

DEFENDING OUR NATION

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, the National Defense Authorization Act ensures our military focuses on its core mission: defending our Nation, not advancing a Green New Deal agenda. This year's NDAA puts an end to efforts that prioritize radical environmental policies over military readiness and national security.

Key provisions include: No climate change programs. The NDAA does not authorize new climate change programs within the Department of Defense.

Our Nation's mission is to deter and defeat threats, not to serve as a testing ground for expensive climate experiments.

Zero-emission vehicle prohibition: The NDAA prevents the DOD from requiring servicemembers and civilian employees to use zero-emission vehicles for official travel. Although it might be usable in some phases, zero-emission vehicles can be impractical and unreliable, particularly in remote or high-stakes operational environments.

The weapon system climate preference prohibition: The bill prohibits the Department of Defense from issuing rules that prioritize weapons systems based on their climate impact instead of their effectiveness in combat. Our troops deserve to have the best tools to win wars, not the most environmentally friendly ones.

Defense industrial base greenhouse gas rules: The NDAA blocks the Department of Defense from implementing costly new greenhouse gas rules that would impose unnecessary burdens on the defense industrial base. These rules could stifle innovation, slow production, and drive up costs for critical defense equipment.

The military's role is clear: protect and defend the American people. Anything that distracts from that mission puts our Nation at risk.

Prioritizing climate regulations over combat readiness is a dangerous gamble, especially when global adversaries like China and Russia are laser focused on advancing their military capabilities.

Pushing a Green New Deal through the Pentagon threatens to undermine our readiness, increase our costs, and weaken the defense industrial base at a time when strength is indeed paramount.

Zero-emission vehicle mandates could leave servicemembers stranded or ill-equipped during missions. Climate-focused weapon system rules could mean our troops are outmatched on the battlefield because effectiveness took a back seat to some ideal of emissions.

New greenhouse gas rules on defense contractors could drive small businesses out of the market, increasing

dependence on foreign suppliers or a handful of very large ones. We cannot afford that risk to prevent innovation either.

The NDAA reaffirms that national security comes first. It ensures the DOD uses its resources to strengthen our Armed Forces, not to chase political agendas.

By blocking these unnecessary climate rules, we are maintaining a strong, focused, and effective military and not an idealistic goal.

The NDAA draws a clear line: The Pentagon is not a climate agency. Every dollar and decision at the Department of Defense should prioritize mission success and national security.

Our allies rely on it, and our people of this country rely on it. With this bill, we are safeguarding our military's readiness and ensuring that America remains the strongest force for peace and security in the world.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S TARIFFS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the impact of President-elect Donald Trump's proposed 20 to 25 percent tariffs will have on raising costs for my constituents in North Carolina.

I want to be absolutely clear. I find it ridiculous, shortsighted, and irresponsible to impose price hikes on working North Carolinians, and that is exactly what the Trump plan will do.

To North Carolinians who are planning to build a home project with lumber and other materials: You can expect to pay a whole lot more. Remember to thank President-elect Donald Trump.

To North Carolinians who want to pay to pack healthy school lunches for their kids: You can expect to pay a whole lot more. Remember to thank President-elect Trump.

Congress has constitutional authority to raise and lower tariffs, but Trump's plan to circumvent Congress is what he would do, and he wants to do it himself.

Why is he doing that?

It is because he knows that if he asks Congress to pass a law, they would tell him that it was a terrible idea.

I am here to get bipartisan work done, Mr. Speaker, and a 25 percent hike on tariffs would never get enough Republicans or Democrats on board to pass this Chamber. Trump will abuse his power to get what he wants. That is why I cosponsored the Prevent Tariff Abuse Act. I am pushing for this legislation to prevent the President-elect from abusing emergency powers to impose reckless tariffs.

Mr. Speaker, 20 to 25 percent tariffs are little more than a national sales tax on working families across the country. North Carolina's working families can't afford that, and our

country can't afford Trump's abuse of power.

