

country for anti-Semitism or any kind of hatred. I ask my colleagues to continue this work after my time in Congress comes to an end.

While we may never eradicate anti-Semitism, we must make it clear that anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination are unacceptable and can never be normalized in this great country, the United States of America.

WASHINGTON'S OBSESSION WITH OVERREGULATION

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about how Washington's obsession with overregulation is making life unnecessarily difficult for everyday Americans.

Under the Biden administration, their energy efficiency standards have become weapons of control, driving up costs, limiting choices for households, and strangling economic growth.

Under Biden's anti-energy agenda, American families are feeling the pinch every time they turn on a light, heat their home, power their appliances, or fuel up their vehicle.

These so-called efficiency standards don't lower costs; they shift the burden onto people's wallets and purses.

In my home State of California, we have seen the impact firsthand. Between skyrocketing energy bills and blackouts caused by these misguided policies, families are paying more for less reliability. Indeed, the blackouts we see in California are for two chief reasons. First, on a hot day in July or August or September, you can see the grid actually having to shut down manufacturing and shut down businesses so the rest of the grid doesn't collapse when people are trying to air-condition their homes or other businesses.

Secondly, we have what are called public safety power shutoffs, which, when the wind blows in California, we actually have to shut off the power lines in some cases because the fear is that trees or branches or whatever might fall upon the power lines can cause a blackout and the failure of the equipment, or, worse, a wildfire.

Indeed, in my own district, we have suffered with enough wildfires to last eons. Just to name a few: a million-acre fire known as the Dixie fire just this year, the Park fire where hundreds of thousands of acres were destroyed and many homes damaged, and the Camp fire a few years ago where 85 people lost their lives.

It is all sorts of mismanagement by my Governor in that we are not managing our forests. We don't have the electrical grid to have 24-hour sustainability even in a tough time of year.

There are remedies for that. We could be building more nuclear power plants. We could be building more natural gas plants and not regulating them out of business. We should be building more

pipelines to get natural gas, which is extremely efficient and low cost.

We cannot be doing dumb things like tearing out hydroelectric dams like is being forced upon us in my district in northern California where four hydroelectric dams have been removed.

What do you get with a hydroelectric dam? You get water storage, you get flood control, you get water for agriculture, you get the hydroelectric power, and you get recreation. That has been taken away.

When you are talking hydroelectric power, a lot of people are worried about CO₂ and carbon dioxide. Hydropower is a zero CO₂ emitter as is nuclear power. We seem to want to regulate these things out of business, regulate them to not be part of our grid. Instead, we opt for the idealism of a few solar panels and windmills, which have a very limited life and are very inefficient.

This is the future the Democrats want for the rest of America, like in California, where energy is neither affordable nor dependable.

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Soon gone will be the days when you can buy the appliance that best works for you. Bureaucrats now want to dictate what kind of washing machine you can have, what stovetop you can use, and even how long your dishwasher should run.

They even want to dictate what light bulbs you can use. A new mandate in California is talking about how State buildings, schools, things like that, have to start changing their light bulbs out by an arbitrary deadline. It doesn't matter if the bulbs have burned out or been used up or the ballasts have been used up. They just want to change them out.

This will cost schools, for example, hundreds of millions of dollars throughout the whole State to have to just arbitrarily change these out instead of attrition over time. I am doing that on my own farm, my own ranch, where when a ballast goes out or a set of bulbs goes out, let's change it over to LED at that time, and then you are saving the costs.

They don't care about that. They just have this mandate. We are limiting options, and the government is telling you that it is good enough for you, for your home.

Californians know this all too well. We have been forced to live with these policies that now Washington, D.C., tries to emulate. It just continues to strangle our economy. From manufacturers forced to spend millions complying with ever-changing rules to even small businesses struggling under higher energy costs, these regulations hurt all of them, large and small, as well as families.

The more we hamstringing energy production and force businesses to conform to out-of-touch mandates, the less room we have for growth and prosperity. There are a couple of key drivers that are making things less afford-

able with inflation, the high cost of energy being one of them. The other is government overspending, as we are going to find out here pretty soon this week.

