

its second formal "safety culture" review. The only other site to have undergone such a review is the Millstone nuclear plant in Connecticut, where NRC officials have said they believe workers were harassed and intimidated if they tried to report problems.

FirstEnergy is to make a lengthy presentation about its progress September 18 at the NRC's Midwest regional office in Lisle, Ill. The agency will take FirstEnergy's presentation under consideration, then hold at least one more meeting on the topic to give the company feedback before restart, Jan Strasma, NRC spokesman, said.

During both outages, the NRC has had its own credibility questioned by members of Congress and other high-powered officials in Washington.

U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Toledo), after hearing about the reactor head corrosion 18 months ago, questioned the capability of the NRC, an agency she accused of being weak and ineffective with its handling of Davis-Besse's 1985 incident. Although Miss Kaptur called for Davis-Besse to be shut permanently in 2002, she has not been as outspoken in recent months as has U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D., Cleveland).

Earlier this year, Congressman Kucinich petitioned the NRC to revoke FirstEnergy's operating license at Davis-Besse. More recently, in response to finger-pointing alleging FirstEnergy may have responsibility for the nation's worst blackout, he petitioned the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio to revoke the utility's right to do business in Ohio.

A long paper trail of records reviewed by The Blade shows others have shared their skepticism about Davis-Besse.

A report prepared for the U.S. House Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power just days after the June 9, 1985, event suggested that the coolant-water episode at Davis-Besse should not have surprised the NRC. The report said 48 problems concerning Davis-Besse's auxiliary feed-water system had been reported by Toledo Edison since July, 1979. The plant unexpectedly shut down 40 times between 1980 and 1985—at least half of those times because of hardware problems and at least nine times because of human error.

In April, 1987, former U.S. Sen. John Glenn (D., Ohio) introduced a bill that ultimately led to the creation of the NRC's Office of Inspector General. Senator Glenn said at the time that the NRC is "supposed to be a watchdog, not a lapdog."

Earlier this year, that same Office of Inspector General accused the NRC of putting profits ahead of safety when it allowed Davis-Besse to wait until February, 2002, to shut down for refueling and the safety inspection for control rod cracks.

Former NRC Chairman Richard Meserve vehemently denied that charge.

George Mulley, the inspector general's senior level assistant for investigative operations, told The Blade that a follow-up probe into the NRC's oversight performance at Davis-Besse will likely be released this month.

Part of the criticism the NRC received following its 1985-86 probe of Davis-Besse stemmed from its decision to back off from a proposed \$900,000 fine against Toledo Edison.

The agency originally said it would impose the penalty because of a "long history of ineffective and inadequate attention and direction in the operation and maintenance of the Davis-Besse facility."

But in 1987, the NRC cut the fine amount to \$450,000. The agency explained that it had changed its mind because it was impressed by Toledo Edison's aggressiveness toward establishing "a long-range, in-depth corrective

action program to address the problems that existed at Davis-Besse."

No fine has been issued in connection with the current problems at Davis-Besse. A decision on any civil penalty depends on whether the NRC's Office of Investigations believes there is evidence of criminal wrongdoing to turn over to the Justice Department for prosecution.

"The criminal process would take precedence over the civil process," Mr. Strasma said.

Although the two extended outages appear to have some parallels in terms of oversight, the country's mood toward nuclear power at the time they each began was likely very different.

Early last year, in the weeks before the reactor head corrosion was discovered at Davis-Besse, the nuclear industry had the best reason for optimism since before the Three Mile Island accident.

After 23 years of doldrums, nuclear energy was embraced by the White House as a solution to energy problems. Congress in 2002 eventually eliminated one of the nuclear industry's most nagging obstacles to expansion when it designated Nevada's Yucca Mountain as a burial site for spent reactor fuel.

Contrast that with how most people felt about nuclear power when Toledo Edison restarted Davis-Besse in December, 1986. Several months earlier, on April 26, 1986, the world's worst nuclear accident had occurred at the Chernobyl nuclear complex near Kiev, Ukraine. Thousands died, either immediately from the blast or from radiation-related sicknesses in the following years.

As Davis-Besse moved closer to restart, Toledo Edison's Joe Williams, Jr., sought to allay fears. On Sept. 7, 1986, the retired U.S. Navy vice admiral devoted nearly an entire page in The Blade to a 2,000-word letter in which he explained what happened at Davis-Besse, Three Mile Island, and Chernobyl.

"A Chernobyl simply cannot happen here for a variety of reasons," Mr. Williams wrote, citing the containment at U.S. nuclear plants among those reasons.

The hiring of Mr. Williams has been seen as one of the key moves Toledo Edison made in response to Davis-Besse's 1985 shutdown.