CIVIL NUCLEAR EXPORTS

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, this week I am proud to have introduced the Civil Nuclear Export Act along with my colleague, Congressman JIM CLYBURN of South Carolina.

Our bill will boost U.S. competitiveness in the global civil nuclear exports market and bolster U.S. national security.

As Russia and China aim to corner the market and exert their influence around the world by financing nuclear projects, this legislation could not be more timely.

That situation is intensifying rapidly, and it is time for the U.S. to step up.

The Civil Nuclear Export Act would reduce other countries' dependence on Russia and China for technology and financing. This would be a win for our national security, a win for economic growth and more jobs, and a vital step toward a more sustainable energy future.

HURRICANE HELENE RELIEF

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because North Carolina working families deserve action from their elected leaders. They deserve action on needed relief for Hurricane Helene victims. They deserve action on lowered grocery costs, childcare costs, and healthcare costs. They deserve to have faith and trust in our government systems and to know that their leaders are acting in their best interest.

Unfortunately, North Carolina Republicans in the general assembly are not acting in the best interest of North Carolina's working families. They are acting to consolidate their own power for personal gain. Under the guise of providing relief for Hurricane Helene victims, Republican leaders in the North Carolina General Assembly are using disaster aid as a smokescreen to push a brazen power grab.

I am talking about North Carolina Senate Bill 382, a bill which weakens our democratic institutions and punishes voters for electing Democrats up and down the ballot in North Carolina.

Despite needing \$3.9 billion in the State of North Carolina for recovery funds outlined by Governor Cooper earlier this year, Republicans are sending just a fraction, 6 percent, of what is needed for western North Carolina. What is worse, buried in this 131-page bill are provisions designed to strip Governor-elect Josh Stein's control over our elections, to restrict Attorney General-elect JEFF JACKSON's ability to fight to protect consumers and to create judicial positions to be handpicked by the legislature instead of elected by the people.

They are rushing through this bill because North Carolinians just elected Democrats to those State offices. They are changing the rules to suit themselves, not the people of our State.

My constituents in North Carolina sent me to Congress because they believe in bipartisan work. They want

legislators who work across the aisle to get things done. Until my term ends, I am doing everything I can to restore their trust in our systems, to stand up for them against rogue politicians, and to fight back against bills like SB 382.

My constituents deserve better, and the American people deserve better.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President-elect.

HONORING CLEMENCIA ESTEVIZ ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a truly remarkable woman from Alamo, Texas, Clemencia Esteviz, who recently celebrated her 100th birthday on November 22.

From her early days at working in the fields to her dedicated service to the Diocese of Brownsville, Clemencia has lived a life filled with resilience, hard work, and unwavering devotion to her family and to others.

Her family treasures the warmth that she brings to every Christmas gathering, where her tamale-making traditions have created many cherished memories for generations. She has extended her nurturing spirit beyond her immediate family, raising her niece's child as her own.

I wish Clemencia a happy birthday and congratulate her on this incredible milestone.

EMERGENCY AID

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to sound the alarm for our farmers in south Texas and American food security. South Texas farmers are facing a crisis due to the Mexican Government's failure to honor its water obligations under the 1944 water treaty. This neglect has left over 960,000 acre-feet of water undelivered, devastating our agricultural sector.

The Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers, after 50 years, has shut down, taking 500 American jobs with it. Our citrus and our vegetable farmers have seen millions in losses, and row crop yields are down 40 percent. Without immediate action, more livelihoods will be destroyed.

Keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, food security is national security. That is why I have introduced H.R. 10113, the South Texas Agriculture Emergency Assistance Act. This bill provides \$280 million in emergency aid to our farmers.

Earlier in 2024, water was selling for around \$300 per acre-foot. At that amount, the value of the water deficit is about \$280 million, the amount we are requesting in emergency aid. This does not come close to equaling the losses to producers, but it is a starting point for funds needed to aid the region.

Mr. Speaker, I urge leadership to include this legislation in any emergency aid bill that comes to the floor.