These policies are rooted in the same far-left ideology that has driven inflation. They have weakened our energy independence and have left America less competitive on the global stage. We need to do better.

U.S. OFFENSIVE MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL FOR WAR IN GAZA VIOLATES U.S. LAW

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I come to the House floor to send one straightforward message to President Biden: Providing U.S. arms and military aid to the Netanyahu government for use in Gaza violates U.S. law.

The devastation, human suffering, and Palestinian civilian deaths and injuries are unmatched in scale by any other conflict. This is the conclusion reached last week by Airwars, the British NGO that documents civilian casualties in 21st century conflicts.

Before anybody rejects this detailed report, I would like to note that Airwars is known for its exacting, thorough research. Its referrals prompted more than 70 percent of the Pentagon's investigations into incidents of civilian harm during the U.S.-led air campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Madam Speaker, this is just the latest in a series of reports from human rights, humanitarian, and defense reports documenting the civilian harm and deprivations in Gaza.

Israel, Madam Speaker, absolutely has a right to defend itself. I support military operations to dismantle and destroy Hamas' military capabilities and other terrorist organizations operating inside Gaza that have launched vicious attacks against Israeli civilians and have badly mistreated the Palestinian population, but Israeli air and ground campaigns must abide by U.S. law and international humanitarian law, also known as the Geneva Conventions and the laws of war.

States are required to take every precaution to minimize civilian harm, avoid destruction of lifesaving civilian infrastructure, guarantee unimpeded access and delivery of humanitarian aid, and ensure the life and security of humanitarian aid workers.

Specifically, I am talking about section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act, also known as the Humanitarian Corridor Act, which states: "No assistance shall be furnished under this act or the Arms Export Control Act to any country when it is made known to the President that the government of such country prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States

humanitarian assistance.” We all know that the Netanyahu government has frustrated the delivery of such aid to the people in Gaza.

The Netanyahu government has also violated its assurance under President Biden’s own National Security Memorandum 20, which requires U.S. military assistance, arms sales, and arms transfers not to be used contrary to U.S. law and international humanitarian law. According to an October 30 Washington Post report: “The Biden administration has received nearly 500 reports alleging that Israel used U.S.-supplied weapons for attacks that caused unnecessary harm to civilians in the Gaza Strip, but it has failed to comply with its own policies requiring swift investigation of such claims.”

The Biden administration already knew this. On October 13, Secretary of State Blinken and Defense Secretary Austin sent a detailed letter to the Netanyahu government describing Israel’s arbitrary, deliberate, and consistent obstruction of humanitarian aid to the suffering Palestinian people in Gaza. They detailed how U.S. law and international law were being violated. They gave Netanyahu 30 days to deliver results.

The 30 days have come and gone with no change to U.S. arms transfers or military assistance. Once again, the Netanyahu government called the bluff of the Biden administration. Once again, the Netanyahu government frustrated U.S. efforts to get humanitarian aid delivered and safeguard innocent civilians.

It is not too late for the U.S. to use all of its leverage, including the suspension of U.S. offensive arms transfers to pressure the Netanyahu government to open up the humanitarian aid corridors and allow hundreds and hundreds of trucks to deliver lifesaving aid.

It is not too late for the U.S. to use all its leverage to press Israel to reach a cease-fire, secure the release of all the hostages, and create a viable path for a secure and dignified future for Gaza’s Palestinians that guarantees Israel’s security.

It is not too late for the Biden administration to comply with U.S. law. It is not too late for the Biden administration to stand up for America’s own values and interests. It is not too late for all of us to reinforce our commitment to human rights and peace. It is not too late, Madam Speaker. It is not too late.

I include in the RECORD a Washington Post article titled: “U.S. inundated with claims that American arms killed Gaza civilians.”

