

stations have been completed. This failure highlights the need for a more thoughtful approach, one that assesses cost and benefit and one that respects consumer choice and avoids unnecessary government intervention.

President Trump understands that a thriving economy is built on freedom and choice, not top-down mandates. Under his leadership, the American people will have the freedom to make their own decisions without the overreach of Washington.

MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S WORD OF THE YEAR

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, Merriam-Webster has named "polarization" the word of year. While that may reflect current times, it should also serve as a reminder that we must work harder to bridge the growing divide in our Nation.

Too often, political discourse has become hostile, with one side labeling their opponents as extremists for advocating commonsense solutions like securing our borders, lowering costs, or commonsense solutions that are helping hardworking families and ensuring fairness in women's sports.

I am optimistic that we can begin to heal these divisions and put America back on track. We must come together to prioritize policies that promote economic growth, strengthen national security, and restore the American Dream.

As we move into a new year, let us focus on the values that unite us and work for the betterment of all Americans.

WITH GRATITUDE TO NORTH CAROLINA'S SIXTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep gratitude for the people of North Carolina's Sixth Congressional District for trusting me to represent them in the U.S. House of Representatives.

I have been proud to stand with House Democrats to pass historic legislation to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, lower the cost of prescription drugs, strengthen domestic manufacturing, protect our future with the development of clean energy, address gun violence, and provide vital support for our veterans.

Thanks to these efforts, 80,000 households in my district have gained access to affordable high-speed internet, 39,000 residents are saving hundreds of dollars annually on their prescription drugs, and more than 4,700 veterans exposed to toxins during their service have filed claims to access benefits they have earned.

I have also been proud to secure nearly \$60 million in Federal funding for community projects across the Sixth District. From improved transportation to new equipment for our police

and firefighters, public safety initiatives, expanding education and job training, incentivizing economic development and public health, these projects are making a real difference.

I have also been proud to fight against the terrible loss of women's rights. Two years ago, the Supreme Court overturned 50 years of judicial precedent with its decision to strike down Roe v. Wade. This terrible ruling stripped millions of women of their right to obtain an abortion, has placed devastating hurdles in obtaining care for miscarriages, and has unleashed a wave of rightwing attacks on the full range of women's reproductive healthcare, including birth control.

That is why I introduced my Right to Contraception Act, to protect access to all FDA-approved birth control, which passed through the House in the last Congress. Sadly, my bill was blocked by Republicans, first in the Senate and again this term by Republicans in the House. It is shameful.

As policy co-chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus, I have been proud to fight for all women to make decisions about their own bodies and to have the ability to succeed in the workplace while still caring for their children and their family members.

In addition to fighting for North Carolinians' basic freedoms, I have worked to advance America's values and interests on the world stage. As the vice ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I have advocated for rebuilding and expanding strong relationships with our allies, including unwavering support for Ukraine and Israel in the face of unprecedented attacks.

After Hamas' brutal October 7 invasion of Israel, I have stood up against the alarming rise in anti-Semitism here at home and around the globe as the co-chair of the House Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Anti-Semitism. This includes introducing my Countering Antisemitism Act, the most comprehensive legislation aimed at addressing the disturbing increase in anti-Semitism in our country's history.

This bill must be passed if we are serious about eradicating the scourge of the world's oldest hatred and protecting the fundamentals of our democracy. What begins with hatred against the Jews never ends there but spreads to other vulnerable groups.

As a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, I have championed investments in our students and schools and worked to address the youth mental health crisis, introducing the Improving Mental Health and Wellness in Schools Act to expand resources for our students.

As chair of the New Democrat Coalition Workforce Development Task Force, I have fought to address ongoing labor shortages and prepare workers for the jobs of the future.

While I would love to continue this important work on behalf of my con-

stituents, the blatantly gerrymandered congressional districts passed by the Republican-led North Carolina General Assembly make it impossible for me to do so. These maps are a deliberate distortion of the will of the people, designed with surgical precision to split communities of interest and deny real representation to North Carolinians. These maps force me to depart Congress, but I recognize that I am doing so at a time of great division within our country.

Now, more than ever, it is our duty in this Chamber to reaffirm the fundamental values that unite us as Americans: freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and the belief that all people are created equal.

While I will not be here to witness the next chapters of history written in this Chamber, I will keep using my voice to defend these values and trust in their enduring power to make our Union more perfect.

I will close by thanking my extraordinary staff members who work every day to get things done for the people we represent. I thank everyone who supported me in getting to Congress and all the colleagues with whom I have worked to develop friendships on both sides of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING FARMERS, RANCHERS, AND OTHER PRODUCERS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize our Nation's hardworking and dedicated farmers, ranchers, and other producers.

In 1978, radio broadcaster Paul Harvey addressed the Future Farmers of America at their annual convention and delivered a powerful message that highlighted the importance of our Nation's farmers.

He said:

And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said: I need a caretaker.

So God made a farmer.

God said: I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper, then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board.

So God made a farmer.

God said: I need somebody with arms strong enough to rustle a calf and yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild; somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, have to wait lunch until his wife is done feeding visiting ladies, then tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon and mean it.

So God made a farmer.

God said: I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt and watch it die, then dry his eyes and say: Maybe next year. I need somebody who can shape an ax handle from a persimmon sprout, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make a harness out of haywire, feed sacks, and shoe scraps; who, planting time and

harvest season, will finish his 40-hour week by Tuesday noon and then painin' from tractor back, put in another 72 hours.

So God made a farmer.

