

during that meeting that CATHY made me feel like I belonged here.

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS is special. During my time serving in Congress, CATHY has become a great friend and a great example of what it means to lead with grace and faith.

Even though we will miss her here, I am excited for what the Lord has in store for her. May God bless her and may He continue to guide her steps in this next season of life.

RECOGNIZING CONGRESSWOMAN CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to recognize Congresswoman CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS, who is retiring at the end of the 118th Congress.

In 2004, the two of us came to the House in the same class, and we have been friends throughout our time here.

CATHY has the distinction of being the first woman to give birth three times while in the House. She is a visible and vocal leader within the disabilities community, and her advocacy is inspired by her son, Cole, who was born with Down syndrome.

I thank the gentlewoman for her years of service to this great institution, to her constituents in Washington's Fifth Congressional District, and to the American people.

May God continue to bless her, her husband, Brian; and Cole, Grace, and Brynn, their three children, as she enters a well-deserved retirement.

RECOGNIZING ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL

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

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, for those of us from the Valley of the Sun, the Phoenix, Arizona, area, there is an excitement around us. Our college team, Arizona State University, which was predicted to be last in its first year in the Big 12, has made the college playoffs. As a matter of fact, they won the Big 12 and they get a bye in their first playoff game.

For the community, the excitement, the joy, and having one of the youngest coaches in America, I can only be thankful to the team. Being predicted to be last and coming out where they are, you have provided hope, joy, and excitement to our community.

I thank Arizona State University football.

MAKING OUR MILITARY GREAT AGAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROSE) is recognized for 60

minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, today, the House passed the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, otherwise known as the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA.

The Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA will improve the quality of life for every servicemember who serves our great country. It restores the focus of our military on lethality, not woke ideology. It improves the military's ability to recruit and train our fighting forces to be able to deter China and our other adversaries. It also increases oversight and requires accountability of the Biden administration and the Department of Defense.

All of these tremendous accomplishments are why we are here tonight, Mr. Speaker.

To speak in support of this recently passed bill that will make our military great again, I am grateful for the Members who join me this evening to discuss this important bill to protect our country and restore our national security.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the State of Missouri (Mr. ALFORD).

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend Mr. ROSE for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my unwavering support for the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act.

We must ensure our Nation's military remains the greatest force for freedom and stability the world has ever known, and this year's NDAA does just that.

At this very moment, our Nation faces numerous threats from the growing aggression from China and Russia to the persistent menace of terrorism. It is imperative that we ensure our military is provided the resources and support they need to defend our interests and keep Americans secure.

The fiscal year 2025 NDAA authorizes \$895 billion in defense spending to support our military's critical missions, enabling us to modernize our Nation's capabilities. From upgrading our naval and air power to investing in cutting-edge technologies, we will remain superior against our adversaries.

Missouri's Fourth Congressional District will receive major wins in this legislation, wins that we have fought hard for on the Armed Services Committee. Whiteman Air Force Base in Fort Leonard Wood will receive a combined total of \$139.5 million for fueling facilities and advanced individual training barracks.

There will be expanded access to childcare for Missouri's military families and to programs that help military spouses attain and retain employment.

We are ecstatic to announce a 14.5 percent pay raise for junior enlisted servicemembers and a 4.5 percent pay raise for all other servicemembers.

This legislation isn't just about numbers. It is about the values that we hold dear as Americans. It is about our commitment to freedom, to justice, and the protection of our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, this year's NDAA embodied our unwavering commitment to America's military excellence, reflecting the values that have always made our Nation strong. We are prioritizing the well-being of our military families, bolstering the readiness of our Armed Forces, and fortifying our national security.

To truly restore our military's lethal edge, we have to purge the radical, woke ideologies that are being forced on our servicemen and -women, infiltrating our ranks.

□ 1715

These divisive concepts have plagued our military and are undermining our elite cohesion and combat effectiveness.

That is why this year's NDAA will take bold action: Number one, banning life-altering transgender medical treatments for minors; prohibiting the toxic spread of critical race theory; dismantling the bloated DEI bureaucracy; blocking a misguided military Green New Deal; and countering anti-Semitism.

By eliminating these destructive influences, we are reclaiming our military's focus on its core mission: defending Americans and their interests.

Mr. Speaker, as you saw today, this is not a bipartisan bill. This is an American bill.

