

America to participate in this celebration from September 15 through October 15.

America thrives on the cumulative efforts of all ethnicities working for the collective good, beginning with the annexation of Florida, Louisiana, and the northern part of Mexico. More than 100,000 Hispanic people became U.S. citizens in the 1800s to be followed by millions more over the next 200 years.

Today, the American-Latino population amounts to over 65 million people and roughly 20 percent of the total U.S. population. The name of my home State of Colorado comes from the Spanish phrase “coloreado rojo,” “colored red.” This name originates from the 16th century conquistadors who explored the area in search of gold over 400 years ago. Their journey paved the way for exchanges that continue to shape our society today.

In the late 1800s, following the end of the Civil War, 25 percent of New Mexico’s Hispanic population moved to Colorado and established towns throughout. One of the most notable was the trading post of El Pueblo, which at the time was the border between the United States and Mexico. This area became a hub of commerce and culture, illustrating the vital role of Hispanic communities in our Nation’s development.

San Luis, the oldest town in Colorado, was founded by Hispanic settlers who came to farm and raise livestock. These pioneers laid the groundwork for agricultural practices that are still necessary to our economy today. Then, in the early 1900s, Hispanic families moved to Greeley, Colorado, to work for the Great Western Sugar Company, which offered workers the chance to own a small home.

This opportunity allowed families to build a foundation for future generations, demonstrating the enduring spirit of resilience and hard work.

Some individuals in the Hispanic community have stood tall as leaders in Colorado, including Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, a boxer and poet who led the crusade for justice during the Chicano movement in the 1960s and 1970s fighting for the rights of the Hispanic community nationwide. His dedication to social justice continues to inspire community activists today.

Joe Trujillo, a good friend of mine that for years lived in Colorado, was an instrumental mentor not only to myself but to others to always be proud of our heritage, to always be proud of what we came from, and never forget our humble beginning.

You see, I come from humble beginnings. My mom and dad grew up working in the fields. My dad had a sixth-grade education and never learned to read and write. My mom has a tenth-grade education, and yet, I stand before you here in Congress as a true representation of what America offers the Hispanic community, and it is an honor to be an American.

Just 6 years ago, Kendrick Castillo, a young Hispanic boy attending a STEM

school in Highlands Ranch, sacrificed himself for his classmates, when a shooter entered his school, saving their lives. His bravery serves as a reminder that any of us can have the courage to stand up for our communities.

These individuals exemplify the resilience, character, integrity, and passion that is the lifeblood of the Hispanic community. Moreover, the arts, the culture of the Hispanic community have enriched American life, influencing music, literature, politics, and businesses across the Nation.

Many of the Christian beliefs of our Founding Fathers constitute the pillars of the Hispanic community. Core values like family, faith, and freedom are instrumental to my culture and are essential to the success of a nation. These values unite us and provide a path for future generations to thrive as well.

For centuries, members of the Hispanic community have legally migrated into the U.S. for the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. The influx of illegal immigrants and criminals is damaging this crucial process and is unfair to those who have legally immigrated to America. It is imperative that we differentiate between those seeking refuge and opportunity and those who seek to undermine our laws.

The term “Latinx” is a derogatory term and when utilized is an insult to Hispanic Americans and should never be used. This term was invented to erase the male and female gender of the Hispanic community and culture. It is a perversion of the Spanish language and an insult to Hispanic heritage.

It is vital that we continue to uphold our values of justice and fairness, ensuring that the pathways to citizenship remain open for those who seek a better life. We must support comprehensive immigration reform that honors the contributions of immigrants while addressing security concerns.

In closing, let us celebrate the rich history and achievements of the Hispanic community, recognizing together we can create a future where all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, can contribute to the American story.

For my Anglo brothers and sisters, I leave you with this: If you like tacos, you are one of us.

RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY OF HAMAS’ ATTACK ON ISRAEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the approaching, somber, first anniversary of Hamas’ horrific attack on Israel on October 7, 2023.

This past year, we have experienced continued heartbreak and mourning with fresh pain rearing its ugly head

each time we learn the tragic fate of hostages who were captured that fateful day and subsequently murdered by their captors.