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain clouds and yet stop in midfield and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbor's place.

So God made a farmer.

God said: I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bales, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-combed pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadow lark.

It had to be somebody who would plow deep and straight and not cut corners; somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed, and rake and disc and plow and plant, and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeders and finish the hard week's work with a 5-mile drive to church; somebody who would bale a family together with the soft, strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh, and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says that he wants to spend his life "doing what dad does."

So God made a farmer.

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Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, it is my honor to advocate for their interests and ensure that they have certainty and stability for generations to come.

Even though Paul Harvey wrote these remarks about our Nation's farmers, it encompasses so much more than that. Our farmers, ranchers, foresters, and producers are essential in providing food, fiber, and fuel to our Nation and the world.

Mr. Speaker, food security is national security. As we head into the holiday season, I recognize and thank our Nation's producers for their contributions to our everyday lives.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF HOUSTON'S IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Mrs. LEE CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the rich legacy of Houston's immigrant communities and the contributions they have made to improve the lives of all Houstonians and the United States of America.

Houston is a city built by Dreamers, a vibrant metropolis where nearly one-quarter of our population is comprised of immigrants.

I will highlight members of Houston's immigrant community who are as diverse as they are inspiring.

From Eugene Pillot, who opened one of the city's first opera houses, to Ninfa Lorenzo, whose modest restaurant blossomed into a multimillion-dollar empire featuring Tex-Mex classics.

In these times when some would demonize immigrants, who have always

been an important part of America's fabric, I choose to lift them up.

In Houston, foreign-born Latinos make up 20 percent of our population and include persons like Renaissance man Felix Tijerina, a restaurateur, philanthropist, and the 25th president of the League of United Latin American Citizens; Ellen Ochoa, the first Latina in space and a former director at the Johnson Space Center which is in the Houston area. They remind me of the limitless potential immigrants bring to our society.

Houston is also home to the Nation's largest Nigerian population outside of Nigeria. Nearly 57,000 Nigerian Americans call Houston home.

The legendary athlete Hakeem Olajuwon is a proud Nigerian American. He dominated at the University of Houston and became the number one draft pick in 1984 where he played for the Houston Rockets and led us to a pair of championships. I was proud to be at those games to cheer him on.

Immigrant contributions go beyond culture and commerce. Immigrants are vital to Houston's economy, especially in industries like healthcare, education, and construction.

Our educational institutions have also prospered from immigrant leadership like Dr. Renu Khator, an immigrant from India and the chancellor of the University of Houston. She was the first Indian immigrant to head a comprehensive research institution in the United States. She has raised a record number of research dollars and overseen unprecedented growth. Her story remains a testament to the transformative power of immigration, education, and innovation.

Yet, challenges still persist. Around 67,000 college-educated immigrants in Houston are underemployed and not living to their full potential, which is sometimes called brain waste. We must address this by reducing licensing barriers and improving English proficiency programs. We must create real immigration reform, as that solidifies pathways to citizenship and reduces the backlog.

Also, nearly one-half of all children in Houston live in a household where at least one parent immigrated to the United States, and these parents are shaping the next generation of Houstonians who will be leaders, innovators, and changemakers.

However, they face extreme challenges, specifically those with temporary or undocumented status. Barriers to naturalization and access to public services create uncertainty for many, despite their immense contributions to our city.

In my home State of Texas, State leadership is fighting to keep DACA recipients, our Dreamers, from being able to pay for Affordable Care Act insurance under the Biden rule. They should not deny access to those brought here as children to healthcare and health insurance.

Houston's immigrant communities are not just part of our city, they are

a key part of what has made our city and Nation truly great. Let us honor their contributions, celebrate their achievements, and continue to build a city and a nation where everyone, regardless of origin, has the opportunity to thrive.

RECONCILIATION CAN SAVE OUR COUNTRY

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, our country is in dire fiscal straits. Years of profligacy under both parties are now crushing our economy under the heaviest debt in our long history. Just paying the interest on that debt now exceeds what we spend on our Nation's entire defense. History warns us that nations that bankrupt themselves aren't around very long.

Now many people find hope in President Trump's creation of an unofficial Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE. Others propose a bipartisan fiscal commission.

However, in our haste to pass the buck, let us all remember that it is Congress alone that holds the purse strings. Try as we may, we cannot escape our responsibility. Congress is the ultimate bipartisan fiscal commission because, in a very real sense, the buck starts here. The Federal Government cannot raise or spend a single dollar unless and until the House says that it can. Ultimately, this responsibility rests with us. It cannot be DOGE'd and it cannot be dodged.

Fortunately, we have the ideal tools in our possession to bring spending in line with revenues if we choose to use them properly: the budget resolution and the accompanying reconciliation act.

Here is how it works. Both Houses agree on a spending ceiling by a simple majority resolution. Reconciliation instructions are then sent to every House committee with the mandate to report out statutory changes to bring spending within these limits. If they fail to act, then the House Budget Committee acts in their place, and a single comprehensive bill goes to the floor for an up-or-down vote. The bill gets expedited consideration in the Senate, and when signed by the President, all the laws necessary to balance the budget are enacted together.

There is one catch. It can only be used to enact the fiscal reforms necessary to implement the budget. It cannot be used for general policymaking beyond these fiscal confines.

The last time this process was used as it was designed and intended was during the Republican majority led by Newt Gingrich in 1995. The result was four balanced budgets in a row that produced one of the greatest waves of prosperity our Nation has ever seen.

Tragically, in 2017, the Republican majority under Paul Ryan utterly