We are not just funding the military, we are improving the lives of those who protect us every day.

By passing the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act, we have sent a clear message to our adversaries: America will not be intimidated. America will always reign as the greatest nation on Earth.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. GENE RICHARDSON

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of an extraordinary man, Dr. Gene Richardson, a mentor, a friend of mine, and someone who was really like a second father to me. He was a man who had one of the biggest impacts on my life and who is one of the reasons I am standing here today in this very Hall.

Dr. Richardson was a man of remarkable character and compassion. Born in Kennett, down in the bootheel of Missouri, he embodied the values of hard work, faith, and service from a very young age.

Growing up as the youngest of five children, Dr. Richardson's life was shaped by his parents, Irl, who was a Baptist pastor, and his mother, Pearl,

who was a dedicated homemaker. Gene excelled in both academics and athletics, all while running his own newspaper franchise.

After earning his bachelor's degree in biology and graduating from Baylor College of Medicine, Dr. Richardson embarked on a journey that would impact countless lives. At just 26, he established a family practice down in Sanderson, Texas, becoming the sole doctor for an entire rural county.

When his calling led him to radiology, he brought innovation to the field, cofounding a mobile nuclear medicine company that brought advanced care to underserved hospitals across the country.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Gene Richardson's service didn't stop at our borders. He founded the Ultrasound Fund for Latin America, providing equipment and training to small hospitals in Mexico, and he was very proud that he learned Spanish during that time.

He later joined medical missions to Guatemala, walking miles through remote areas to deliver lifesaving care. His legacy of compassion crossed continents, touching lives in profound ways.

Beyond his professional achievements, Gene was a man of deep faith and unshakeable love for his family. Married to his beloved Mary for 65 years, he often reflected on their life together saying: I could not have chosen a more perfect helpmate.

Together they raised two wonderful children, Gene Jr. and Kay, and cherished their three grandchildren.

Gene's passion for life extended to music, travel, and education. He played trumpet in the Baylor marching band and added his rich bass voice to choirs and quartets well into his nineties. He was a good singer. He taught line dancing, and he jitterbugged with youthful enthusiasm.

As a lifelong learner, he traveled the world discovering new cultures and inspiring others to do the same.

In one of his final messages to his family, Gene reminded us of life's greatest gifts: faith, family, and friends. He said: God has given us grace and mercy. Let us use these gifts to enrich our relationships and to serve others.

Dr. Richardson's life was a testament to just that, Mr. Speaker, the power of service, of faith, and of love.

He leaves behind not only his beloved wife, Mary, and their family but also a legacy that will inspire generations.

Mr. Speaker, it is with both joy and gratitude that I honor the life of this extraordinary man.

May we all strive to live as Dr. Gene Richardson did, with generosity, with courage, and with a heart full of adventure.

Dr. Gene Richardson, we will see you in the morning.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Missouri for that heartfelt tribute and for his important remarks concerning the issue regarding

the National Defense Authorization Act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

PACIFIC DETERRENCE INITIATIVE

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend from Tennessee (Mr. ROSE) in leading this effort tonight and for all his great work on our messaging that we are doing as a Republican Conference to illustrate to the people of the country what it is we are trying to do and that is our belief that it will be good for America and, in this case with the NDAA, good for our military and the people who populate it.

Regarding this NDAA, the point I want to make this round is that the NDAA puts real muscle behind countering China's aggression with \$15.6 billion for the Pacific deterrence initiative, which is about \$5.7 billion more than what the Biden administration thought was going to be adequate.

We are covering gaps the administration ignored, funding \$490 million toward critical Indo-Pacific command priorities to shore up operations and capabilities in the region.

We are making it clear: Taiwan won't have to stand alone. This bill launches the Taiwan security cooperation initiative to send lethal aid where it is needed most.

The joint training and trauma care programs will boost their readiness, while industrial base agreements make sure their defense capabilities and ours are solid.

The U.S. is doubling down on its commitments to allies in the region. This isn't just talk. We are reaffirming congressional support with action. With so much aggression by China in the region and around the world, this is the least we should be doing for an ally such as Taiwan who is there for us when we need them.

We are also demanding a deep dive into the troubling alliance between China, Iran, Russia, and North Korea, the actors who are teaming up to challenge us in that region in the Pacific as well as the mayhem they are causing with their alliances in the Middle East and our issues with trying to help protect Israel whether it is going to be with Iran's efforts immediately or with whatever is going to happen in Syria now with Assad taken out.