Let's stand with our farmers and ensure that they have the resources to recover and thrive, which ultimately means American farmers feed American citizens and that we do not depend on foreign actors for our food.

HONORING VELETER MAZYCK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. BROWN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor an individual whose service, character, and dedication have left an indelible mark on this institution and the people it serves.

I first met Veleter M.B. Mazyck in 2017 when I was selected to participate in the CBC Institute boot camp. I could not have known then that 4 years later Veleter would become not only my chief of staff but also a trusted adviser, confidante, and unwavering partner in serving the people of Ohio's 11th Congressional District.

A steady hand who had served my predecessor for more than a decade, Veleter has been vital to the success of my office ever since.

As she prepares to retire, I rise to recognize a career defined by integrity, selflessness, and an unwavering commitment to public service.

Too often the contributions of congressional staff remain behind the scenes, unnoticed by the public but essential to our democracy. Far from the cameras, the House Chamber, or the committee dais, staff work long hours. They are driven by a deep and abiding sense of duty.

Veleter Mazyck personifies this culturally, spiritually, and professionally. She is known for being both wise and witty, spontaneous and strategic, careful and kind, thoughtful and thorough, but, most importantly, a loving, loyal, steady, and steadfast steward of our Nation. She is a calm and commanding force behind every success.

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Mr. Speaker, I rise to etch the name of Veleter Mazyck into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, ensuring her legacy endures for years to come.

An unsung hero of this institution, Veleter committed herself to honing the skills and talents the Lord had blessed her with, to bending the moral arc of the universe a little bit closer to justice, and to ensuring our government serves its people with respect, dignity, and compassion.

After a celebrated career as a general counsel to large metropolitan school districts, Veleter agreed to serve as Congresswoman FUDGE's chief of staff for 1 year or maybe 2. Yet, a decade later, Veleter was still here, a cornerstone of the office, the Congress, and, dare I say, the country and the Constitution.

Through her efforts, legislative priorities were championed with purpose and passion; crises were managed with character and charisma; and partner-

ships were forged, both publicly and privately, all with the goal of creating a better future for the people of Ohio's 11th Congressional District.

Following my predecessor's appointment to President Joe Biden's Cabinet, Veleter skillfully managed the office during the transition, ensuring constituents continued to receive the support that they needed.

Upon my swearing in, her wealth of experience and knowledge allowed me to competently step into my role. Ever since, Veleter's deep understanding of this institution has been invaluable.

In moments of uncertainty, Veleter was the steady hand navigating challenges with poise and resolve. In moments of triumph, she didn't celebrate personal accolades but the victories achieved for the people of northeast Ohio. In every moment in between, she exemplified the highest standards of professionalism and dedication.

What truly sets Veleter apart is her ability to bring out the best in those around her. Whether mentoring young staffers or building coalitions with colleagues, she led with patience, humility, and a genuine belief in the power of collaboration.

After 13 years, the countless individuals she has impacted, from colleagues to constituents, are a testament to the lasting influence she has had on all who have worked with her.

As Veleter steps away from Capitol Hill, I know that her contributions will continue to ripple outward. The legacy she leaves is one of progress, integrity, and hope.

Veleter, throughout her career, has often spoken about the importance of getting off the dance floor. It was, as she says, her role as a leader to get to the balcony to see the bigger picture.

As she retires, it is time to leave both the balcony and the dance floor behind. Now, the stage is hers to set. Whether it is traveling, writing, or pursuing new passions, retirement is her front-row seat to a life of her own design.

I thank Veleter on behalf of a grateful Congress, a grateful district, and a grateful Nation. I thank her for her vision, virtue, and vigilance. We are better because of her sacrifice and for her unwavering commitment to see a nation not for what it was but for what it could be.

We wish Veleter all the best in her well-earned retirement with full confidence that her impact on this institution and the Nation it serves will live on for generations to come.

RECOGNIZING RYAN JARMULA

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and express my gratitude to a long-time trusted adviser for the Pence family.

Ryan Jarmula, my chief of staff, has been a part of this team since the very