arduous 250-page application process, but her dream was finally realized with an official ribbon cutting on July 26, 2024, alongside her cofounder, Joellen.

This picture of her was taken on that very day the ribbon was cut. Her family and friends were there to celebrate and remember her beaming with joy on the day that her dream was realized.

I will never forget when I stood up to leave after our meeting and tour of her new school was complete. She stopped me on the way out to grab something from her desk. Her eyes flooded with tears as she showed me a picture of her son, Ace. She said: This is my why.

She didn't have to say another word. Our eyes met, and I instantly understood. There is nothing more powerful than a mother's love. It has the power to change the world.

In northeast Louisiana, we lost our dreammaker on August 30, 2024. Richard, who is with us today in the gallery, lost his loving wife. Gracyn, Ace, and Jett lost their precious mother.

As they navigate this journey through grief, I pray they will find some comfort in knowing that they were Maddie's whole world, so much so that she left them a legacy.

The Academy of Collaborative Education has the power to transform a region and impact countless lives in our State of Louisiana and beyond. It will be there for years to come to help autistic children and worried moms and dads because Maddie had a dream in her heart and a fierce determination to help her children, and she never gave up.

Madam Speaker, I leave my colleagues with the words spoken by Maddie's husband, Richard, at her funeral. He said: We lost Maddie, but only in flesh. Her spirit lives on through her family, friends, and each and every one of the people who knew her. We will all be reunited with her again one day. How sweet that day will be.

May we all live each one of our days left inspired by the way Maddie lived hers: as a dreammaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOORE of Utah). The Chair reminds Members not to refer to persons in the gallery.

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
PROGRAM

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise serious concerns about the ongoing underfunding of our Federal public defender program.

Nearly 90 percent of defendants in Federal court cannot afford their own attorney. Defendants have a constitutional right to an attorney in criminal cases. Without Federal defenders, the justice system can't function, and defendants are not able to get a speedy trial.

Any loss of Federal public defenders increases court delays and costs, sometimes significantly, because of reliance on private panel attorneys, who are usually more costly and often have less experience.

This is a particularly precarious moment for the Federal defender program. In fiscal year 2024, an inadvertent budgeting error resulted in initial funding levels that were more than \$100 million less than what the program needed across the country.

In response, the program implemented a series of cost-saving measures, including a hard hiring freeze, suspension of training opportunities, and deferral of cybersecurity upgrades.

Insufficient funding for the Federal public defender program affects not only the rights of indigent individuals charged with Federal crimes, but also the overall operation of the Federal criminal justice system. When the Federal public defense system is underfunded, it creates delays in processing criminal cases, backlogs in U.S. Attorney's Offices, and an increase in appeals.

Additionally, we are seeing more complex cases that require increased forensic evaluation. These cases are not given the attention they deserve in an underresourced public defense system. A strong Federal public defense system, which is something that has historically been bipartisan here in the Capitol, enhances the confidence of everyone who has an interest in an efficient, reliable, and fair Federal justice system, including crime victims and the public at large.

Congress must adequately compensate Federal public defenders for the unintended consequences of the fiscal year 2024 cost-saving measures. We must restore training and cybersecurity infrastructure investments, and we must address the cost pressures for personnel in those offices and other essentials. This is important for our criminal justice system and for fairness. Let's get it done.

CELEBRATING BILL DECAPITE ON
HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. MILLER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a patriot and American hero, Bill DeCapite, a member of the Solon VFW who recently celebrated his 100th birthday.

As a U.S. Navy World War II veteran, Mr. DeCapite was the seventh born of 11 children. He and his late wife, Rose, had two daughters and are proud grandparents of two adult grandchildren.

A Seabee in the Navy during World War II, Mr. DeCapite was stationed in the Pacific Islands for 3 years, where his duties included helping to repair U.S. ships and planes. He also helped to build the runway on Tinian Island, where the Enola Gay was launched.

Mr. DeCapite has always had a love for cars. When he returned from World War II, he went into the car repair business and continued that career into his sixties.

Today, Bill continues to volunteer at Cleveland Public Theater. When asked what his secret is to a long life, Mr. DeCapite says: I can't believe I am 100. Volunteering helped me. I just get up every day, and I live a good life.

I thank Mr. DeCapite for his selfless service to this country and wish him a very happy birthday. May God bless him.

IN HONOR OF CRISTINA
VILLAREAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. RAMIREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, in honor of our Latino communities' rich contributions to our Nation, I rise to recognize my constituent, Cristina Villareal, for her dedication and advocacy to champion Latinas in our Nation.

Cristina's career, from her roles in the city of Chicago to Cook County, reflects a deep commitment to social justice and equity. As chief officer of external affairs at Planned Parenthood of Illinois, Cristina has tirelessly worked to ensure that Illinois remains an abortion haven for the Midwest, defending the right of every woman to bodily autonomy and to access the reproductive care they need and deserve when they need it.

Cristina has also served as the president of the Chicago chapter of the National Organization for Women, amplifying the voices of Latinas and ensuring they exercise their right to vote.

Her work is inspired by the world she wants to build for her two daughters, Catalina, who is watching now, and Camila.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I commend Cristina Villareal for her unwavering dedication to justice, to equity for Latinas and all women, and her invaluable service to her community and to our State as a "powerful Latina," "poderosa Latina." Mr. Speaker, I thank and congratulate Cristina.

IN RECOGNITION OF ROGELIO "ROY" SORIA

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, in honor of our Latino communities' rich

contributions to this Nation, I am proud today to recognize Rogelio "Roy" Soria of the Transportation Workers Union of America Local 556 for his tireless advocacy for worker rights.

As a shop steward, executive board member for his local, and recording secretary of the Chicago metro chapter of the Labor Council for Latin-American Advancement, Roy has dedicated himself to building a multiracial unity as we fight for fair wages, for dignity, and for justice.

Because of Roy's leadership, we passed the 2022 Illinois Workers' Rights Amendment, enshrining the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively in Illinois, and expanded the Illinois Sick Leave Act to 30,000 aviation workers in Illinois.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I commend Rogelio "Roy" Soria for his unwavering commitment to worker solidarity and the power of collective action.

Mr. Speaker, "congratulations," "felicidades" to Roy, and I thank him for his incredible leadership.

□ 1045

HONORING HUGO MANZO

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, in honor of our Latino communities' rich contributions to our Nation, I rise to honor Hugo Manzo, a champion for Latino representation in the trades, for his unwavering commitment to organized labor and Latino empowerment.

Initiated into the Painters Local Union 33 in 1993 as a drywall finisher, Hugo was the very first Mexican American hired by Painters District Council 14.

In 2014, Hugo became the first Mexican elected business representative for Painters District Council 14, overseeing the work of Will and Grundy Counties.

He later served as the director of organizing, driving efforts to unionize nonunion sites and industries, providing workers with the option to, for the very first time, collectively negotiate wages, hours, working conditions, and their own welfare.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I commend Hugo Manzo and join workers throughout Illinois to thank him for his leadership.

HONORING STEPHANIE CHAVEZ

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, in honor of our Latino communities' rich contributions to this entire Nation, I rise to honor my constituent, Stephanie Chavez, a proud first-generation Mexican American from Glendale Heights, Illinois.

The daughter of Maria and Tomas Chavez, Stephanie has spent her life pursuing a career as a secondary social studies teacher. She believes that education is a tool for collective liberation and has committed to teaching the next generation about the history and policies of our Nation and to teach our young people to be proud of our roots, many of those immigrant roots, and