

Jack Felton. Jack is a proud member of the fall 2024 pledge class of the Sigma Chi fraternity at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he was recently initiated.

Jack graduated from the Webb School of Knoxville, where he served as captain of the baseball team and played shortstop. He thinks quickly, he has got steady hands, and he works very hard.

Jack is majoring in agribusiness. I know he will find success wherever his life takes him. I know his parents, and they have raised him well.

Jack has four sisters; three are here, and one sweet little girl is in heaven.

Jack has been a lifelong Vols fan, and he is fourth in the family to attend UT. He truly bleeds orange, Mr. Speaker.

I have no doubt Jack will continue to make his family proud by attending every single class, as his father did, and not staying out late when he should be in the library.

Mr. Speaker, as a reminder, one of our other fraternity brothers, Scott Davis, owned a bar on the Cumberland Avenue Strip, and its name was The Library.

I look forward to seeing all the great things he will accomplish, and I expect to see his pledge class at the top of the GPA leaderboard this semester.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Jack on his initiation. Go Vols. "In hoc signo vinces." "In this sign you will conquer."

#### FALL OF SYRIAN DICTATOR ASSAD

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday morning, a new day dawned in Syria. The world saw stunning images of liberty emerge in the world's oldest continuously inhabited capital city of Damascus.

Syria was freed from the 55-year-old regime of Bashar al-Assad, who had turned it into a dictatorship.

It was not totally clear who the rebel factions were that swarmed through the towns of Aleppo, Hama, and Homs, and then the capital city.

As a result of the fall of Assad, the spiderweb of tyranny between Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China has been weakened.

Iran and Russia could no longer prop up their puppet. The days ahead for Syria are uncertain, but the Syrian people deserve a chance to rebuild a civil nation of their choosing after decades of turmoil. Hopefully, it will be a tolerant society, accepting of people from all religious confessions.

Under that dictatorship, over 500,000 people suffered horror and death at the hands of Assad. Others were held warrantlessly in captivity by this ruthless dictator. My hope is that the Syrian people may have the chance to write their own intelligent chapter in human history.

While the future of Syria remains uncertain, we should recognize this spirit of triumph. Millions who fled the scourge of war will have a chance to return home free of bombs.

#### CONGRATULATING WARE COUNTY, GEORGIA

(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 congratulate Ware County, Georgia, for celebrating its 200th year anniversary.

Ware County was founded in 1824 and resides in Georgia's First Congressional District, which I have the honor and privilege of representing.

Originally carved from Appling County, Ware County was named after the United States Senator, Nicholas Ware, who served as the mayor of Augusta, Georgia, before his term in the Senate.

Today, Ware County is recognized as one of the leading counties in south Georgia, as it is home to the 451st militia district, the oldest in our entire country.

The county site, Waycross, has grown from a small town with nothing more than a log courthouse to a city serving 14,000 people and large manufacturing companies such as Stewart's Candy Company.

Waycross is also bordered by the beautiful Satilla River, which became a busy route in the early 1800s for transporting longleaf pine trees to sawmills on the coast.

In fact, Waycross is the largest city in the largest county in the largest State east of the Mississippi.

I am proud to celebrate this anniversary with Ware County and our great State of Georgia.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF MICHAEL ALEXANDER RAIMONDI

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

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of Michael Alexander Raimondi, a remarkable young man from Westchester County, who was tragically taken from us far too soon. Michael was a bright and imaginative soul who brought joy to everyone around him.

A student at Somers High School and a member of the Westchester County Police Cadet program, he had begun exploring his love for forensic science and criminal justice. His creativity knew no bounds, from crafting intricate origami designs to building automotive LEGO masterpieces with his brother and grandfather.

Michael's gentle and nurturing spirit shone through in his love for animals, his deep bonds with family, and his quiet yet purposeful way of expressing himself. His love for music, gaming,

and endless laughter with his brother, Matthew, created memories that will live forever in the hearts of those who loved him.

Though his time with us was far too brief, Michael's vibrant spirit and boundless imagination left an indelible mark on Somers and all of the Hudson Valley.

May his memory be a blessing to his family and all who knew him.