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 30, 2024
U.S. INUNDED WITH CLAIMS THAT AMERICAN
ARMS KILLED GAZA CIVILIANS

(By Abigail Hauslohner and Michael
Birnbaum)

The Biden administration has received nearly 500 reports alleging that Israel used U.S.-supplied weapons for attacks that caused unnecessary harm to civilians in the

Gaza Strip, but it has failed to comply with its own policies requiring swift investigations of such claims, according to people familiar with the matter.

At least some of these cases presented to the State Department over the past year probably amount to violations of U.S. and international law, these people said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to discuss internal deliberations.

The reports are received from across the U.S. government, international aid organizations, nonprofits, media reports and other eyewitnesses. Dozens include photo documentation of U.S.-made bomb fragments at sites where scores of children were killed, according to human rights advocates briefed on the process.

Yet despite the State Department’s internal Civilian Harm Incident Response Guidance, which directs officials to complete an investigation and recommend action within two months of launching an inquiry, no single case has reached the “action” stage, current and former officials told The Washington Post. More than two-thirds of cases remain unresolved, they said, with many pending response from the Israeli government, which the State Department consults to verify each case’s circumstances.

Critics of the Biden administration’s consistent provision of arms to Israel, now about 13 months into a war that has killed at least 43,000 people, according to Gaza’s health authorities, say the handling of these reports is another illustration of the administration’s unwillingness to hold its close ally accountable for the conflict’s staggering toll.

“They’re ignoring evidence of widespread civilian harm and atrocities to maintain a policy of virtually unconditional weapons transfers to the Netanyahu government,” said John Ramming Chappell, a legal and policy adviser focused on U.S. security assistance and arms sales at the Center for Civilians in Conflict. “When it comes to the Biden administration’s arms policies, everything looks good on paper but has turned out meaningless in practice when it comes to Israel.”

The State Department declined to detail the volume of incidents under investigation. A spokesman, Matthew Miller, confirmed on Wednesday during a news conference held after the publication of this report that officials are reviewing “a number of incidents” and that “we have not yet gotten to the point with any of them that we’ve been able to make final determinations.”

Based on “the overall scope of the damage and the number of civilian lives that have been lost,” Miller said that it is “reasonable” to assess that Israel may have violated international law but that reaching such a conclusion is “incredibly difficult.”

“It takes gathering facts. It takes gathering information. And it takes ultimately making legal judgments about those facts. And, often times, you have conflicting accounts of what happened, and it is our job to try to sort through that the best we can,” he said.

On Tuesday, after an Israeli strike on an apartment building killed more than 90 people, including 25 children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, the State Department said Washington was seeking a “full explanation” from Israel. The Israeli military said it was “aware of reports that civilians were harmed.”

Oren Marmorstein, a spokesman for Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, declined to discuss the U.S. inquiries or Washington’s efforts to limit civilian harm. “As part of the close alliance between Israel and the United States, there is continuous and close

contact with the American administration regarding Israel’s struggle against terrorist attacks against its citizens,” Marmorstein said in a statement.

The Israeli military says it makes “significant efforts” to avoid civilian harm but has cited the presence of Hamas fighters hiding among civilians as justification to carry out bombings on schools, hospitals, mosques and tent encampments. Gaza’s Health Ministry says the majority of the dead have been women and children.

Earlier this month, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin sent a letter to the Israeli government threatening vague policy “implications” if Israel did not immediately allow more aid into Gaza, where doctors and analysts say thousands have starved to death. The warning was widely interpreted to mean Washington may consider withholding arms transfers unless the humanitarian situation markedly improves.

In their letter, Blinken and Austin also acknowledged the failure of U.S. efforts to mitigate Israel’s civilian casualties. “It is vitally important that our governments establish a new channel through which we can raise and discuss civilian harm incidents. Our engagements to date have not produced the necessary outcomes,” they wrote. They gave Israel 30 days to deliver results, which would delay any action until after next week’s U.S. presidential election.

The State Department’s civilian harm guidance, unveiled by the Biden administration in August 2023 in response to congressional concerns about Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates’ bombardment of Yemen, instructs the agency in how to assess whether a foreign military has violated any one of an assortment of U.S. laws and makes clear recommendations for action.