A former commander of the U.S. Atlantic submarine fleet and the NATO submarine fleet, he was brought in on June 18, 1985, nine days after the shutdown began. He took the helm under the title of senior vice president in charge of nuclear operations, and was given wide latitude in decisions.

Davis-Besse's manpower was expanded to 890 employees in 1986, up from 644 in 1985. There was less reliance on contractors.

Compare that with the current workforce at Davis-Besse, which totals 725 full-time employees in a deregulated, more competitive market. FirstEnergy spokesman Richard Wilkins acknowledges there are far fewer employees today and that the trend has been to bring in more contractors to do specialized work.

Lew Myers, chief operating officer of FirstEnergy's nuclear subsidiary, has told the NRC that he has put a renewed emphasis on training.

Yet employees fear burnout: Some have privately complained about working in excess of 72 hours a week throughout much of the 18-month outage.

A number of key positions, including some in Davis-Besse's engineering department, have been filled by employees from FirstEnergy's Perry nuclear plant near Cleveland and the Beaver Valley nuclear station at Shippingport, Pa.

Howard Whitcomb, a Toledo lawyer and former NRC resident inspector in South Carolina who worked under Mr. Williams at Davis-Besse after the 1985 incident, has said

he believes many of the workplace issues that exist at Davis-Besse today would not have been tolerated under the former vice admiral's reign.

"You've had a few really close calls at Davis-Besse," said Jim Riccio, Greenpeace nuclear policy analyst in Washington, citing the two extended outages and a 1998 tornado which narrowly missed the plant.

"I'm wondering when luck is going to run out."

## 17TH ANNUAL BRENT BERRY FOOD DRIVE

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

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the 17th annual Brent Berry Food Drive in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

Named the Brent Berry Food Drive in honor of their son, Brent, the family took the initiative to help those in need.

This year, the food drive was the largest food drive in the event's history, breaking its record in 2022. Members of the community donated \$100,000 worth of food, enough to fill six schoolbuses and two trailers.

□ 1045

With the help of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Salvation Army, this food was distributed to thousands of individuals across the city.

Buck Berry, the lead organizer of this food drive, grew up not knowing where his next meal would come from. His family received help from the Salvation Army so they wouldn't go hungry, and that stuck with him into adulthood, and he felt motivated to provide that same goodness to his community.

This self-sacrifice shown by the Berry family has impacted the lives of so many in the Sixth District for 17 years, and I commend them for their dedication to community service.

### RECOGNIZING KOOL KIDS DIGGITY DOGS

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize a local hot dog business in my district, the Kool Kids Diggity Dogs, for their giving back tailgate at the Roanoke Rescue Mission during the Super Bowl on Sunday.

The goal of the event was to provide a great meal for the big game for the homeless population in Roanoke, and they did just that.

The employees of the hot dog business served up free hot dogs, chips, and drinks to those in need.

In addition to the plate of food, the employees went above and beyond and provided clothing and hygiene products.

The display of community spirit by the Kool Kids Diggity Dogs stands as a testament to the civic spirit of the town and as an example of Jesus' instructions to us in his sermon on the mount: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

I want to thank Melvin Ward, the owner of the business, and the rest of

the volunteers for their selfless service and wish them much success with their business in the future.

RECOGNIZING HARRISONBURG HIGH SCHOOL  
ELECTRIC VEHICLE TEAM

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Harrisonburg High School Electric Vehicle Team for being invited to compete in the 2024 UAE Electric Vehicle Grand Prix.

The Harrisonburg High School Electric Vehicle Team has been competing in the Electric Vehicle Grand Prix as this competition empowers each constructor to use their knowledge and design and build a car that can race the most laps within the time span of an hour.

The Harrisonburg car is unique, as it is equipped with built-in data collection so the team can get feedback in real time to improve technique.

After 2 years of hard work and dedication to build the most efficient car, these young engineers were selected to be one of six teams representing the United States in the International EV Competition in Abu Dhabi.

The engineers of this car include: Jack Rocker, Joshua Nafziger, Johanna Mayfield, Monica Espinoza Martinez, Colin Snider, Peter Johnson, and Davis Bert.

As these young engineers enjoy life in the fast lane, I join all Americans in expressing our support and hope that we see them standing at the top of the podium in Abu Dhabi as winners of the Grand Prix.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS HAS FAILED

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, this weekend while Americans were preparing for the Super Bowl, Secretary Mayorkas appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press" and claimed that the Department of Homeland Security did not bear responsibility for the broken immigration system in this country.

The Department of Homeland Security website states that the job of the Secretary is to: counter terrorism and enhance security, secure and manage our borders, enforce and administer our immigration laws, and provide essential support for national security.

The Homeland Security Committee outlined for the House how he has failed in every single category. I commend my colleagues for taking action yesterday to impeach Secretary Mayorkas and hold him accountable for his failures.

Let me give an example for each one.