#### CONGRATULATING MAYOR JIM LUKE

(Mr. EZELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EZELL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to extend heartfelt congratulations to Mayor Jim Luke on being named the recipient of the prestigious 2024 Excellence in Government Award. This is a remarkable achievement, and Mayor Luke is only the second mayor in history to receive such an honor.

Luke has spent his career improving the city of Picayune, Mississippi, starting his career as a police officer at the Picayune Police Department. Under Luke's leadership, the Picayune Police Department achieved significant advancements in community engagement and public safety.

Luke initiated innovative programs such as the Teen 411 Program and the police camp aimed at fostering positive relationships between law enforcement and youth.

As chief, he spearheaded the Partnership, Pride, and Progress Program which revolutionized public safety technological capabilities without incurring additional cost to the city.

Through innovative partnerships with local businesses, the program facilitated the exchange of information and resources beneficial to law enforcement and the community. His outstanding dedication and visionary leadership and tireless commitment to improving the lives of those in Picayune have truly earned him this recognition. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a dedicated leader guiding our community.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mayor Luke for his exceptional contributions and for serving the city of Picayune with unwavering distinction.

#### CHRISTMAS 1777

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WIED). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time to come here in December. I am not sure if we will get time next week here on the floor.

As we look forward to Christmas, I think it is important to remember why we are here and why we are here in the House.

Christmas 1777 was one of the lowest and most desperate points of American

history. General Washington, fresh off defeats at Brandywine and Germantown had marched the battered Continental Army to winter quarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Frozen rain, snow, and brutally cold temperatures tested not only the men's resolve to fight for freedom, but their bodies' ability to withstand the elements.

They showed up low on provisions. It was so bad that in a letter on December 23, General Washington wrote to Henry Laurens of the Continental Congress: "I am now convinced beyond a doubt, that unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place . . . this Army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things: Starve, dissolve, or disperse. . . . [This] is not an exaggerated picture. . . ."

Historians estimate that as many as one-third of them didn't have boots or shoes. Washington ordered soldiers to build wooden huts for themselves to stave off the cold and search the surrounding countryside for straw to make bedding to keep them warm. They didn't have enough blankets to go around after all.

In the same letter, Washington also noted that his Army was in danger from the enemy. General Howe was nearby, and Washington needed his men ready to rock and roll, but they couldn't do it.

"I ordered the troops to be in readiness," for an attack, Washington wrote. "When behold to my great mortification . . . the men were unable to stir on account of provision. . . ."

"All I could do under these circumstances was to send out a few light parties to watch and harass the enemy. . . ."

His officers were resigned to leaving the camp, and he fretted that without congressional action otherwise "I much doubt the practicability of holding the Army together much longer."

Mr. Speaker, how did we get here?

Twelve months earlier had been one of the high points of the Revolution and Washington's military career—victories at Trenton, victories at Princeton, the Crossing of the Delaware and the daring Christmas Day surprise attack on the Hessians.

This year it was burnt mutton and watered-down grog for an Army that was cold, starving, and on the brink.

Mr. Speaker, 2,100 out of 10,000 would die there from disease and exposure.

We know that is not the end of the story. We know that because I am standing here on this floor in the United States House of Representatives as a citizen of the greatest country in the world.

Baron Von Steuben got to camp in 1778 and started whipping the Continental Army into better shape, and Washington's men kept up the fight until Yorktown 3 long years later.

However, now, Mr. Speaker, to my friends and colleagues who are here in the Chamber, the few remaining, it is now our turn to fight. We are at a relatively speaking low point in our coun-

try's history due to the unbelievable but yet completely observable negligence, nay, I say purposeful actions of the current administration to undermine the safety, security, prosperity, and well-being of our people and our Nation.

We have millions of people who have been dumped into our country illegally, including criminals. We have \$36 trillion in debt, another \$2 trillion a year. It is really another \$1 trillion every 100 days, a little over 3 months.

Americans are in record levels of personal debt because of the record levels of inflation and a hamstrung economy by bureaucrats and progressive radical Democrats who want to micromanage your life and regulate your life to death, tell you what stoves you can use, what cars you can drive, drive up the price of cars, your houses, your schools, your healthcare, and then thank you for the privilege.

