

Iran is not America's friend. We all know that, yet President Biden ignores Iran's bad intentions and Iran's possession of resources that pose a great threat to our allies, including Israel.

While President Trump applied a maximum-pressure strategy that constrained Tehran financially, President Biden was at the helm as Iranian-backed militias attacked our troops more than 170 times without consequence. President Biden's so-called strategy only emboldened Hamas and other Iran-backed proxies to attack our ally Israel, launching the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust.

Other adversaries are closely watching. China continues planning its invasion of Taiwan and increases its influence in America's absence. Just this week, several of my colleagues joined me in expressing concerns to President Biden about Communist China's growing influence at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. A recent proposal from the current FAO director-general and former Chinese Vice Minister would extend the director-general's tenure from 8 years to a decade, increase his already \$300,000 salary, and give Communist China more control of the U.S.-led World Food Program.

America cannot afford to sit by idly, even during our time of political transition, while China positions itself to expand its influence.

I have been blessed to grow up in a world where the United States has led the free world. I want my children, their children, and future generations to grow up in a similar world, but I understand that leadership didn't come from being passive or trying to tap dance around communism.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, one of Kansas' favorite sons, military hero, and our 34th United States President, dedicated his entire career to promoting freedom and waging peace. He helped shape the global U.S. leadership many of us know today. In his inaugural address, he said: "History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid."

Unfortunately, the Biden administration has chosen timidity and tiptoed approaches to foreign policy to placate far-left activists. Luckily, Mr. Speaker, this will soon be over. I would say to America that we got it right. President Trump is committed to securing American peace through strength and making it clear to our enemies that we will not tolerate any nonsense.

It is a new day in America, and the days of American weakness are gone. I look forward to working with President Trump and the incoming House and Senate Republican majorities to restore America's leadership and make the country safe again. Our brightest days are yet to come.

NYC SUBWAY CHOKING DEATH IS NOTHING TO CELEBRATE

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

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise because one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle has introduced legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal for heroism to Mr. Daniel Penny for choking a man to death on the New York City subway.

Just the other day, a New York City jury found Daniel Penny not guilty of the choke-hold death of Jordan Neely.

To think that Members of this body would consider the circumstances of this case to be anything other than a complete tragedy for everyone is cruel.

When a young man is suffering from a mental health breakdown and loses his life at the hands of a 24-year-old veteran, who is probably also suffering from a particular set of challenges, there is absolutely nothing to celebrate here.

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I say this, Mr. Speaker, because even the prosecutor said that Mr. Penny went too far. Mr. Neely was not just a Michael Jackson impersonator who was crying out, both hungry and thirsty. Mr. Neely was not a distressed person on a train or some kind of public nuisance, as was described. He was someone's son, he was somebody's friend, and he was no less a part of the fabric of this American mosaic as any one of us who rightfully stands here today.

Yes, no one could deny that Jordan Neely had challenges, but who among us does not have people in our districts who are suffering from all kinds of struggles and setbacks. Each and every one of us represent people who are wrestling with the vicissitudes of life each and every day.

Yes, like millions of Americans, Jordan Neely was homeless. He struggled from mental illness after his mother was murdered in 2007. In spite of all of his challenges, Mr. Neely was a human being. He was as much a person worthy of respect as anybody and no less deserving of compassion and de-escalation as any of us in this Chamber.

When he got on the train that day, he had no weapon, he had not touched anyone, and more importantly, he was asking for help. Instead of encountering kindness, he was choked to death.

Rather than being seen as a brother and a sister, we have become so heartless that we see each other as combatants in a war that none of us can win as long as we are committed to fighting each other.

I wonder today: Have we become so desensitized to cruelty that we would dare to celebrate savagery in this Chamber without regard for the tragic loss of life?

When a jury cannot determine that a man should not be executed for having a mental outburst, one wonders is this

the future of justice in America for people who are not well, for people who are not rich, for people not living in a home with locked doors and carpeted hallways?

There are over 110 billionaires who live in New York City, but Jordan was not one of those persons. The greatest amalgamation of wealth in the history of the world congregates in the city of New York, but Jordan Neely was not a part of it. Yet, he was as American as any of the captains of industry who work on Wall Street, who fly off to the Hamptons in order to enjoy their weekend pursuits.

All over the city of Chicago, people are wondering: If the racial roles were reversed, would Mr. Penny have been allowed to walk away without any accountability?

I find the jury decision to be appalling on many levels and not the least of which because all life is sacred. As long as one of us is disposable, then all of us are in the candidacy to fall victim to the reaffirming silence that allows evil to flourish.

The denunciation of cruelty should not be a partisan issue. We should not be so eager to run to our partisan corners when it comes to mental illness and the tragic loss of life.

I say to my colleagues and to the American people: There should be no medals for this act. There should be no knee-jerk partisan celebration that degrades the life of a man suffering from mental illness by making a mockery of his death.

I hope in the days to come, all of us will do what we can to inspire our constituents to find a more excellent way.

I pray that in the weeks to come, we will resist the temptation to give in to the darker impulses that live in the shadows of our great democratic experiment. We will, in the best of our ability, work to ensure life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all who make this country their home.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 33 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

PROCEEDINGS OF FORMER MEMBERS PROGRAM

The following proceedings were held before the House convened for morning-hour debate:

UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS 2024 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

The meeting was called to order by the Honorable Donna F. Edwards, Vice President of Former Members of Congress Association, at 8:11 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

And so we pause in this place to acknowledge Your hand in the governing of our Nation. We give thanks to You that from generation to generation, and Congress to Congress, You have called men and women to serve in this House, upholding the values of freedom and liberty on which our country was founded. We honor their continued defense of the rights and welfare of the people and communities who make up these United States.

Call us this day and every day, in office or out, to acknowledge the higher calling to which You call each of us, wherever You call each of us.

May we ever live as agents of Your love, instruments of Your peace, and advocates of the hope You set before us. In Your most holy name we pray.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable Donna Edwards led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Ms. EDWARDS. At this time the Chair recognizes Former Members of Congress President, the Honorable Barbara Comstock, for remarks.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Thank you, Donna. It is always a great honor and distinct pleasure to return to this wonderful Chamber, especially when being able to do so with so many friends and former colleagues.