By investigating such cases, officials should be able to “identify, recommend, and document what actions the Department can and will take in response to such incidents,” according to the 21-page policy document, a copy of which was obtained by The Post but has not been made public.

Current and former U.S. officials described a process that, while detailed and deliberate on paper, has become functionally irrelevant with more-senior leaders at the State Department broadly dismissive of non-Israeli sources and unwilling to sign off on action plans.

Some U.S. officials and congressional Democrats have been frustrated by the State Department’s apparent tendency to rely on Israel to substantiate the allegations against it.

Mike Casey, who worked on Gaza issues at the State Department’s Office of Palestinian Affairs in Jerusalem, said senior officials routinely gave the impression that their goal in discussing any alleged abuse by Israel was to figure out how to frame it in a less negative light.

“There’s this sense of: ‘How do we make this okay?’” said Casey, who resigned in July. “There’s not, ‘How do we get to the real truth of what’s going on here?’”

Senior officials, he said, often dismissed the credibility of Palestinian sources, eyewitness accounts, nongovernmental organizations, and official accounts from the Palestinian Authority and even the United Nations.

A U.S. official who addressed questions about the administration’s handling of these reports said that the State Department considers both Palestinian and Israeli voices as it assesses allegations of civilian harm.

People familiar with the process said that at least one-quarter of cases have been dismissed in the first of three investigative stages, either because they were deemed not

credible or because there was no indication of U.S. weapons use. The majority have proceeded to the “verification” stage, whereby, “We ask the [government of Israel] about the cases: Did you forewarn? Why did you hit this school or safe road or safe zone?” said one former official.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Maryland), who has met with administration officials on several occasions to discuss the issue, said he has been deeply frustrated by what he called a lack of follow-through. “There’s no set timeline for getting responses to the many ad hoc inquiries that have been made,” Van Hollen said.

Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. military aid since World War II, and the Biden administration has provided it with at least \$17.9 billion in U.S. military assistance in the past year alone, according to a recent study by Brown University’s Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs.

But despite deepening alarm among administration officials and lawmakers over Israel’s conduct of the Gaza war, nearly all military assistance, apart from a delayed shipment of 2,000-pound bombs, has continued to flow without interruption. The pace and volume of weaponry have meant that U.S. munitions make up a substantial portion of Israel’s arsenal, with an American-made fleet of warplanes to deliver the heaviest bombs to their targets, analysts say.

William D. Hartung, a co-author of the Watson Institute report and an expert on the arms industry and the U.S. military budget at the Quincy Institute, said “it’s almost impossible” that Israel is not violating U.S. law, “given the level of slaughter that’s going on and the preponderance of U.S. weapons.”

Among the cases submitted to the State Department, according to people familiar with the matter, are the January killing of a 6-year-old girl and her family in their car, with pieces of a U.S.-made 120mm tank round purportedly found at the scene. There were shards of American-made small-diameter bombs photographed at a family’s home and at a school sheltering displaced civilians after airstrikes in May killed dozens of women and children. And there was the tail fin of a Boeing-manufactured Joint Direct Attack Munition on the scene of a July airstrike that killed at least 90 Palestinians.

“The U.S. is the biggest donor to Israel with these weapons,” said Sarah Yager, the Washington director at Human Rights Watch. “And it’s a year in. When is the United States going to put its foot down?”

CHALLENGES CAUSED BY SHARED ZIP CODES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LALOTA. Madam Speaker, for far too long, my constituents who live in Flanders, Riverside, and Northampton have faced unnecessary challenges caused by shared ZIP Codes. Mislabeled mail, delays in receiving essential medications, and confusion over geographic identity have disrupted their daily lives for decades.

Last week, we took meaningful steps to address these persistent issues by ensuring that each of these communities has access to reliable mail delivery and U.S. postal services.

H.R. 8753, which I proudly supported, directs the United States Postal Service to designate single, unique ZIP

Codes for these communities. This simple, commonsense fix will go a long way in improving the quality of life for my constituents in Flanders, Riverside, and Northampton.