The world around us is in chaos. We see what is happening in Syria. We saw what is happening in South Korea, and we see what is happening around the globe, Ukraine, and Russia, the empowerment of Iran, although, thankfully, the resolve of Israel is standing strong while our country has walked away from that fight.

That is all due to the weakness of the Biden administration that it has shown for 4 years. Now it is our calling in this Congress to stand up alongside President Trump to stand up and fix it. However, the calling for our Congress is not to simply walk back some of the failures of this administration. It is not to ask for some quick fixes. It is to fundamentally change the trajectory of our country.

□ 1730

It is to take bold action. It is to pass serious legislation. It is to fundamentally change our reliance on debt and profligate spending that is indebting our children and driving up inflation because we are spending money we don't have.

We have an obligation to fight for the American people. That is our calling as we wrap up this year. We have several really important fights and debates to continue to finish, such as the National Defense Authorization Act, which, unbelievably, our Democratic colleagues are resisting and saying they aren't going to support. Why? Because Republicans have taken the position that we shouldn't have taxpayer funding at the Pentagon for transgender surgeries for children.

Our Democratic colleagues are so committed to the mutilation of children that they would choose not to authorize the defense of the United States. That is the world in which we are currently operating, and it is Republicans who are standing here in defense of our children while trying to make sure our defense is strong.

The NDAA is not where it should be. Let me be clear, because of radical progressive Democrats in the Senate and the House, we have miles to go.

We have an obligation to do our job. We have an obligation to not spend money that we don't have. We have an obligation to pay for the disaster aid that so many of my colleagues understandably want and seek for their constituents in the wake of hurricane damage, drought, or issues that are facing our people. We have an obligation to pay for these things, or else we are no better than the people we criticize.

Come January, after we do whatever we are going to do here in December with respect to the funding of government, such as the disaster funding, the national defense bill, the farm bill, all issues that are still ripe before us—we have a new President, a new Congress coming in, a new Senate, all Republican—what will we do? I am here to suggest to you that, through the reconciliation tools, we can make serious change.

Now, here, I pause for a second. I have colleagues of mine who, rightly, on both sides of the aisle, will point out that reconciliation is supposed to be a budget tool for reconciling the budget and ensuring that we are, frankly, working to achieve balance and not spending more money than we should. That very much should be the priority of budget reconciliation, and I will endeavor to ensure that we follow that path.

I remind the American people that the reason they cannot afford healthcare, the reason they cannot go to the doctor of their choice, the reason they are frustrated with the American healthcare system today, and the reason insurance companies are making billions of dollars while they suffer is their Federal Government.

It is a Federal Government that has overpromised, overregulated, and is now telling you precisely what kind of healthcare you can have while then enriching insurance companies to administer it for you. You can't go to the doctor of your choice. You can't get the healthcare of your choice. We don't have robust health savings accounts. We haven't empowered you.

We have empowered bureaucrats in Washington at HHS and bureaucrats at CMS who are managing Medicare and managing Medicaid. We have empowered insurance bureaucrats. We have empowered corporate cronies. What we have not done is empowered you. What we have not done is empowered doctors.

We must do that if we are going to claim the mantle of not just healthcare freedom and making America healthy again, but if we are going to actually say that we are going to be fiscally responsible, we can't solve our \$36 trillion of debt if we don't solve the burden of healthcare.

When we get to January, when we are sworn in, when we have counted the electors for President Trump, when the Senate is in session, we should act with dispatch to pass a reconciliation package right out of the gate that secures the border of the United States.

It was the fundamental promise of the Trump campaign but, more importantly, what President Trump has campaigned on all the way back since 2016, what President Trump did while he was in office from 2017 to 2021.

It was the fundamental failure of the Biden administration to purposefully flood our country with some 10-odd million human beings, including criminals, weakening our border, fentanyl, all the dangers that have been posed to the American people, including the murders of Americans, deaths from fentanyl poisoning, putting the burden on our social welfare state and our schools, jails, and hospitals.

Obligation number one for this Republican Congress is to ensure that we secure the border, or at least take step one to secure the border. What will that mean?

Well, we need to build the wall. President Trump ran on building the wall in 2016, so let's provide the funding through reconciliation to ensure that the wall is built.

