

get it done. They got to work delivering food, supplies, and hands-on assistance to those hit hardest.

Samaritan's Purse and Mountain Ways embody the best of who we are as Americans: neighbor helping neighbor, faith in action, and compassion when it is needed most. Their efforts have been a lifeline for the victims of Helene, providing not just relief but dignity and hope.

We need to take a hard look at how FEMA funds are distributed. Using these funds as flow-throughs to organizations like Samaritan's Purse and Mountain Ways will get resources where they are needed faster and more efficiently.

The truth is these groups know the communities, they know the needs, and they deliver the results because they live there.

Mr. Speaker, when push comes to shove and people need help the most, it is organizations like these that come through and save the day, not the Federal Government.

I would ask everybody to remember these folks in their prayers this weekend as apparently there is going to be some pretty bad snowstorms up there, and those people are just living in tents, Mr. Speaker, still waiting on aid from FEMA.

HONORING FIREFIGHTERS IN CALIFORNIA

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

Ms. BROWNLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the brave firefighters and first responders who swiftly responded to and recently contained the Mountain fire, a destructive and devastating wildfire that burned over 20,000 acres in the hillsides of Camarillo in my district of Ventura County, California.

Ignited on the morning of November 6, the blaze, fueled by 80-mile-per-hour winds, quickly spread. While many homes were damaged and destroyed in this disaster, fortunately no lives were lost thanks to the swift and strategic response of emergency personnel.

I join a very grateful community in thanking the men and women of the Ventura County Fire Department, CAL FIRE, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, local law enforcement, and the unified command of 3,000 personnel on the ground who responded to this incident and protected the lives and livelihoods of so many.

I remain deeply inspired by the heroism of our firefighters and first responders and our community's unwavering support for one another as we enter the recovery process and rebuild a stronger Ventura County.

REMEMBERING SPENCER LAWTON, JR.

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of famed Chatham County District Attorney Spencer Lawton, Jr.

After graduating from the University of Georgia's law school, Lawton worked in his family's firm and founded his own law firm before winning the 1980 election for Chatham County District Attorney.

Lawton served as the Chatham County DA for over 28 years where he modernized his management office, built an incredible team, and created Georgia's first victim-witness assistance program.

Lawton also helped to pass many pieces of legislation, including victim compensation and the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights. The victim-witness program Lawton created became a model for prosecutors across the Nation.

In addition to this incredible work, Lawton rose to fame for prosecuting Jim Williams in John Berendt's best-selling book "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil."

Outside of his career, Lawton was deeply involved in community organizations, including the Mediation Center, Coastal Children's Advocacy Center, and the Savannah Music Festival.

Our community will forever remember Lawton's service, and I send my deepest condolences to his family and friends.

HONORING NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH MONTH

(Ms. MCCLELLAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Rural Health Month to bring attention to the pressing need and to expand access to comprehensive healthcare services throughout rural America.

The rural communities in my own district of Virginia's Fourth face some of the worst public health outcomes of all counties in Virginia. Over the past 2 years, I have consistently engaged with these rural communities to hear firsthand about the challenges they face, including hosting a rural health summit with counties in the southern part of my district.

Throughout my conversations, I have heard similar challenges facing various rural communities, including the following: geographic constraints; long commutes and limited transportation; food deserts and a lack of access to healthy, nutritious, balanced foods; limited healthcare providers; insufficient access to culturally competent care; physician and healthcare provider shortages; and limited access to high-speed internet and devices for telehealth services.

Each of these contributes to the healthcare challenges in our rural communities and exacerbates existing disparities.

We must do more to support our rural communities, and I look forward to working with the Congressional Bipartisan Rural Health Caucus and Members on both sides to do just that.

RECOGNIZING APPRENTICESHIPS

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

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the hardworking apprentices and those who are training them in Idaho's First District. Apprenticeships are a pipeline to good-quality, high-paying jobs.

Here is one example. My district is home to Quanta Services' Northwest Lineman College, which is training the next generation of skilled labor in the electric power, telecommunications, and natural gas industries. They trained 763 apprentice and preapprenticeship students last year at the campus at Meridian, Idaho, and one in five students is a veteran across their multiple training facilities.

When disaster strikes, linemen are on the front lines of the wreckage working to restore power to millions of homes, hospitals, and businesses.

This workforce is critical to build an electric grid and a broadband network that will deliver affordable and resilient services to Americans. We must ensure that our workforce is ready to meet the Nation's energy and broadband challenges of tomorrow.

I am proud to represent a community that supports and values apprentice work.

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

(Mrs. LEE CARTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak for so many of those unable to speak for themselves, our children.

Today, we commemorate the 70th anniversary of World Children's Day. The need for this day is even more poignant given the global challenges children face around our world.

As the daughter of the founding member of the Congressional Children's Congress, the Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee, I too am committed to protecting and uplifting children.

I know that many of my colleagues believe in supporting our children, and I urge you to restore the child tax credit. If the child tax credit was restored today, in 2025, roughly 2.6 million fewer children would live below the poverty line.

My mother believed deeply in protecting our children, and she worked vigorously to stop human trafficking and especially to protect our youngest, vulnerable Americans.