Let me begin by thanking Speaker Johnson for inviting our association into the House Chamber for our annual report.

Like most of us, I consider my service in Congress one of the most important and impactful chapters of my professional life. The memories of this Chamber are among the highlights of my work.

I cherish the relationships I was able to forge with fellow Members, and I am proud of the legislation I was part of, both as a Member and as a staffer before I ran for Congress.

What makes FMC, the Former Members of Congress Association, so special is that it empowers those of us who had this experience to continue giving back. We do so by involving both Senators and Representatives. More importantly, we do so in a completely bipartisan manner.

FMC is 100 percent bipartisan, was founded in 1970, received its congressional charter in 1983, and functions as a standalone 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization.

Though chartered by Congress, no taxpayer dollars are earmarked for our work. Everything we do is funded through foundation grants and contributions, and all of our former Members donate their time pro bono. We

don't pay any fee or honorarium for the many programs we are about to describe.

Today my colleagues and I will focus on the two types of programs that help us accomplish FMC's mission of strengthening democracy, our international projects, most notably the Congressional Study Groups, and our domestic work like Congress to Campus.

As you hear more about the work former Members are engaged in, you will see that everything we do fits neatly into the mission of strengthening representative democracy. An important part of accomplishing that mission is to support current Members and Congress as an institution. No work better illustrates that aspect of FMC than our partnership with the House Administration Subcommittee on Modernization.

We were privileged to work with DEREK KILMER of Washington and WILLIAM TIMMONS of South Carolina when this was a select committee, and we are equally proud of our partnership with Chairwoman BICE as she leads this newly created House Administration subcommittee.

Ms. EDWARDS. At this time the chair recognizes the Honorable Speaker MIKE JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for being here.

The SPEAKER. You know what, I am going to stand right in the middle. How about that.

I am so grateful to all of you.

Barbara, good to see you.

Donna, thank you, and Cheri, and everybody who does so much good work for this organization.

This has been a wild week for us. They are all wild weeks now. We keep making history. I keep saying to Stephanie that we don't want to make history. We just want a normal Congress. Nobody knows what that looks like anymore.

It has been an interesting week. Monday night, I was in here. I was doing a late-night tour. I don't get to do those anymore.

My son was here, Barbara. He is a freshman at the U.S. Naval Academy. He brought 40 midshipmen, his classmates. They came in full uniform. It is such a proud thing to see them here. Half the group had never been to the Capitol before. They are just in Annapolis, but they come from all over the country.

They came in here, and they were seated right here. I let them walk in, as we do, for late-night tours. You have all done it. Everybody just takes their seat. I said, you guys are all on the Democrat side. It was fun.

I shared with them some of the neat features of our Chamber here. What was really moving to me was the awe that was on their faces. Now these are young people who have signed up to serve our country, and they really believe in this grand experiment in self-governance like we all do. To see the wonder, almost childlike wonder on the

faces of these midshipmen, was so moving to me because sometimes we get sort of numb to it because of all the craziness every day. It is the relationships here that help us through all these crazy times. I loved seeing that on their faces.

I kept them for like 1½ hours. We took them in and I showed them everything I could, every little secret spot and the Lincoln burial tunnel and all that stuff.

Then yesterday was another stirring event. It really moved me. It is hard to get moved these days because there is so much crazy stuff going on, but we gave out the John W. McCormack Award, which is named after Speaker McCormack who, I think, served 9 years as Speaker, but served a total of 43 years in the House all the way through his career. This award is given to a staff member, the highest award we give to the House staff, for dedication, service, and bipartisanship.

We gave the award to two very worthy recipients yesterday. One of them has been serving the House for 44 years. In fact, I brought the names of both of these guys because you will know them.

You all probably know Ted Daniel. He finally got the award. He served a year longer than John W. McCormack for whom this award is named, which is pretty awesome.

Then Dan Turton, who tragically passed away last year. His wife and his five children were there, his widow. It was very moving. The remarks that both of those people gave about this institution, about the people they served under and with, about Members who had come and gone on to other things in their careers and some who had passed away, it was so moving to just see that living history, somebody who has been witness to it—who has served under almost all of you—and to see the reverence that he has for this place and how important it is.

So what you do as the Former Members of Congress Association is carry on this grand institution. It is such as awesome thing. We are the stewards of this grand experiment in self-governance now. Current Members, former Members, we have held that and carried it along. For the younger folks here, you are not former Members, though I am glad you are here.

I always remind younger people and remind myself that there is no guarantee that this grand experiment in self-governance is going to last. This still is an experiment. We are almost 250 years into it. It falls to us, all of us, current Members and former Members, to help carry that banner and people who will take it after us. It is an awesome thing to consider.

I love me some STEPHANIE BICE. Can I say that? She is so worthy of this award. She truly is because she exemplifies public service, a servant's heart. She is an influencer because she has such integrity, and there are not enough things that I could appoint her

to or ask her to do. The problem is she will say yes to all of it, and I don't want to wear her out.

There is no more worthy recipient.

So thank you all for your service to the country and what you do and for carrying on this grand tradition. It means so much to all of us.

Sorry to interrupt. I would never interrupt.

Ms. EDWARDS. It is a great honor, your being here.

The SPEAKER. No, I am happy to do it. We have some new Members. Now you are joining the real esteemed group.

I am grateful to all of you. Thank you so much. Sorry to interrupt.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know it is like being a grandparent, BRANDON. It is all the fun without the responsibility.

This weekend, I was privileged to be able to bring some college friends who were political science graduates like myself. They always have that awe of being here.

So thank you all, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So much has been accomplished by FMC thanks to the commitment of these Members, like Congressman KILMER and BILL TIMMONS, who take a close, hard look at how Congress operates as an institution and what reforms can be made to empower Members and congressional staff.