Number two, the wall does no good if you have policies in place that allow people to be released into the United States. That is what the Biden administration has done, so we must fund and empower ICE to carry out the repatriation of millions of individuals who are illegally placed into the United States in violation of law, in violation of the statute, in violation of parole, in the name of parole, and in the name of asylum. These individuals must be removed and repatriated through funding to ICE and Border Patrol.

We need to fund the Migrant Protection Protocols that President Trump was using to ensure that Mexico was upholding its end of the bargain and not dumping people into our country. We need to pay back the States that have had to be on the front lines when our government failed us, like Texas, which has spent \$12 billion over the last 4 years to stand in the breach. Other States also have a claim to having stood up to try to secure the border.

We should impose monthly and annual fees on those who have been paroled into the United States and those who have been given notices to appear in court. We have to pay for all that. Impose fees. Impose fees on applications for work permits. Ensure that welfare benefits only go to United States citizens and legal permanent residents and not parolees, not asylees, and not people who are illegally present.

Currently, that is costing us upwards of \$160 billion over 10 years. Your tax dollars are going to fund welfare benefits for people who have been illegally placed into the United States or who illegally came here.

Additionally, let's make Mexico and other bad-actor states pay for the wall by imposing a tax on remittances sent by noncitizens here abroad.

Impose taxes or fees on nongovernmental organizations that have been

taking taxpayer money just to use it against us and move people here illegally into the United States.

Require illegal aliens to cover the cost of background checks.

Impose fees on aliens who fail to provide approved, unexpired identification documents at ports of entry.

Increase financial penalties for visa overstays.

Increase fees on student visas to stop the foreign takeover of U.S. colleges.

Beef up 287(g) to allow local law enforcement to collaborate with Federal law enforcement to enforce our border security and immigration laws.

These are just some of the things, a pretty exhaustive list, that we can do, should do, and must do right out of the gate in January when we have the pen. We can do it—and by the way, we can pay for it—and we must.

Let me be clear: For all manners of our choices on reconciliation, we will pay for them. We will achieve deficit reduction, not deficit increase. That is our calling, and we must achieve it. Failure to do so will not succeed.

We can repeal the expanded Internal Revenue Service funding. I would rather pay for Border Patrol agents than to pay for Internal Revenue Service agents. There is some \$50 billion sitting there. Let's use that to secure the border of the United States.

Let's repeal the student loan policy of the Biden administration in which Americans who never went to college or have paid off their student loans or don't qualify are paying off the student loans of other Americans. Why is that happening?

My wife's student loan hasn't been paid off. She has now been working on it for 20 years, the product of a single mom. She worked her butt off to go to school, had debt sitting there. She has been paying it down and working hard to pay it down.

There are thousands, millions of those people in this country who have followed the law, done their responsibility, worked hard to pay off their student loans. Joe Biden came in and said: Don't worry about that. I am going to take from you, and I am going to give to these other people.

End that. That could get us between \$100 billion and \$270 billion. Take that and fund the things we need to do and that the Constitution calls for us to do.

Repeal the SNAP Thrifty Food Plan. Do you know what that was? It was a massive expansion done by the stroke of the pen, just like the same stroke of the pen that Joe Biden used to expand the student loan bailouts, to expand food stamps, effectively, and to walk into just continuing to fund the worst form.

Huge percentages of the food stamps go to sugar drinks and all the things that are making us unhealthy, making us obese, and making us overweight so that we can then go to pharma, Big Insurance, and big hospitals and say: Please save us from ourselves.

The government subsidizes both. The Federal Government subsidizes the poi-

son. The Federal Government subsidizes the overmedication. The Federal Government subsidizes the bureaucracy. Guess what? We are all worse off because of it, and we are \$36 trillion in debt. How about we stop doing that?

Every Member of Congress is going to have some constituency telling them why they can't do that. They are going to have somebody saying: If you do that, my rural hospital might have a problem. If you do that, my local business, my local sugar growers, my local manufacturers—who cares? That is not our job.

Forgive me for channeling "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," but we are not supposed to be here to funnel printed money to our local districts. We are not. That is not why we are elected. Unfortunately, that is why too many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are here. Don't do that.

We could repeal the EPA EV mandate rule. We could save \$113 billion by stopping the ridiculous rule to mandate that two-thirds of our fleet be changed to electric vehicles by 2032. That is absurd.