He has failed in his responsibility to stop the influx of terrorists into this country. Last year, there were 169 people whose names appear on the terrorist watch list who were stopped trying to cross the southern border—a record.

He has failed to secure and manage our borders. There have been over 7 million illegal crossings of our southern border, 1.7 million known got-aways who evaded U.S. Border Patrol, and has empowered and emboldened ruthless criminal cartels to control our southern border and poison our com-

munities with enough fentanyl to kill every American. In 2023, CBP seized a record of over 27,000 pounds of fentanyl at the southwest border.

He has failed to enforce and administer our immigration laws. On day one, Joe Biden and Secretary Mayorkas ended the Trump-era remain in Mexico policies, the strongest border security laws implemented in generations. He also has the authority to use the current laws in place to secure our border but has neglected any law in the book and this has led to the crisis that has engulfed this country.

He has failed to provide essential support for national security. Border Patrol agents have apprehended individuals from more than 160 countries since January of 2021, including from countries that sponsor terrorism or major U.S. adversaries.

Additionally, between October 2022 and August 2023, CBP recorded nearly 75,000 encounters of aliens who represent a potential threat to national security.

He has failed. It is time to remove him from office.

RECOGNIZING THE SIXTH ANNI-  
VERSARY OF THE PARKLAND  
SHOOTING

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

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Madam Speaker, today is Valentine's Day, but I don't celebrate Valentine's Day anymore. I haven't celebrated Valentine's Day in 6 years. Today is a difficult day for myself, many in the city of Parkland, and my constituents. You see, it is the sixth anniversary of the mass shooting at my high school, Marjory Stoneman Douglas in my hometown of Parkland.

I remember February 14, 2018, like it was yesterday. I was in Tallahassee when my wife called and said something terrible has happened at the high school around the corner from our home. I was informed that there had been a mass shooting.

I immediately traveled home to Parkland. I went to the school that I graduated from and saw what it looks like when your high school is turned into a war zone.

I then went to the hotel where they were keeping the families of the kids who were missing. I knew they weren't missing.

For 8 hours, they waited in that hotel while the Broward Sheriff's Office and the FBI told them what happened to their kid. They pulled families out one by one into a separate area of the ballroom separated by a partition. The process went on from 12:30 in the morning until 3 in the morning. I didn't hear crying. I heard screaming. It haunts me every day.

Madam Speaker, 17 innocent people didn't make it out of that building on that fateful day. I knew we had to do something, and so I brought my colleagues from the Florida legislature to

see the building firsthand and see how it affected families in my community.

What we saw was unfathomable to imagine—the sight of the deadliest high school shooting in American history.

Families now have empty rooms in their homes. They have empty chairs at the dinner table. My own son, who was 4 years old at the time, went to preschool right around the corner separated by a traffic light from Marjory Stoneman Douglas. The teacher that was with my 4-year-old in a closet that day, her daughter was killed. While she was protecting my son, her daughter, Jaime, was killed at Douglas.

Like previous Valentine's Days, parents and wives will spend their time visiting their children or their husbands at the cemetery.

I remember parents telling me one thing, and they said it over and over, and it has stuck with me ever since. They said that the only thing I did wrong was send my kid to school. That is not on them. That is an indictment on us. It is an indictment on the elected officials who have failed to do nothing to keep our kids safe in school.

I mean, look at them. These were babies murdered in their classroom. They were teachers. I went to high school with Aaron Feis. He was on my football team when we were in high school. He became a football coach. He ran in to try to help, and he was gunned down.

At least in Florida we did something after the shooting at my high school. The Florida legislature passed the Marjory Stoneman Douglas School Safety Act. It raised the age to buy a firearm to 21. It instituted red flag laws and 3-day waiting periods. By the way, those red flag laws which take weapons out of the hands of people who are mentally ill have been used 12,000 times in 6 years. Madam Speaker, 12,000 times law enforcement in the State of Florida has deemed someone either a danger to themselves or a danger to others.

We put hundreds of millions of dollars into mental health, school resource officers, school safety, and this was passed on a bipartisan basis. In fact, it was led by my Republican colleagues, A-plus rated members of the NRA, and signed into law by Governor Scott who became a U.S. Senator. They got it right that day. They got it right. We did that while still upholding people's constitutional freedoms and rights.

Madam Speaker, as we sadly reflect today on the sixth anniversary of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, I am going to use the rest of my time to sit in silence after I read the names of the victims: Alyssa Alhadeff, Martin Duque Anguiano, Scott Beigel, Nicholas Dworet, Aaron Feis, Jaime Guttenberg, Chris Hixon, Luke Hoyer, Cara Loughran, Gina Montalto, Joaquin Oliver, Alaina Petty, Meadow Pollack, Helena Ramsay, Alex Schachter, Carmen Schentrup, and Peter Wang.