This bill gives counter-intelligence agents more tools to expose and crush Chinese Communist Party spies working to undermine us in any of these regions.

There will be no more contracts with Chinese Communist Party-affiliated contractors, labs, or universities. We are shutting down their access to our defense programs.

Why we have to do that now, when it should have been our policy years ago, I am not sure, but it is just common sense. You don't want to have Chinese access toward our technology and their ability to have some kind of weight in how our defensive programs work.

It bans the Department of Defense from buying Chinese tech like semi-

conductors and communications gear. Relying on China for anything critical is asking for trouble.

Who knows how easy it might be for them to embed spy technology into some of these chips and into some of this other equipment that could send information that is critical to us out to a different source that they can then mine and use against us.

From ship repairs to logistics hubs, this bill ramps up our ability to operate in the Indo-Pacific.

We are even funding forward-deploying manufacturing because if China wants a fight, we will make sure we are ready for them on day one. Now nobody really wants to have a fight. Indeed, readiness and projecting strength is one of the best deterrents. The work we can do in the NDAA, whether it is in this Pacific deterrence initiative and the other related pieces or overall, it helps prevent war, and it helps prevent conflict in the United States. It brings confidence to its allies around the world and maybe just a little bit of fear to its enemies.

That is what we hope to accomplish and continue building on for the rest of this year and on through the Trump administration.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for sharing his thoughts on these important issues tonight, and I appreciate his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I will close by reiterating our support of our servicemen and -women who defend our great country. Many of us have highlighted the improvement in the quality of life they will receive from the passage of this bill and it being signed into law by the President.

However, I would like to take a moment to highlight the impact it will have on Tennesseans serving in the armed services.

According to the House Armed Services Committee, this bill will provide a 14.5 percent pay raise for junior enlisted servicemembers and an average 4½ percent pay raise for Tennessee's 19,500 servicemembers.

It also expands the program to help Tennessee's 1,500 military spouses attain and retain employment.

Lastly, it expands access to childcare for the 2,800 children of military families in Tennessee.

These important provisions to increase servicemembers' pay, expand childcare services, and bolster efforts to assist military spouses are much-needed and well-deserved.

Servicemembers' families sacrifice a lot so that their loved ones can keep us safe. I am proud to support these provisions, and I am glad that they have been included in the final passage of the NDAA.

When Americans elected President Donald Trump to serve as the 47th President of the United States, they sent a clear message: We must deter

our adversaries, eliminate our enemies, protect the homeland, and support our troops.

That is exactly what this National Defense Authorization Act seeks to do. We are proud to see it pass and encourage the Senate to join us in passing this important legislation so that it can be sent to the President's desk to be signed into law.

Mr. Speaker, I thank everyone who has joined me this evening, and I yield back the balance of my time.

DOING THE RIGHT THING REGARDLESS OF THE COST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOOD) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my deep appreciation to the people of Virginia's Fifth District for the privilege of representing them these past 4 years. Being their Congressman has been the greatest honor of my professional life. When I answered the call 5 years ago to run for Congress, I identified as a Biblical and a constitutional conservative.

I wanted the voters and my future constituents to know how I would make decisions, how I would represent them, and how I would vote on their behalf in Washington.

I wanted them to know that my values and principles come from my Christian faith and my Biblical world view. I wanted them to know that my guiding political philosophy comes from the Constitution and its stated limits on Federal power.

My allegiance as a Congressman has been to my creator, my Savior, the institution, the promises I made to my constituents, and to doing what I know is right regardless of the cost.

My main priorities have been to cut spending, to shrink the Federal Government, to fight for America first border and immigration policies, and to protect our constitutional freedoms.

As my time serving in this body on behalf of the citizens of Virginia's Fifth District comes to a close, I leave with no regrets because I have done as I told them I would do when I asked them to trust me with their vote and their support.

My ultimate desire, however, has been to please the Lord, to be more concerned about offending Him by what I don't say than I am about offending others by what I do say.

I didn't run for Congress promising to bring the money back home, to deliver the earmarks or the pork projects. I didn't run promising to work across the aisle, to compromise, or to find common ground, or to get things done. In fact, most of what we do here in Washington is bad, certainly unconstitutional, unjustified, and often downright harmful, not to mention we don't have the money, so the less we do, the better.

