

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

how to engage and shape a brighter, more equitable future.

Her dedication and hard work have led to her being awarded the 2024 Outstanding Graduate by the College of DuPage Foundation.

I had the pleasure of seeing firsthand the incredible leadership and positive example that Stephanie sets for her children at Glen Ellyn Children's Resource Center in my district.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I commend and thank Stephanie for her passion and dedication. She is an inspiration to all of us, especially young Latinas dreaming of a future of liberation like I do.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 47 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DESJARLAIS) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Lord, our Shepherd, we are Your people, the sheep over whom You keep watch. It is You who have made us, and we belong to You.

Such a relationship is at times too intimate to accept. Such dependence on You is often a challenge to our sense of self-sufficiency.

But if we open our eyes to the multitude of blessings You have bestowed on us, if we allow our wills to experience the goodness You desire for us; if we soften our hearts to receive the love You demonstrate to us in countless ways, how can we desire anything but to enter into Your presence with thanksgiving? How can we but seek to live lives that please and praise You? How can we not trust Your faithfulness in these days, when we realize it has been present with us for generations?

May our prayers show our gratitude. May our actions today demonstrate our desire to glorify You. May our thoughts, decisions, and attitudes reveal our faith and trust in You.

In Your eternal mercy we stand and in Your gracious name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

77TH BIRTHDAY OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 77th birthday of the United States Air Force.

The United States Air Force was established on September 18, 1947, but its beginnings can be traced back to August 1, 1907, when the U.S. Army Signal Corps established a small aeronautical division to handle all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and related subjects.

After the U.S. involvement in World War II, the evolution of battle made the need for an air-specified military branch evident. For the past 77 years, the Air Force has patrolled the skies, protecting citizens here and abroad.

Our U.S. airmen embody strength, excellence, and innovation. Their unwavering dedication to our country is demonstrated by their "Aim High . . . Fly-Fight-Win" motto.

I ask my fellow colleagues to join me in recognizing the sacrifice of our airmen, thanking those who serve today and honoring those who have served.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join me in wishing our U.S. Air Force a happy 77th birthday.

CENSURING CONGRESSMAN THOMPSON OF MISSISSIPPI

(Ms. GREENE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce I am introducing a resolution to censure the ranking member of Homeland Security Committee, BENNIE THOMPSON of Mississippi.

In April of this year, Mr. THOMPSON introduced a bill to repeal and completely remove the Secret Service pro-

tection of former President Donald J. Trump.

With the Department of Justice being weaponized against President Trump and multiple Democrat State DAs being weaponized against President Trump, they are also taking action that could lead to the murder of President Trump.

Mr. THOMPSON has refused to remove his bill.

On July 13, President Trump was nearly assassinated. On September 15, there was another assassination attempt on his life.

This bill must be removed, or Representative THOMPSON should be censured in the well of the House.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE 77TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as a dedicated member of the United States House Armed Services Committee, a 1994 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, and a proud United States Air Force veteran, I rise today to celebrate the 77th birthday of the United States Air Force.

The United States Air Force was officially established on September 18, 1947, and has since proven to be the best in the world.

The United States Air Force has played an essential and unwavering role in defending our Nation's security and honor, ensuring the safety and freedom of our citizens.

To all those who have served and those who are currently serving in the United States Air Force, to you and your family, I say thank you for your service to our country.

"Fly-Fight-Win."

CONSTITUTION DAY

(Mr. LOPEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LOPEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate yesterday's 237th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution. What began as a grand experiment in governance has culminated into the most free, productive, and powerful nation in the history of the world.

The wisdom that our Founding Fathers embedded into the U.S. Constitution has proven the test of time, and we must hold to it just as strongly today as we have through the centuries of intermittent war and economic depressions.

We live in a time of great social unrest, political polarization, and differing ideologies threatening to tear this country apart. However, if we hold steadfastly to the truth and guiding principles of our Constitution, we will