I am pleased to announce that DEREK KILMER, once he becomes a former Member in a couple of weeks, will join the FMC board and will continue to be a partner to Chairwoman BICE in that capacity.

I am also pleased to welcome Chairwoman BICE to the House Chamber this morning so that we can properly recognize her exceptional leadership in this space. I would ask Chairwoman BICE to join me at the dais.

FMC is incredibly pleased to present our 2024 Distinguished Service Award to the chair of the House Administration Subcommittee on Modernization, STEPHANIE BICE of Oklahoma.

Thanks to your leadership, there have been remarkable strides in fostering collaboration across party lines, proving that Congress can work together for the common good.

Under your leadership, the subcommittee has made critical recommendations that will have a lasting impact on the functionality and effectiveness of Congress. From ensuring access to legislative data, to improving accessibility to the Nation's Capital, and promoting the use of modern technology to streamline operations, your work has been tireless and exemplary.

Your former colleagues are, therefore, extremely pleased to recognize you with our annual award.

In addition, we believe you will find this book, "The First Congress: How James Madison, George Washington, and a Group of Extraordinary Men Invented the Government" by historian

Fergus Bordewich, extremely interesting. The author was kind enough to include a personal inscription for you.

Now we would welcome your remarks.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you very much.

First of all, thank you, Barbara, and to the former Members for honoring me. It is truly an incredible honor for me to receive this.

I think it would be wise for me to share with all of you how I got here because it is sort of a fun story.

When I came to Congress, it was 2021. COVID was rampant. Being a freshman and going through orientation was challenging for a lot of reasons. I had served in the State legislature prior, and I had done a sort of mentor program. As I did orientation here in Washington, there were some things that I thought should be different.

The Speaker talked about coming on the House floor with the midshipmen last night. When I was a Member-elect, I walked onto this floor after about 3 days of orientation, and I thought to myself: Why did it take so long?

When you have that first moment on this House floor, there is no greater moment. You have worked so hard to get here. You never forget it.

I wanted that opportunity to be the first thing that happened on orientation. When you got to D.C., it should be at night. It should be quiet. You should get to come and sit in these chairs, where only a few thousand people before us have sat, and take this moment in.

I decided to take it upon myself to make a suggestion to the Speaker, the leader at the time, on what should be different, should we be in the majority and be able to sort of decide how orientation goes.

Fast-forward a year, I landed in D.C. from the Marshall Scholars trip. I got a call from the Speaker at the time, Kevin McCarthy, who said: I have some great news for you. I am going to put you on the House Administration Committee, and you are going to be the chairwoman of the House Administration Subcommittee on Modernization.

I didn't call him "Mr. Speaker" for a reason that you will understand in a second. I said: Kevin, you have waived me onto the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. I am now the designee to Budget from Appropriations. I am an appropriator, and now you have put me on House Administration.

His response was: It is going to be great.

Mr. UPTON. It is better than the House Committee on Ethics.

Mrs. BICE. It is true, Mr. Upton. It is better than the House Committee on Ethics.

For those Members that have been around for a while, I tell you that to say that I was in for a challenge. As the Members know, being on four committees is not an easy task.

The coolest part of that experience, though, is I had just landed and had

just spent 4 days with DEREK KILMER, who I did not know until that trip. I think it was serendipitous that I was given this opportunity.

It has been a great pleasure. It has taken a lot of work because I was not on the select committee to be able to understand what had been done the 4 years prior.

I feel honored and privileged to be in this role. I hope that I am making the former Members proud, and I hope that I am making this institution better for the long term.

I could not do this job, this role, without staff. I see Derek Harley sitting over here, who, sadly, is leaving me soon. I couldn't do it without an incredible staff on the Committee on House Administration team, so thank you to Derek and Marian and all of those who have been a part of this.

My personal office staff, Robert Sar, Wesley Harkins, my deputy chief, Jett Thompson, these individuals have all been a tremendous part of making sure that I am successful in this role. I couldn't do this without them.

I want to say thank you. Thank you for this great opportunity and for this honor to be recognized today.

Ms. EDWARDS. The Chair thanks and congratulates Chairwoman BICE.

The Chair now invites two former Members, Dennis Ross of Florida and Cheri Bustos of Illinois, to offer remarks.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the Chair, and it is good to see the Chair in the chair. It is a pleasure, my friend.

I also want to congratulate Representative BICE on her exceptional leadership to the House Administration Subcommittee on Modernization.

It is my pleasure to report on FMC's Congressional Study Groups on Germany, Japan, Europe, and Korea. In keeping with our mission to support the Congress, FMC has established itself as a premier convener of bipartisan, non-advocacy, and candid discussion on timely issues at home and abroad.

By connecting Congress at the Member and staff levels with their international counterparts, the diplomatic community, academia, and the business community, we foster the mutual understanding, personal relationships, and continued presence that is essential for the productive functioning of this body for the American people.

All this important activity is accomplished through international Member and staff delegations overseas and roundtable programs here in Washington as well as in regional settings.

Together, the study groups are proud to count almost 200 current Representatives and Senators as members. Each study group is led by a bipartisan, bicameral group of four co-chairs. These dedicated co-chairs embody the study groups' commitment to meaningful and dynamic engagement and take the mission to heart by donating their valuable time and energy to support FMC's programming.

Beyond their contributions at official study group events, they actively collaborate with embassies and external organizations, participate in panels, attend roundtables, and meet with numerous visiting delegations to advance the objectives of their respective study groups and strengthen the international relationships they foster.

This year, we welcome my friend, Representative ANDY BARR of Kentucky, who has become co-chair of the Congressional Study Group on Japan, and look forward to continuing to work with his predecessor, LARRY BUCSHON of Indiana, who will remain active in FMC as part of our board of directors following his retirement from elected office.

The work of the study groups would not be possible without the generous support of committed individuals, organizations, and Business Advisory Council members. In particular, I would like to recognize Dr. Satoshiro Akimoto of Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, Thomas Byrne of The Korea Society, Sung Won Bae of the Korea Foundation USA, as well as the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission.

I include in the RECORD a list of the FMC's Business Advisory Council members.