By taking this step, we sent a clear message that every community, no matter how large or small, deserves accurate and dependable services from their government.

I thank the residents of Northampton, Riverside, and Flanders for their unwavering determination to bring this issue to our attention. This is a battle these communities have been fighting for more than a decade. I am proud to see it finally coming to fruition here in the House.

IMPORTANCE OF STRONG FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Mr. LALOTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to underscore the importance of strong Federal investments in research and education, which are critical to maintaining America’s position as a global leader in innovation and progress.

Stony Brook University, located in my district, is a prime example of the extraordinary advancements that come from such support. As one of the Nation’s leading public research institutions, Stony Brook excels in quantum physics, artificial intelligence, and healthcare. Their groundbreaking work drives economic growth on Long Island, throughout New York State, and across the Nation while pushing the boundaries of scientific discovery.

Stony Brook’s role as a quantum internet testbed and its status as a hub of transformative research demonstrates the immense potential of continued Federal investment in higher education.

Institutions like Stony Brook don’t just shape our present. They are laying the groundwork to become the next premier research institution, setting the standard for excellence in education, research, and innovation. I am committed to ensuring that institutions like Stony Brook have the resources needed to thrive, securing our Nation’s leadership in education, research, and innovation. Let’s go.

GOVERNOR HOCHUL’S COMMUTER TAX

Mr. LALOTA. Madam Speaker, Governor Hochul’s so-called congestion pricing is just a commuter tax that unfairly targets hardworking Long Islanders. With families already struggling under New York’s crushing tax burden, this plan adds insult to injury, forcing suburban communities to subsidize the wasteful and mismanaged MTA.

The MTA loses nearly \$700 million annually to fare evasion—over \$300 million on buses alone—and doles out six-figure overtime to hundreds of employees.

Instead of addressing these failures, Hochul and her New York City allies want suburban New Yorkers like my constituents to fill a \$15 billion budget funding gap without any reforms or accountability.

Hochul suspended this ill-conceived commuter tax before the election but shamelessly brought it back afterward, breaking the trust of so many New Yorkers.

Long Island deserves better—real accountability, fairness, and policies that reflect our priorities, not another slap in the face from Albany’s one-party, antisuburban agenda.

WELCOMING KAI LI HOME

Mr. LALOTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate an extraordinary moment of triumph and resilience.

After 8 long years of wrongful detention in China, my constituent and Huntington resident Kai Li is finally back on American soil and has been reunited with his family. This long-awaited news brings immense relief and joy to his family and every Long Islander who has followed his adversity.

Kai’s release ends an unimaginable ordeal and highlights the unwavering strength of his family, especially his son, Harrison, who tirelessly advocated for his father’s return. I was honored to bring Harrison as my guest to this year’s State of the Union to amplify his family’s story. Kai’s release is not only a victory for the Li family but for all of America.

The United States must remain steadfast in our commitment to bring home every wrongfully detained American. Kai Li’s return reminds us of the power of persistence and the importance of standing firm against injustice.

Welcome home to Kai, whose courage and determination inspire us all.

RECOGNIZING TOM LANNEN ON HIS RETIREMENT

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

Ms. PEREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the career and recognize the retirement of Skamania County Commissioner Tom Lannen.

Tom wasn’t born here, but he got here as fast as he could. He is internationally famous in Washington State, serving as the chair of the Washington State Association of Counties’ Timber Caucus.

Tom pioneered the use of “the stick,” a yardstick that visually demonstrates the fact that our county, Skamania County, has only 1.8 percent of our acreage which can generate tax revenue.

Tom won’t let his Federal Representatives forget how much Skamania County needs their mills to produce timber, the Secure Rural Schools program to keep our schools open, and economic development opportunities to ensure that communities thrive.

Madam Speaker, I thank Tom for his mentorship and leadership and for spending time working on behalf of things that matter, our community. I hope he enjoys his retirement with Sophia and wish him the very best.