If you even converted the entire American fleet today to electric vehicles, you would diminish CO<sub>2</sub> production by less than, I think, 2 percent, a fraction. I don't even think it is that high. It would be a minimal impact, and you can't even do that. Even if we wanted to, we couldn't do that.

Why would we drive up the cost of automobiles, make them less reliable, harm the economy, spend money subsidizing something that is not going to produce the result that it said it is going to produce, all so some people can run around, flying to Davos in their private jets, patting themselves on the back, which is precisely what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and gasbags like John Kerry do.

I will probably get admonished for that one.

The fact of the matter is that we have an obligation here in Congress to do the job we said we would do. I give this speech, and I give it pretty regularly, but I am going to keep giving it because I have to be honest with you. This job has its pros and cons. The cons list tends to stack up. You are away from your family, and you are traveling and all of that, but it is a great honor and a great blessing.

One of the great blessings is when you are around the country and see somebody—or like the woman who I ran into on the street who was walking up the street and coming up to the Capitol, who just said: Thank you. Thank you for fighting for us. Thank you for giving us a voice for sanity.

The American people just want their country back. Do you want to know what the election was about in November? They just want their country back. They just want common sense back. They just want sanity.

Here we are again, sitting here on the eve of passing a National Defense Authorization Act, which many of my

Democratic colleagues are saying they don't want to support because, again, we are limiting the use of taxpayer dollars to go to transgender surgeries for children.

□ 1745

We have a defense authorization bill that is something like, I don't know, \$900 billion to authorize the national defense of the United States.

Now, imagine George Washington and all of those men freezing to death. They didn't have socks. They didn't have shoes. They were suffering. General Washington thought he was going to lose the Army.

Fast-forward to Christmas of 1944 and our grandfathers, our great-grandfathers, some of our fathers were sitting in a foxhole in Bastogne freezing to death, and for what?

For a country that would take taxpayer dollars to fund, through the national defense of the United States, the mutilation of children. Now, my Democrat colleagues want to hold up the National Defense Authorization Act because we dare say that children shouldn't be mutilated.

That is the current Democratic Party. If you want to know why they were thrown out on their ear in November, that is why.

Now we should lead. We should lead farther.

I heard some rumbling on this side of the aisle that the Speaker shouldn't have included that language in the bill. The Speaker was exactly right to include that language in the bill. We have an obligation in the House of Representatives, the people's House, not to punt. I hear my colleagues saying, well, President Trump will come in and take care of it.

I understand that we believe that the policies adopted by the President will be much more to our liking.

But what about your constitutional obligation?

What about our job?

What about our use of the power of the purse?

The United States House of Representatives is supposed to be the closest to the people. The people didn't sign up for this. The people just want a military that is lethal again. They just want a military that is not woke, that isn't going through all sorts of nonsense trainings at the academies or at the Pentagon itself. They sure as hell don't want their taxpayer dollars going to the mutilation of children.

Let's not forget that this same National Defense Authorization Act will continue to allow and promote the use of taxpayer dollars for adult transgender surgeries.

Mr. Speaker, if we pass this bill, this horrible bill, according to our Democratic colleagues that shouldn't have this provision to protect children, our great win is to pull back the goalpost from full transgender surgeries being funded through our tax dollars through the Pentagon to, well, we will just do adults, but not children, we think.

We will still fund the chief diversity officer, whatever that is and whatever value that is providing for the Pentagon. We will still continue to authorize all manners of programs. We still have a bill that is larded up with conservation programs and all sorts of things, it is not just a specific defense bill.

There are a variety of reasons to oppose this legislation because we can do better. It could be more focused on lethality. It can be with fewer dollars.

Our job is to represent the people. It is not to represent the latest focus group at Yale University that sit around talking about what woke nonsense they want out of our Pentagon, but yet that is what our Democrat colleagues are doing.

We will see what happens tomorrow when we vote on this defense bill. I think it is useful for the American people to see precisely the values of our radical, progressive Democrat colleagues on this particular issue.

It is incumbent upon Republicans for us to advance the ball, to actually shrink the size of government. Don't hide behind DOGE. Don't hide behind Elon or Vivek. Don't say: Oh, isn't it great? They are going to do all this stuff. They are going to take this stuff in. They are going to use AI. They are going to crowdsource. Then what? What?