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Ms. ROSS. It is my pleasure to showcase just a few statistics about our program this year that highlight the diversity of the Congressional Study Groups' programming.

In the past year, the study groups have led five study tours for Members of Congress and their senior staff. They have engaged over 500 unique attendees across all study group events. They have held over 30 study group events on issues ranging from global security to trade relations. They have elevated this programming with new undertakings, including a series of roundtables with Members of the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party and a retreat for the chiefs of staff and leading experts on the Indo-Pacific in Charlottesville, Virginia, at the University of Virginia.

FMC study tours have provided the opportunity for Members and staff to hear directly from our friends in Berlin, Tokyo, and Seoul about the challenges faced by everyday citizens and our closest allied nations. These visits go beyond brief exchanges with policy experts, with each study tour thoughtfully designed to incorporate disparate voices and travel outside the capital city of each respective designation.

In addition to Berlin, Tokyo, and Seoul, 2024 saw visits to Busan, Okinawa, Kobe, Mainz, and Dusseldorf. By reaching beyond political and financial hubs, the tours engage in a diverse range of voices and underscore the breadth of our bilateral relationships.

Delegations have met with student groups, media representatives, and cultural and historical experts, which offer a comprehensive and representative perspective on the connections between these Nations and the United States.

In the spirit of furthering this dialogue among our friends and allies, FMC is proud to count 29 United States Ambassadors stationed in Washington as members of our Diplomatic Advisory Council. Each Ambassador is an active and engaged participant in our programming. The Ambassadors from Bel-

gium, Singapore, the Philippines, Sweden, the European Union, the Republic of Korea, and Japan have hosted over 30 individual Members of Congress for our series of programs this year.

Our work would not be possible without the support of our many, many partners. For example, FMC's Business Advisory Council list is impressive and long. I will not take the time to go through it, but I will take the liberty of submitting their names for the record.

I now invite the gentlewoman from Illinois, CHERI BUSTOS, for her remarks.

Ms. BUSTOS. Thank you, DENNIS. I appreciate it.

While the international projects that DENNIS described are mostly legislative exchanges that involve current Members and current congressional staff, I am pleased to report that FMC's work engaging former Members on a bipartisan basis is just as active and impactful.

FMC has been part of my post-congressional chapter for 2 years now, and the organization has given me the opportunity to come together with students across the country as part of Congress to Campus. I have also met with elected officials overseas—for example, in South Korea, Germany, and the U.K. just last month.

For almost a decade, FMC has sent former Member delegations, or ExDels, to Korea several times a year. When I went last year, not only was I able to understand much more about the South Korea-U.S. relationship based on the common experience of the Korean war but also gained tremendous insight into the strong trade relations and opportunities that tie our two countries, thanks to the great discussions with companies such as Korea Zinc, Hyundai, and Samsung.

Past delegations have also played an active part in the annual Asia Leadership Conference, a global security symposium organized by Korea's Chosun Daily.

On behalf of FMC, I thank former Member Jay Kim from California and his wife, Jennifer Ahn, for making these incredible ExDels possible year after year.

I also had the opportunity to travel to Germany earlier this year thanks to FMC. Made possible by a grant from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs as part of its European Recovery Program, six former Members, including Bart Gordon of Tennessee, Barbara Comstock of Virginia, Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania, Ron Kind of Wisconsin, and Fred Upton of Michigan, visited students of different ages and in cities from Hamburg to Berlin to Dresden.

We were also able to speak candidly with young Germans whose knowledge of American politics and affairs rivaled our own college students. They expressed their fears and their hopes, and we gave insight into the inner workings of Washington during this past election cycle.

Our time coincided with recent elections in Germany, and we explored the recent ascension of the Alternative for Germany party in former East Germany.

In implementing this larger style of a Congress to Campus program, we saw German politics laid bare from the perspective of Germany's future leaders. We will continue this tradition in February 2025, where FMC will once again bring a bipartisan delegation to have this incredibly important conversation with Germany's next generation.

Thanks to FMC, former Members are engaged in a myriad of overseas delegations, all bipartisan and all with the purpose of strengthening democracy.

In 2024 alone, we partnered in more than a dozen overseas missions with organizations such as IRI, NDI, East-West Management Institute, and the House Democracy Partnership and sent ExDels to countries including North Macedonia, Malaysia, Guatemala, and Thailand.

Often these missions are part of very specific legislative strengthening objectives—for example, focused on oversight, ethics, or women in leadership. However, one of the most important and most satisfying opportunities to travel through FMC is domestically with our Congress to Campus program.

For more than 40 years, FMC's flagship domestic program, Congress to Campus, has been connecting students and academic communities with bipartisan pairs of former Members of Congress. At its core, Congress to Campus is about bridging the gap between elected officials and future leaders.

We bring former Members of Congress into universities, community colleges, and high schools across the country, creating a unique space for direct conversations between those who have served on Capitol Hill and the students who may one day take up those roles.

The three goals of the Congress to Campus program are to showcase civil, respectful, and productive debate on issues where former Members still wear their partisan hats, like environmental policy or the Second Amendment, while at the same time engaging students in a back and forth, very different from the shouting matches they witness sometimes on cable news and social media.

The second goal is to encourage public service in the next generation, to show interested students a path toward Capitol Hill, and to mentor future public servants.

The third goal is to remind the students of their roles as citizens, that they need to be active participants in our representative democracy. Otherwise, our form of government does not work. Students hear from former Members that, at a minimum, they have a responsibility to be informed voters.

Congress to Campus also shares the many other ways those being represented can hold accountable those doing the representing.

This year, Congress to Campus has reached new heights. We have con-

ducted a total of 31 programs, including 3 at historically Black colleges and universities, 7 at Hispanic-serving institutions, 3 at military service academies, 2 at community colleges, and 2 international programs. These numbers reflect our growing commitment to ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds and institutions have the opportunity to engage directly with former Members of Congress.