Just a few weeks ago, on the eve of a rescue operation, Hamas executed six hostages in cold blood, including an American, Hersh Goldberg-Polin. It was a gut punch.

After surviving absolutely horrific conditions for nearly a year, they were brutally murdered by Hamas in the tunnels below Gaza all because their rescue was imminent and because of Hamas’ hatred of Jews and their commitment to destroy Israel.

As a Jewish mother of three, meeting with so many parents of the hostages, including Hersh’s parents, Rachel and Jon, has felt deeply personal. Their fortitude and strength in advocating for the return of their children is nothing less than heroic.

I have met with Rachel and Jon countless times this past year, and something that always sticks with me is when Rachel shared her last embrace with Hersh before he left for the Nova music festival for his 23rd birthday.

No mother should ever have to think that when they kiss their child goodbye before a concert, it will be for the last time because they will be murdered by terrorists.

This senseless evil compels us to hold our own children tighter and strengthens our resolve to end the terrorist threat that lives on Israel’s doorstep, which no people should have to endure.

I was in the region with a congressional delegation on October 7 and in Israel on October 10. Since October 7, I have traveled to Israel twice more. During a visit in March, the most searing moment for me was when our delegation paid our respects at the site of the Nova festival.

The Nova festival was a celebration of peace. Thousands of young people joined together in the desert to celebrate life.

At sunrise, terrorists invaded the site, including flying in on motorized paragliders with the sole objective of murdering, maiming, sexually assaulting, and kidnapping festivalgoers and hundreds of Israelis in their homes.

No parent should fear getting the text that so many received that morning from their children that the worst has happened.

When you go to the Nova site today, you see memorials and photos of the beautiful, vibrant faces of the hundreds of young people marked where they were murdered.

As a mother, a Jew, and a Zionist, the experience was overwhelming.

Despite the horror and ongoing tragedy of the almost 100 hostages that still remain in Gaza, ripped away from their loved ones for almost 365 days, the people of Israel are strong and will never stop fighting for their future.

I am inspired by those Israelis who have dedicated themselves to bringing the hostages home and seeking a just peace.

October 7 didn't just impact Jews living in Israel. It impacted Jews around the world, especially here at home. While anti-Semitism was already on the rise after October 7, Jewish hate exploded, reaching record levels of anti-Semitic incidents in the United States.

According to ADL, since it first started tracking incidents of anti-Semitic harassment, vandalism, and assault in the United States in 1979, this past year resulted in the highest number of anti-Semitic incidents on record.

The American Jewish Committee found that two-thirds of American Jews say the status of Jews in the U.S. is less secure compared to 1 year ago, and 62 percent of American Jews report facing anti-Semitism online or on social media in the past 12 months.

This is unacceptable. Anti-Semitism doesn't just threaten Jews. It is an attack on the very foundations of our society, pluralism, religious freedom, and equal rights, endangering all of us.

I am so grateful for President Biden and Vice President HARRIS' moral clarity and leadership in combating anti-Semitism.

In May 2023, their administration took the unprecedented step to release the U.S.' first ever whole-of-society National Strategy to Counter Anti-Semitism.

We must combat this hatred, and I urge all of my colleagues to call out anti-Semitism no matter where it comes from.

Lastly, I have a plea for my colleagues: When you are home in your districts, please check in on your Jewish friends and neighbors.

We are not okay. Local Jewish organizations are planning events around the October 7 anniversary, so I implore you to reach out and show up for your Jewish neighbors and constituents. Speak out against anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, which is a form of anti-Semitism.

Together, we will stand up against hate and stand up for Israel.

We will never forget the victims, the hostages, and their families. We must bring them all home now.

"Am Yisrael Chai," "The people of Israel live."

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FOREST FIRES

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I frequently make speeches trying to have the American people know and understand just what we face, especially in our Western States. Every fire season it is pretty much the same thing.

As you see depicted here, Mr. Speaker, this is just one of many fires we would have in California or Idaho or Oregon or Arizona or Montana. In many of our Western States, this is

just a microcosm of what we see each year.