They are going to present recommendations to Secretaries. The Secretaries will implement some of that stuff. Meanwhile, Congress will continue to appropriate. Congress will continue to authorize.

What will we authorize? What will we appropriate?

Will it be responsible? Will we shrink the size of the bureaucracy? Will we make government more efficient and effective and focus on its actual constitutional provisions? Will we address the massive problem with the automatic spending that is Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, now increasingly, the Veterans Administration, which is on autopilot?

Mr. Speaker, 70 percent of the budget, 70 percent of what we spend every year, is on autopilot, and we don't touch it. My Democrat colleagues will say, you are going to push granny off the cliff. My Republican colleagues will say, we can't cut discretionary spending because we must focus on so-called mandatory, automatic spending. Yet then we never have a proposal. We never come to the floor.

One of my Democratic colleagues was walking by me earlier. I won't name this individual lest I get that individual in trouble. I was giving an interview and they asked me about whether ObamaCare subsidies should be on the chopping block for this round of debates on reconciliation later this year in tax policy.

Now my answer, as someone who opposed the implementation of ObamaCare, was to not focus on ObamaCare. My answer was simple:

The American people deserve robust health savings accounts in which they can choose their healthcare, where they are empowered, their doctor is empowered, and insurance companies, bureaucrats, hospitals, and pharma are not in power.

This Democratic colleague was walking by and said, hey, I can support that. Those are the kinds of conversations, if we want to be serious about driving down the cost of healthcare, so we can actually balance our budget, that we must have in the context of reconciliation.

My message to my Republican colleagues is, if you think you are going to come in this Chamber and waltz in here and say that we are going to pass tax reform, extend the tax cuts without dealing with spending, you are mistaken. You are mistaken.

If K Street wants to come down here and make their case for all of the tax provisions they want—and look, there are a lot of small businesses and people across America who care strongly about getting the tax policies that I agree with that we ought to put in place: expensing, research and development, pass-through tax policy. To be very clear, tax policy is not going to move off of the House floor until we deal with spending.

We are going to cut spending. We are going to put us on a path to balance. We are going to reduce deficits, or I will be an opponent of tax policy and many of my colleagues will also because the time is now. No more games, no more gimmicks, no more short-term extensions to get a political win. This has to end on both sides of the aisle.

We need to get busy this Congress figuring out how to be fiscally responsible, dramatically cutting the bureaucracy, shrinking Washington, and empowering Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded as I wrap up here that Valley Forge was not the end of the story for this country when I opened up my remarks about General Washington and the suffering of those soldiers under his care and watch.

Those men freezing, starving, and uncertain of the future, not knowing what laid in front of them, they didn't give up.

General Washington wrote in that pre-Christmas letter, "We have not more than 3 months to prepare a great deal of business in—if we let these slip or waste, we shall be laboring under the same difficulties all next campaign. . . ."

Washington knew that every low point was a time to prepare, to keep moving, to get things in place for the next fight, because those low points are where opportunity lives. That is what we can learn from and what we have to imitate here.

We have 4 years to make transformative change or we will squander everything that those men at Valley Forge fought for and gave us, all those men who fought in the Civil War in the 1860s, all of those men who stormed the

beaches of Normandy and ended up at Bastogne.

What are we going to have written on our headstone when this fight is over? Did we keep and preserve this republic for our kids and our grandkids?

That should be the question that guides everything we do as Republicans in charge of this House Chamber going forward.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### BIDDING FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO) for 60 minutes as designee of the minority leader.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to give valedictory remarks as my service as a United States Representative comes to a close.

Nearly 32 years ago, I arrived in this Chamber after the people of the most distinguished congressional district in our country gave me the honor of a lifetime to serve as their Representative in the Congress.

Over those years, I have worked to live up to that sacred trust that they placed in me and I can say that I have given it my all.

In 1993, I was sworn in as a Member of the largest freshman class since World War II with 110 new Members and one of the 47 women elected in the House in that "Year of the Woman." I was the first Democrat and the first woman in the history of my congressional district to represent it.