One of the most valuable parts of the program is the opportunity it gives students to ask questions openly. There is no script. Students hear honest stories about what it means to serve in Congress, the complexities of decisionmaking, and the importance of collaboration. They get to engage in genuine dialogue with leaders who have spent years in the legislative process, and they see a genuine, civil back and forth on the issues that affect us all.

Our program is proudly bipartisan. We believe it is essential for students to understand all perspectives. Former Members bring years of experience in working together, despite policy disagreements. They show students how effective dialogue and compromise can lead to solutions.

In today's divided landscape, these are lessons we need to highlight and need to celebrate. Students consistently tell us that these interactions are transformative. They come away with a deeper appreciation for democracy and often feel inspired to pursue careers in public service. For the former Members who participate, Congress to Campus is equally rewarding. It is a chance to pass along their knowledge and inspire a new generation of future leaders.

To date, Congress to Campus sessions have been held on over 200 campuses in almost all 50 States and half a dozen countries. In just the past 10 years alone, the program has reached almost 60,000 students. Every year Members donate between 800 and 1,000 hours to the program.

As we reflect on the year, we are grateful to the Stennis Center and the Park Foundation for their generous support which has been instrumental in making this year such a success. Their contributions enable us to expand our reach and continue fostering civic engagement and bipartisan dialogue among students.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the prospect of bringing Congress to Campus to even more institutions, especially universities and colleges that might not otherwise have the opportunity to host a program like this.

A recent professor who hosted one of our bipartisan teams had this to say:

"The Congress to Campus program gave my students the opportunity to hear directly about political processes from people with lived experience in making laws, changing laws, and negotiating with others, even when they hold different viewpoints on an issue. In a strikingly politically polarized time, this opportunity to see two

Congresspersons interact, disagree, and agree with one another on a variety of topics 'across the aisle' was an invaluable opportunity for students to witness how civil discourse actually works."

With that, I thank FMC for all the wonderful opportunities it has provided both me and my former colleagues to continue to serve.

Ms. EDWARDS. The Chair recognizes the Honorable Barbara Comstock.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Thank you, Cheri, for this report and for all you do for FMC's many programs.

Cheri makes an important point. FMC has a unique and very important voice of reason and bipartisanship. We always think of the importance of that role, particularly in this building and the history it holds, and the men and women throughout the ages who have fought for a rule of law here, all that have endured here, and all those who have protected our democracy including the United States Capitol Police who protect this building.

In 2024, we certainly made a commitment of our limited resources—funding, staff time, and former Member volunteer hours—to bring that message of bipartisanship to as many college campuses as we could.

In addition, since our last report to Congress, FMC has significantly grown our efforts to strengthen U.S. democracy. Our work in this portfolio includes conducting outreach to and facilitating dialogue with the general public in order to reestablish trust in our democratic institutions, most importantly in 2024, our electoral process.

This work took many shapes, but the basic concept was to bring the voting public together with election officials working hard year-round to administer free, safe, and fair elections and have bipartisan teams of former Members serve as trusted voices as we facilitate dialogue in communities throughout the country.

We began this work by partnering with the Charles F. Kettering Foundation to convene a conference here in Washington, D.C., in November 2023. The 3-day conference brought together former Members of Congress from both parties, election administrators, leaders of political science programs across the country, foundations, journalists, and other leading thinkers to develop a plan to effectively engage students on college campuses and community members alike on the topic, as well as how to deal with emerging threats to Americans' confidence in our electoral system such as the use of artificial intelligence to create fake images, videos, and audio recordings of candidates in order to influence the outcome of or undermine the integrity of the electoral process.

With the support of the Carnegie Corporation, we then took those findings and developed a program to visit key regions of six Presidential battleground States prior to the November general election, to hold a series of

townhall-style events with community members and students around election security and integrity specific to that State and county.

These dialogues featured both bipartisan groups of former Members of Congress, as well as State and local election administrators such as each State's Secretary of State and/or county clerk who detailed each respective State's election security measures to combat the public's biggest election security concerns, as well as underscore accuracy and fairness of the electoral process in each State and answer audience members' questions directly.

Not only did these events facilitate the bipartisan civil dialogues around a hot-button topic like we had envisioned with the community members in the room but these events were also recorded and/or covered by media outlets in the respective markets in order to bring the information to even larger audiences.

FMC is extremely proud of the result of the project because it is the first multistate community engagement project our organization has ever undertaken.

We sincerely thank all of the former Members of this Chamber who generously donated their time and insights to the project.

I am submitting their names for the RECORD.

Sam Coppersmith of Arizona, Matt Salmon of Arizona, Mike Bishop of Michigan, Mark Schauer of Michigan, Dave Trott of Michigan, Fred Upton of Michigan, Donna Edwards of Maryland, Shelley Berkley of Nevada, Joe Heck of Nevada, Jon Porter of Nevada, Mark Critz of Pennsylvania, Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania, Jim Gerlach of Pennsylvania, Joe Hoeffel of Pennsylvania, Ron Kind of Wisconsin, Scott Klug of Wisconsin, Tim Petri of Wisconsin, Reid Ribble of Wisconsin.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Additionally, FMC is incredibly thankful for the participation of and opportunity to work with all the incredible public servants who handle election administration in each State and county we visited.

Despite years of threats toward them, their families, and their teams, each of these election officials remain committed to the foundation of our democratic process: Free, safe, secure, accurate, and fair elections. They redoubled their efforts to transparency by repeatedly sharing information with concerned members of the public about how elections work in each State, county, and municipality.

Their work is truly what enabled this country to have one of the best-run elections in our Nation's history on November 5. For that, FMC and I, as well as millions of Americans across this country, are immensely grateful.

I am submitting the names of these wonderful public servants into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for proper recognition.

In Arizona: Maricopa County Recorder, Stephen Richer.

In Michigan: Secretary of State, Jocelyn Benson, Kent County Clerk and Register of

Deeds, Lisa Posthumus Lyons, and Former State Director of Elections, Chris Thomas.

In Nevada: Secretary of State, Francisco Aguilar.

In Pennsylvania: Secretary of the Commonwealth, Al Schmidt, Berks County Commissioners Christian Leinbach and Michael Rivera.