Mr. Speaker, you see these smoke plumes. Not only does it affect the West, but when you get a really, really large fire in the six digits or one in my district 3 years ago known as the Dixie fire which ended up being just under 1 million acres, that smoke plume actually got up into the jet stream and affected the East Coast where there were low health days declared in places like New York City, Philadelphia, and even in D.C.

We experienced it here on the East Coast from Canadian fires earlier on, which is more proximate here just up north of us in Canada. They are affecting the whole East Coast. Even the West Coast fires can affect here. We need to do a lot more about that.

Here is what some of that damage looks like in the very real world in the communities that are affected. I have had several of my communities just in my district, and that is just one of 435 congressional districts, that are negatively affected.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard about the town of Paradise where 85 people lost their lives, as well as about 90 percent of the town.

It is a picture not unlike this town of Greenville a couple years ago in the Dixie fire, or the town of Canyon Dam right nearby in what is called the North Complex fire near Oroville, California, which devoured most of Berry Creek and Forbestown.

This becomes very real to the people who are proximate to these forests.

The Park fire this year consumed at least 70 to 80 homes.

Mr. Speaker, just to give you a quick recap of the acreage we are talking about, I mentioned the Dixie fire just under 1 million acres; the Park fire this year in my district, 430,000 acres; the Bear fire, also known as the North Complex, burned over 300,000 acres. So you can see we are getting really tired of these big numbers. That is just in my own district. Many other Members of Congress can tell you about that.

We see here that 7.3 million acres cumulatively have burned in the West this year. You could say, well, we are getting into the fall; is it going to get better?

It might start tailing off somewhat here as the temperatures come down with the conditions, but fire season is still going to be upon us through the fall, maybe until the first rain and snow starts to fly.

In places like southern California, it never really ends because they have a drier condition down there. Other States, even in the East, are looking at fire conditions that are going to go well into the fall and early winter.

What does all this mean?

It means treatment. It means treatment of our acres. It means the Forest Service needs to engage much more so. I know they are afraid of the lawsuits that the environmental groups always bring, and they are bound up by NEPA

regulations which study to death things that really don't need to be studied. This is not news here, what we need to do to treat our forests.

It is probably hard to see this poster on TV very well, but this area here that is really dark and burned had no treatment. This area in the middle that is nice and green had thinning, removing some of the trees. We still leave a lot of the trees behind.

The left and the environmental groups would have you believe, and scare you into joining organizations and sending dues, saying they are going to cut every tree from here to Canada. That is not the case. That is not even responsible. Nobody wants to do that. It is thinning.

It also says the term "prescribed fire." Fire is a good tool when used properly in the right conditions and the right timeline, et cetera. That actually makes a good condition, getting rid of a lot of the waste material on the forest floor that builds up over time.

We have been putting fires out for over about 100 years under the "Smoky the Bear" type theme, which is good, but we have replaced what nature used to do in the last 50 years of inaction in our forests, and managing those lands needs to be done.

Of course, down here, Mr. Speaker, you see thinning only, which works pretty well and is at least a positive step, but we need to do all these things that are making the lands more sustainable, so to speak, in a fire situation.

We have overcrowding of trees that compete for less and less water in an arid area or a drought period, or if you want to say climate change.

What are we doing about it during climate change?

We are not doing much. We are letting the trees grow 500 per acre when a good forest is healthy at 50 to 70 adult trees per acre, a thin forest. So we need to use these tools such as prescribed fire.

We can't just say: Oh, we don't want the smoke.

Well, we are getting the smoke anyway. We are getting the smoke at 7 million acres at a time and a situation that is not timed or a good structure for doing so.

Fix Our Forests is a bill we passed yesterday. It is going to be a good tool toward getting started on that, and we have a lot to do.

PROJECT 2025

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great concern for the people of New Jersey and the future of our country. Project 2025 puts our healthcare access at risk.

The conservative pledge would impose lifetime caps on Medicaid benefits putting coverage at risk for nearly 1 in 40 New Jerseyans.