During that time, I had the honor to serve among the giants of the bay area delegation: Congressman George Miller, Congressman Norm Mineta, so many from the bay area known as the conscience of the House of Representatives, and my forever Speaker, NANCY PELOSI.

They gave me the guidance I needed to accomplish my goals for my first term. In my second term, I became a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, one of the oldest House legislative committees and the committee with the broadest of jurisdictions.

From that powerful position of enormous privilege, I was determined to be an ambassador to the future from the Silicon Valley District, drafting and passing 68 bills into law signed by five Presidents.

I didn't do this alone. Nearly every single bill was bipartisan and many had more than 200 cosponsors. I am proud of this body of work and what we achieved together.

During my tenure, I have witnessed much. We have witnessed much together: the horror of September 11, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a painful and deep recession, the loss of over a million American souls to the pandemic, and January 6th.

However, there were so many high points: The passage many years ago in

1995 of the Telecommunications Act, the Affordable Care Act where finally we had a national health plan, a real health plan for the American people, the Violence Against Women Act, the end of over 100 years of silence by the United States with the passage of the Armenian genocide resolution, and the election of the first woman Speaker of the House of Representatives, NANCY PELOSI.

□ 1800

Each weekend I have flown home to be with my constituents, and I have seen the words of the laws that we have written walk into people's lives. In my community, as in so many others, Federal grants paved new bike paths, created ADA accessibility, and unveiled the 21st century transportation system of electric trains.

I heard from my neighbors about small improvements, like my law many years ago to lower the volume of loud TV commercials, and big improvements like children whose lives were saved because of new pediatric treatments at Stanford's Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.

I am especially proud to have created two new Federal agencies to bring life-saving research to the American people: the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority—we call it BARDA—and the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, ARPA-H. That agency is at work to pursue the cures for those diseases that are death sentences today.

During my tenure, I had the privilege to serve on the House Intelligence Committee, where I worked to protect and defend during the challenging times of the Iraq war, and to visit our courageous troops in the war zones where they were serving. I still picture them in the places that they were, these young men and women who answered the call of our country.

One of the most memorable events, for me, that took place right here in this Chamber was the visit of Pope Francis in 2015. I recall his words: "A nation can be considered great when it defends liberty, as Lincoln did; when it fosters a culture which enables people to 'dream' of full rights for all their brothers and sisters, as Martin Luther King sought to do; when it strives for justice and the cause of the oppressed, as Dorothy Day did by her tireless work. . . ."

My brother-in-law carries forward that work at the Catholic Worker House in Redwood City, California.

To my staff, you have been a brilliant team, a team that has crafted and negotiated the legislative legacy that I am so proud of and who have successfully helped thousands upon thousands of constituents with immigration issues, housing needs, Social Security benefits, and other important Federal issues. You heard them, you saw them, you served them, and you gave them hope. I thank you.

To all who work in this Chamber and throughout the Capitol, cleaning, cook-

ing, repairing, and administering, I thank you for your labors.

To all of my colleagues, I am grateful to you for your friendship and your support over all the years. I will miss working with you and seeing you every day.

To my beloved California delegation, to say that I will miss working with you and being with you doesn't begin to describe it. Thank you for keeping our State the golden one in our country, and I know that you will continue to. For your precious friendships, I can never thank you enough. To the Connecticut delegation, thank you for adopting me. I was born in Connecticut.

To the people of California's 16th Congressional District, you have my unending gratitude for choosing me to be your voice in Congress.

To my family, thank you for your love, your support, most of all your patience. You have sustained me every single day of my service.

While it may be customary to end these farewell speeches with advice or warnings about the future, I am not going to do that.

What I have carried with me throughout my public service are the words of my grandmother. When I was a child and I would walk past her bedroom every morning, there wasn't a time that she didn't lean over and kiss the ground. When I asked her, "Nana, why are you doing that?" this was her answer: "To thank God for this country, for what it represents, and what it has given to us."

My colleagues, love our country, defend her, make her stronger and better to serve its good and decent people.

I thank God for the blessings that have come to me, and I say farewell to all of you, my colleagues. This has been the joy, the privilege, and the pleasure of my life, and I thank you for it. May God continue to bless the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

#### THANKING REPRESENTATIVE CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS FOR HER SERVICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. HARSHBARGER) for 30 minutes.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in