In Wisconsin: La Crosse County Clerk, Ginny Dankmeyer.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. We are incredibly proud of the work we have done around U.S. democracy this past year and over the past 4 years and are looking forward to continuing this important project next year including with a report on how to strengthen congressional representation that we are already developing as a result of a new partnership with Unite America.

FMC is also continuing to draw attention to the need for reforms to ensure the continuity of Congress with support for the Carnegie Corporation.

Finally, we are immensely thankful for the general operating support we received from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation which will empower us to continue to develop new community and postsecondary outreach, engagement, and education programs.

I would like to submit the names of key FMC partners in our U.S. democracy-strengthening work for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in order to thank them for their role in our success this year.

Rick Albin of WOOD TV8, Christina "Tina" Anderson of the Michigan Department of State, David Becker of the Center for Election Innovation and Research, Kelly Born of the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, Jeff Breneman of Western Michigan University, Dr. Christopher Borick of Muhlenberg College, Ben Chou of the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, Sharon Davis of the Charles F. Ketting Foundation, Mitch Fox of the Nevada Broadcasters Association, Amy Gulli of the Pennsylvania Department of State, Ron Hansen of the Arizona Republic, Cecilia Heston of the Nevada Secretary of State's Office, Josh Heywood of the Maricopa County Recorder's Office.

Robert Macomber of the Kent County Clerk and Register of Deeds Office, Geri Mannion of Carnegie Corporation, Deb Marke of Wake Forest University, Owen Medina Loftus of Unite America, Ari Littleman of Keep Our Republic, Tammy Patrick of the Election Center (National Association of Election Administrators), Lee Rasch of LeaderEthics, Brad Rourke of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Jennette Sawyer of the Michigan Department of State, Scott Schrum of Citizen's Rising, Zac Schultz of PBS Wisconsin, Nick Troiano of Unite America, Mark Wlaschin of the Nevada Secretary of State's Office.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. This type of important work, of course, has generated quite a bit of media attention. We are very proud of the fact that FMC is becoming more and more of a recognized brand when it comes to bipartisanship and showcasing good governance.

FMC's reach and recognition continued to expand in 2024 with coverage in outlets such as the Associated Press, Roll Call, Business Insider, Yahoo News, Newsweek, The Chicago Tribune, and The Dallas Morning News reporting on our organization and events.

Our series of election integrity and security events across battleground States particularly generated interest with local news stations such as NPR, NBC, ABC, and Fox News reporting on our townhalls. In total, communications efforts within FMC resulted in nearly 1,000 individual mentions.

I also want to highlight that, in addition to the current Member legislative exchanges in the U.S. democracy projects you have now learned about, since its founding in 1970, FMC is an alumni group. We take that responsibility very seriously.

FMC strives every year to engage our former Members outside of D.C. through our annual meeting and annual former Member trip. This year, we were excited to host our annual meeting in Austin, Texas, where we spent a weekend with over a dozen former Members and their partners and spouses. We conducted our annual board meeting, enjoyed some outstanding Texas barbecue, learned about the history of Austin, toured the Texas Capitol, the LBJ Presidential Library, and finished with a wonderful reception at former Member Kent Hance's residence.

Holding the annual meeting in Texas allowed us to engage with more of our former Members based in the south. We are hoping to continue this tradition of hosting our meeting again outside the D.C. area in 2025.

Another programming staple that is part of our alumni group portfolio is our annual fall trip overseas for our membership. This year, we had the privilege of visiting Ireland. The trip offered a chance to learn about Ireland's history, experience its culture, and connect with its people.

Our journey took us to Dublin, Kildarney, Waterford, and Belfast. Along the way we visited iconic landmarks, enjoyed traditional Irish breakfasts, walked through the countryside, and explored vibrant cities.

A highlight of this trip was our visit to the Irish Parliament. We attended a luncheon hosted by the former members of the Irish Parliament. This group previously visited FMC during our 2023 annual meeting in Washington, D.C., making the reunion especially meaningful.

Not even COVID and the flu making its way through our group could lessen our appreciation of the strong ties between our two countries and the shared commitment to fostering understanding and friendship. The warmth and generosity we experienced in Ireland made a lasting impression, and we hope to continue building on these relationships in the future.

Before we wrap up, I do want to share a quick word about funding. As I said earlier, FMC does not receive any taxpayer dollars for our work. We are a completely standalone 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, benefiting from an average of 7,000 hours each year of pro bono time donated to our work by former Members of Congress.

In addition, we have been very successful in generating contributions and donations and, most importantly, a great number of independent foundations that support us with grants specific to our programs. We organize an annual fundraising event, the Statesmanship Awards Celebration, which spotlights bipartisan teams of current Members from both the House and the Senate for their commitment to bipartisanship.

Next year's event will be held on May 20 and will recognize Senator BOOKER of New Jersey, Senator TODD YOUNG of Indiana, and Representatives CASE of Hawaii and YOUNG KIM of California, as well as Aflac as our corporate honoree.

I also want to address directly the current Members in the Chamber who are considering joining FMC. I hope the program reports you have heard thus far illustrate the many benefits that you derive through membership. I am thrilled that a great number of you have already enrolled.

We had a record number of recruiting thus far with an unprecedented number of new former Members joining us following an election, both as annual members and as sustaining members. Of the Members who are not returning, almost one-third have already joined our association. The recruiting process is ongoing, and we would be delighted to talk to any of you who would like to sit down and talk with us to learn anything more you would like to know about the organization.

This new class of former Members has yielded our biggest number yet of new sustaining members which is a special category of membership that makes a financial commitment to the longevity of FMC.

I thank all the former Members who have made this commitment.

I am inserting into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD their names as a small token of our appreciation.