While protecting the lives of our children is understood, we must also stand

up for children everywhere. She also authored the Oleksander Ivanov Act of 2023, H.R. 5800, so that the children of Ukraine could be safe and protected and have access to freedom.

As we celebrate the 70th anniversary, we cannot forget the work that is still undone. There should be no child that goes to bed hungry. Unfortunately, hunger is responsible for the death of 3.1 million children a year.

I ask that we join in commemorating this anniversary and rededicate our drive to support all children as well as our own.

HELPING VETERANS REGARDLESS OF ZIP CODE

(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, during a Veterans Service Officer Roundtable held in my district earlier this year, a constituent expressed concern about the difficulty he and his fellow veterans had traveling to access healthcare. In response, we took action and introduced the Rural Veterans Transportation to Care Act, which expands the Department of Veterans Affairs' Highly Rural Transportation Grants program and helps veterans in remote areas travel to the VA or VA-authorized healthcare facilities for their appointments.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Congress to pass this essential legislation. We must help our veterans, regardless of their ZIP Code or crossroads.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS PREPARE FOR 119TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KEAN of New Jersey). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MOORE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Utah?

There was no objection.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back in Washington, D.C., this week as the House Republicans set the stage for the 119th Congress with a unified front to tackle the most pressing issues that the American people face.

Americans from coast to coast are grappling with the consequences of the Biden-Harris administration, including high energy costs, crippling inflation, rising crime, burdensome regulations, and government overreach in schools and other institutions.

House Republicans are working together as a conference to craft legislation that tackles inflation, implements pro-growth tax policies, cuts back on regulatory red tape, promotes family values, supports small businesses, secures our borders, and strengthens our position on the world stage.

During this lameduck period, we are hard at work advancing other key important pieces of legislation, specific pieces. This week, we put on the floor Congresswoman CLAUDIA TENNEY's Stop Terror Financing and Tax Penalty Act, which protects American citizens who are wrongfully detained or held captive abroad from late penalties from the IRS and revokes the tax-exempt status of nonprofits that provide financial or material support to terrorist groups like Hamas.

We have to listen to the American people when it comes to energy independence, a topic that we have spent the last 4 years trying to debate.

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I think the people have spoken, and House Republicans are listening. They are advocating for policies that cut red tape and unleash our Nation's energy potential.

That is why we passed, earlier this week, Congressman RUSS FULCHER's, who was just in the Chamber, Committing Leases for Energy Access Now Act, the CLEAN Act, which requires the Interior Department to increase the frequency of geothermal lease sales from every 2 years to every year, hold a replacement sale if necessary, and create decision deadlines for geothermal drilling permit applications, therefore enhancing our geothermal energy output and domestic energy supply.

If you say that you want clean energy, if you say that you want other alternatives but continue to withhold the permitting and hold hostage the permitting process, then you truly do not want to create a solution.

We are done with this. Permitting reform is something that has to take place in our Nation. We have done a little bit of it in a bipartisan way, but if we can't look at something like this and say that this, to reduce the burden on permitting, is the most common-sense thing for geothermal potential, then nobody is being actually serious back here.

Let's get these things done.

I am grateful for my colleagues who are going to join us this evening to discuss this and many other measures that are pertinent to their districts. I am grateful for their commitment to delivering for the American people as we continue to look forward to next Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from the Commonwealth of Virginia (Mr. CLINE).

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Utah for holding this Special Order this evening.

This week, House Republicans are taking a decisive stand to support our

fellow Americans who are wrongfully held hostage abroad.

The Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act will change the way the IRS will treat American citizens who are held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad. With over 40 Americans currently detained, it is simply unacceptable for them to return home only to face tax penalties imposed by their own government.

Our current tax code provides just 1 year of relief before late fees begin to accumulate, and this is unacceptable.

The IRS imposing late fees and penalties on hostages for missing tax returns highlights the agency's failure to help the American people. We must ensure these Americans can focus on reuniting with their families and not be burdened by financial penalties and bureaucratic red tape.

Additionally, a crucial part of this legislation is that it sends a powerful message to those who finance terrorism that we will revoke the tax-exempt status of U.S. nonprofits that support groups like Hamas.

American taxpayers should never be forced to subsidize those who seek to undermine our safety and security. We must stand united with these Americans and make it clear: Our government will not tolerate any support for terrorism. We will continue to fight for justice, and we will continue to fight to protect our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the gentleman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) for sponsoring this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on this important bill.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks. We appreciate his followthrough in highlighting this key, important legislation.

There are, I think, 46 Americans who are wrongfully detained. They should not be going through these types of tax penalties. This is something that makes absolute sense.

I appreciate my next colleague who will address the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROSE).

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank our vice chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, for the last several weeks, I listened to countless concerns from literally hundreds of Tennesseans whom I have the honor to represent here in Congress. I heard from families still struggling to make ends meet because of rampant inflation. They are paying more for housing, groceries, energy, and just about everything else you can think of because of Bidenomics.

I listened to constituents who are worried about crime, fentanyl, and, yes, the overrun U.S.-Mexico border.

Small business owners expressed the heavy burden of government regulations. Parents told me the many ways government overreach in schools keeps them up at night.

It is not hyperbole to say that the results of this election were an answered