In fact, we should be proud of the accusation that over the past 2 years this Congress has done less than most Congresses.

As Republicans, what should we have done more of that Biden and SCHUMER would agree to do?

When I first ran for Congress in 2020, I presumed I would have the opportunity to serve with President Trump, help him build on the successes of his first term, and help him enact his second term agenda.

Unfortunately, that has not been the case, and like most Republicans, my efforts have been by extreme necessity directed at fighting the Democratic agenda which has caused so much pain and suffering for the American people these past 4 years.

That is because when Democrats seize power, they wield it without apology, and they ram through the radical agenda as they did in the first 2 years of the Biden administration with a narrow House majority and far less than 60 votes in the Senate.

It is always about the money in Washington, and Democrats spent it lavishly and recklessly in 2021 and 2022 on their trillions for their ill-conceived and harmful COVID response, their inflation increase act, their phony infrastructure bill, and their radical climate agenda, all the while infusing every policy, department, and agency with their extreme pro-abortion, pro-transgender, pro-DEI, pro-CRT, and climate objectives.

□ 1730

Democrats are willing to lose elections to push and pull the Nation to the left, understanding that Republicans don't have the same political courage or willingness to risk their own elective futures to undo the harm, overturn the policies, or defund the programs.

Thankfully, however, the American people responded to the extreme Democratic agenda by entrusting Republicans with the House majority 2 years ago in the 2022 midterms. Unfortunately, this Republican House majority has been squandered by a lack of courage, a lack of principle, and a lack of steely resolve by Republican leadership and too many Republican Members these past 2 years.

Again, it is all about the money, and House Republicans could have blocked, stopped, and defunded anything and everything that we wanted to these past 2 years. We could have just turned off the spigot and refused to give them the money. Instead, we have funded and perpetuated the Biden-Pelosi-Schumer policies and spending levels that we inherited and campaigned against that are bankrupting and destroying the country.

The Constitution entrusts the House to manage the Nation's finances, the Nation's debt, the Nation's credit, and our ability to borrow money if and when necessary and to make the payments on that debt.

However, our national debt has grown by some \$5 trillion in the 2 years that Republicans have controlled the purse strings. We are failing miserably. Every dollar we vote on is borrowed. Every dollar borrowed and spent steals from Americans through higher taxes, more inflation, and/or a greater debt burden for our kids and our grandkids.

Over the past 2 years, House Republicans have given more money to Mayorkas for the border invasion. As a matter of fact, back in the spring, we gave him \$3 billion more to bring more illegals in quicker.

We have given more money to Attorney General Garland and FBI Director Wray to abuse their power and weaponize Federal law enforcement against their political opponents.

House Republicans have continued funding Democrats' radical climate extremism, their pro-abortion agenda, their pro-LGBTQ policies, and their racist DEI-CRT agenda.

Why has our party leadership been more afraid to do nothing than to do something bad? As the medical folks like to say: First, do no harm.

However, with predominantly Democratic votes, typically 90 to even 100 percent of Democratic votes in a Chamber with a Republican majority, our report card shows that, since electing our current Speaker 14 months ago, we have failed to cut \$1 of spending and have instead continued a \$200 billion monthly deficit.

We have passed four CRs, or continuing resolutions, and two minibuses maintaining Democratic policies and spending levels from the Biden-Pelosi-Schumer regime when they had full control.

We reduced our majority by kicking out George Santos, who had a solid conservative voting record and had not been convicted of any crime.

We passed an NDAA maintaining abortion funding, LGBTQ policies, climate priorities, DEI policies, and CRT training. We reauthorized FISA twice without a warrant amendment prohibiting illegal and unconstitutional surveillance of U.S. citizens without their knowledge, due process, or probable cause.

We have borrowed and funded tens of billions of dollars for Ukraine and even Hamas. We borrowed and funded thousands of earmarks for tens of billions of dollars more to provide Members with political cover back home for the bad votes they take here.

We passed a tax bill that gave more benefits to illegal aliens. We failed to use any leverage that we had with the House majority to secure our borders.

Just last month, we increased mandatory or, really, automatic spending by \$200 billion more.

All of this has been done over the past 14 months with significantly more Democratic than Republican votes when we have the House majority.

What if we had instead shocked the American people and summoned the courage and the resolve to just say,