SUSTAINING MEMBERS OF FMC

Hon. Les AuCoin (Oregon), Hon. Brian Baird (Washington), Hon. Joe Barton (Texas), Hon. Mike Bishop (Michigan), Hon. Rick Boucher (Virginia), Hon. Susan Brooks (Indiana), Hon. Cheri Bustos (Illinois), Hon. Dave Camp (Michigan), Hon. Ben Chandler (Kentucky), Hon. Mike Conaway (Texas), Hon. Paul Cook (California), Hon. Ryan Costello (Pennsylvania), Hon. Rodney Davis (Illinois), Hon. Peter DeFazio (Oregon), Hon. Val Demings (Florida), Hon. Jeff Denham (California), Hon. Charles W. Dent (Pennsylvania), Hon. Sean Duffy (Wisconsin), Hon. Donna Edwards (Maryland), Hon. Elizabeth Esty (Connecticut).

Hon. Sam Farr (California), Hon. John Faso (New York), Hon. Bill Flores (Texas), Hon. Martin Frost (Texas), Hon. Tom Garrett (Virginia), Hon. Bob Gibbs (OH), Hon. Phil Gingrey (Georgia), Dan Glickman (Kansas), Hon. Bob Goodlatte (Virginia), Hon. Bart Gordon (Tennessee), Hon. Tom Graves (Georgia), Hon. Gene Green (Texas), Hon. John Hall (New York), Hon. George Holding (North Carolina), Hon. Asa Hutchinson (Arkansas), Hon. Lynn Jenkins (Kansas), Hon. Doug Jones (Alabama), Hon. Kaiiali'i Kahele (Hawaii), Hon. John Katko (NY).

Hon. Ron Kind (Wisconsin), Hon. Adam Kinzinger (Illinois), Hon. John Kline (Min-

nesota), Hon. Scott Klug (Wisconsin), Hon. Brenda Lawrence (Michigan), Hon. Andy Levin (Michigan), Hon. Alan Lowenthal (California), Hon. Elaine Luria (Virginia), Hon. Jim Matheson (Utah), Hon. Ben Michael McAdams (Utah), Hon. Jim McDermott (Washington), Hon. Mike McIntyre (North Carolina), Hon. Pat Meehan (Pennsylvania), Hon. Jeff Miller (Florida), Hon. Jim Moran (Virginia), Hon. Stephanie Murphy (Florida), Hon. Randy Neugebauer (Texas), Hon. Erik Paulsen (Minnesota), Hon. Tim Petri (Wisconsin), Hon. Ted Poe (Texas), Hon. Kathleen M. Rice (New York), Hon. Tom Rice (South Carolina).

Hon. Martha Roby (Alabama), Hon. Peter Roskam (Illinois), Hon. Dennis Ross (Florida), Hon. Loretta Sanchez (California), Hon. Kurt Schrader (Oregon), Hon. James Sensenbrenner (Wisconsin), Hon. Donna Shalala (Florida), Hon. John Shimkus (Illinois), Hon. Bill Shuster (Pennsylvania), Hon. Lamar Smith (Texas), Hon. Jackie Speier (California), Hon. Cliff Stearns (Florida), Hon. Steve Stivers (Ohio), Hon. John Tanner (Tennessee), Hon. Mac Thornberry (Texas), Hon. Pat Tiberi (Ohio), Hon. David A. Trott (Michigan), Hon. Fred Upton (Michigan), Hon. Greg Walden (Oregon), Hon. Henry Waxman (California), Hon. Rob Woodall (Georgia), Hon. John Yarmuth (Kentucky), Hon. Ted Yoho (Florida).

Mrs. COMSTOCK. You can find out more information about sustaining membership and all the other programs you heard about today by visiting our website at usafmc.org.

Let me conclude by thanking two incredibly important groups of people without whom none of the things you just heard about would be possible. They are the outstanding professionals working at FMC, so ably led by Pete Weichlein, our CEO, and Sabine Schleidt, our COO.

Most of the team is here with us today. Let me just briefly read their names and ask them to stand. Then once I have read all their names, let's give them a well-deserved round of applause.

The FMC staff consists of Pete Weichlein, Sabine Schleidt, Lorraine Harbison, Patrick Egenhofer, Erica Daye, Grayson Moore, Ty Baker, Andriana Gregovic, Olivia Truesdale, Jaret Hildebrand, Abby Haas, Caitlin Rissmiller, and Abigail Cate.

A number of you were with us on the Ireland trip when we all got sick. I didn't.

Is everybody standing up?

Thank you all so much. Thank you for all you do.

I also thank our exceptional board of directors. I want to especially highlight the officers who make up our executive committee and are so invaluable to me as FMC's president. They are President-Elect Donna F. Edwards of Maryland, Dennis Ross of Florida, Loretta Sanchez of California, and L.F. Payne of Virginia who is our past president.

I am submitting all of the board members' names for the RECORD.

FMC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rep. Charles Boustany (R-LA), President Emeritus Council; Rep. Larry Bucshon (R-IN), as of Jan. 4, 2025; Rep. Russ Carnahan (D-MO); Rep. Bob Carr (D-MI), In Memoriam; Rep. Bob Clement (D-TN), non-voting Coun-

selor; Rep. Barbara Comstock, FMC President; Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL); Rep. Val Demings (D-FL); Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA); Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND), non-voting Counselor; Rep. Donna F. Edwards (D-MD), FMC President-Elect; Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-CT); Rep. Martin Frost (D-TX), President Emeritus Council; Rep. Jim Gerlach (R-PA); Rep. Tom Graves (R-GA); Sec. Dan Glickman (D-KS), non-voting Counselor; Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA); Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN); Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-IN), non-voting Counselor; Rep. Dennis Hertel (D-MI), President Emeritus Council.

Sen. Tim Hutchinson (R-AR); Sen. Doug Jones (D-AL); Amb. Jim Jones (D-OR), non-voting Counselor; Rep. Barbara Kennelly (D-CT), President Emeritus Council; Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), as of Jan. 4, 2025; Rep. Ken Kramer (R-CO), non-voting Counselor; Rep. Larry LaRocco (D-ID), President Emeritus Council; Rep. Martin Lancaster (D-NC), non-voting Counselor; Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-MI); Rep. Matt McHugh (D-NY), President Emeritus Council; Amb. Carol Moseley Braun (D-IL); Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA), non-voting Counselor; Amb. Connie Morella (R-MD), President Emeritus Council; Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL); Rep. L.F. Payne (D-VA), Immediate Past President; Rep. Tim Petri (R-WI), non-voting Counselor; Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL); Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL); Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL), FMC Vice President; Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), FMC Vice President; Rep. James Slattery (D-KS), President Emeritus Council; Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), non-voting Counselor; Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-FL), President Emeritus Council; Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI); Rep. Al Wynn (D-MD); non-voting Counselor. (officers in *italic*)

FMC STAFF

Peter M. Weichlein, CEO; Sabine Schleidt, COO; Lorraine Harbison, Programs Director; Patrick Egenhofer, Associate Programs Director; Erica Daye, Associate Operations Director; Grayson Moore, Special Projects Manager; Ty Baker, Program Manager; Andriana Gregovic, Communications and Events Officer; Olivia Truesdale, Program Officer; Jaret Hildebrand, Program Officer; Abby Haas, Program Officer; Caitlin Rissmiller, Program Officer; Abigail Cate, Program Officer.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. I hope all of you, whether former Members or current Members not returning for the 119th Congress, will join us immediately after this program concludes for an informal coffee reception in H-122.

For retiring Members, this will be a great opportunity to connect with former Members, all of whom have gone through the professional and personal transition off the Hill that you are about to embark upon.

We will also be joined by representatives of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, a great partner of ours and an organization, if you don't already know, you should get to know well, now that you are former Members. The U.S. Capitol Historical Society is a congressionally chartered nonprofit just like FMC. It is charged to tell the story of the Capitol and those who work in it in a manner that inspires an informed patriotism, to quote the authorizing legislation.

You may know it as the group that publishes the historical calendars that so many Members purchase for their constituents. The society is a great partner with FMC.

Among the society's best public history programs are their historian-led Capitol tours. As former Members of Congress, we have the opportunity to bring visitors into the Capitol. When doing so through the society, you can have the insight of experts who, like no other, can share the institution's history.

For family, friends, or clients, these tours are a special gift that you may now as former Members actually have time for. The president of the society, Jane Campbell, will join us for our coffee reception in H-122. She will be delighted to talk with any of you who are interested in becoming engaged in the society's great work.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you, Mrs. Comstock, for this report. More importantly, thank you for your thoughtful and exemplary leadership of this outstanding organization.

The Chair thanks the former Members of the House for your presence here today. On behalf of FMC, I thank the office of the Speaker and congressional staff who have helped make today's presentation possible. You have been terrific, a terrific resource. We very much appreciate all you have done.

The meeting stands adjourned.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. NUNN) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Sovereign God, You and You alone know the plans You have for each one of us, for this body, and for this Nation. In Your mercy, You have promised that what You have designed for us is for our welfare and not for our harm, to give us a future with hope.

We call upon You then and pray to You, trusting in Your divine provision, claiming what You have promised, even when Your will is not always clear to us, even when the problems of the present prevent us from imagining the favorable future You have foretold.

In the concerns and confusions that clutter our lives, we search for You. We seek You with our whole hearts. Lord, let us find You.

Restore to us the fortune of faith: the assuredness, the confidence, and the conviction that is ours when we acknowledge Your divine hand in our lives and Your favor upon us. It is in Your merciful name we dare to pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. GARCIA of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING BELLEFONTE AREA HIGH SCHOOL'S CONCERT CHOIR AT RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Bellefonte Area High School's Concert Choir milestone event, performing ahead of the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall.

On Monday, December 16, 32 students from Bellefonte Area High School will take the stage as the opening act for the Rockettes' Radio City Christmas Spectacular in New York City.

The Bellefonte Area High School Concert Choir was selected to participate in Radio City's "Sounds of Christmas Experience," a program that allows groups to apply to perform as openers for the Christmas Spectacular.

For their 5-minute holiday-themed a cappella performance, BAHS will perform two pieces: "Noel Nouvelet," a setting of a French carol, and a vocal jazz setting of "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year."

Mr. Speaker, the Rockettes' Radio City Christmas Spectacular is a cherished tradition that brings the spirit of Christmas to life for audiences from around the world.

Congratulations to the Bellefonte Area High School Concert Choir for their dedication, hard work, and their contributions to the iconic Christmas Spectacular.

SHOES FOR KIDS

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

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 35th anniversary of a remarkable event in my district. Shoes for Kids began with a simple donation of just 50 pairs of

shoes and has now grown into a movement, making sure no child in Houston faces the challenges of not having shoes to wear.

Mr. Speaker, these shoes are more than just footwear, Mr. Speaker. They protect little feet, yes; but they also boost confidence, support proper posture, and encourage physical activity.

The founder of this event, Yolanda Black Navarro, was a dear friend. Although she is no longer with us, her vision lives on.

By partnering with schools and community centers, Shoes for Kids also addresses critical challenges in children's lives starting, quite literally, from the ground up.

By supporting our children, we are putting the right foot forward, and we are putting children over politics.

APPRECIATING JJ JACKSON

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to recognize 2024 Army Congressional Fellow, Major "JJ" Joshua Jackson, for his service to the country and the Second District of South Carolina.

Throughout his congressional tenure, JJ has been a valued team member working on military and veterans' issues, including today, the NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act.

As an air defense artillery officer, JJ has held numerous positions with a distinguished career, including tours in valued allies, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. He most recently served the Pentagon as a legislative liaison with the Department of the Army.

A Georgia native, JJ graduated from West Point where he was a starter on the Army football team.

We wish JJ and his young daughters, Amaya and Noah, the best of continued success.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent as warned by the FBI. Donald Trump will reinstitute existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

America celebrates its first ally, France, with yesterday the historic 200th anniversary of the address to Congress by the Marquis de Lafayette with his portrait here in the Chamber along with the portrait of George Washington, the only two portraits here in the Chamber.

RECOGNIZING THE EXEMPLARY SERVICE OF RALEIGH POLICE CHIEF ESTELLA PATTERSON

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

Ms. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the exemplary service of