

As my time in Congress comes to an end, let me be very clear: Public service is not just something I do; it is who I am. From America's youngest mayor to Congressman serving upstate New York, this for me is not a good-bye. It is the start of a new chapter. I will continue to fight for the values we share, advocate for the communities we love, and work tirelessly to make our country better, stronger, and more united.

Perhaps I will be blessed with the opportunity to again serve here in this most fundamentally American deliberative House.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by thanking the people of New York's 19th Congressional District, upstate New York, for the privilege of serving them. May God continue to bless them, upstate New York, and the United States of America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today full of gratitude for having had the incredible privilege of representing New Hampshire's Second Congressional District for the past 12 years.

New Hampshire doesn't have a national sports team. I have long said politics is our pastime, and it has been such a joy to advocate for my friends, my family, neighbors, and our State in this arena.

My time in these Halls has been many things: rewarding, inspiring, challenging, and, yes, at times, frustrating. However, more than anything, it has been truly the greatest honor of my life.

When I was first elected, I promised to bring a new approach to Washington, to reach across the aisle, and to build bridges whenever possible. As I look back at the end of my time in Congress, I am immensely proud of that record.

Over the past 12 years, I have seen Congress at its most and least efficient. With the clarity of hindsight, I can say that our government really, truly does work best when Republicans and Democrats come together to solve our Nation's greatest challenges.

I grew up in a Republican household. My father, Malcolm McLane, served as the mayor of Concord and on our State's Executive Council, and my mother, Susan McLane, served for 25 years in the House and Senate in the New Hampshire State Legislature, and

she even ran for the seat that I am now retiring from.

I know that they would be proud of my and many of our colleagues' efforts to restore bipartisanship, to reach across the aisle to pursue pragmatic solutions, particularly during times of deep political division.

There will always be new challenges and new opportunities for Congress to address. The work here is never truly finished, but thanks to the support of my colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats, we have made meaningful progress on a number of issues that don't always go viral or generate the most clicks online.

I founded the Bipartisan Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Task Force with my Republican colleague, Frank Guinta, and continued the work with BRIAN FITZPATRICK and DAVID TRONE, to bring Democrats and Republicans together to tackle the addiction and overdose epidemic that has impacted every community across our country.

Thanks in part to the task force's tireless advocacy in providing resources for communities and making smart policy changes, we are finally beginning to see overdose deaths decline throughout the Nation. I am proud that one of my final votes in this Chamber will be for vital opioid response legislation to increase access to treatment included in this year's government funding package.

I also started the Bipartisan Task Force to End Sexual Violence, which has helped shed light on the pervasive culture of sexual violence that has flourished for too long in our schools, our universities, our military, and even here in Congress.

It was in this very Chamber that I first shared my own story of sexual assault publicly and fought to reform how Congress responds to sexual misconduct among Members and toward staff.

Through respectful conversation and honest dialogue, my Bipartisan Ski and Snowboard Caucus helped bridge the divide between our parties on the need to respond to the environmental and economic threats posed by climate change.

As chair of the New Democrat Coalition, my colleagues and I have repeatedly prioritized country and duty over party and politics, providing the votes to prevent a devastating default on our debt and a costly government shutdown not once, not twice, but three times.

Thanks to our focus and commitment to pragmatic solutions to improve the lives of hardworking families in our country, our New Democrat Coalition will be the largest it has ever been in the 119th Congress and will make it more than half of the Democratic Caucus.

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In each of these endeavors, we made progress—incremental at times, but

progress nonetheless. We didn't always agree on how to tackle the challenges, but we listened to each other, debated the ideas on the merits, and focused on the mission of delivering for our constituents.

Sadly, my time in these Halls in recent years has been defined more and more by extreme partisanship. As lawmakers, we must reject the cynicism and the notion that Congress and our institutions are destined for dysfunction and disorder. We must not lose sight of our purpose and why we are here—to fight for our communities, to lead by example, and to tackle the biggest challenges facing our country, not create them.

Now, at the end of my tenure, a little older and hopefully a little wiser, I urge my colleagues and the incoming Members of the 119th Congress to lead with courage in the face of division and recommit to building bridges, not tearing them down.

I thank my husband, Brad, and my sons, Zach and Travis.

I remind my colleagues: Be bold, be brave, but most importantly, be kind.

MY BROTHER, MY INSPIRATION

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor my brother, Mike Pence. Michael has been my Congressman, my Governor, and our Nation's Vice President. While serving my constituents, he has been my inspiration.

Everyone has their own preconceived notions of who my brother is. The real Mike Pence, the man I have known his whole life as his oldest brother, is one of the best, most honorable people I know, and he has always done the right thing.

Michael is devoted, kind, and generous, and he loves his family very much. He is humble and gentle, but he is the bravest and boldest of my siblings. His mettle is iron tested. His character is unimpeachable. These are the qualities that made him the leader that he is.

It has been my honor to follow in his footsteps and represent the Hoosiers of the Sixth District of Indiana.

As I stand here so proud of the man Michael is today, it is a gift to be his brother. He has been a gift to our country, and he has been a gift to our Constitution.

May God bless Michael R. Pence and continue to prosper him and not harm him, give him hope and a future.

DELIVERING ON PROMISES FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. TRONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say it has been my greatest honor serving Maryland's Sixth District.

Over the past 6 years, I have met and listened to thousands of Marylanders and worked across the aisle to pass legislation that has improved and will continue to improve the lives of all Americans.

I didn't do it alone. I am forever grateful to my wife, June, and my four children, Michelle, Julia, Natalie, and Rob. During my time here, I have become a grandfather to two grandchildren, with a third on the way. Nothing reminds me more of how important our future is as when you see it through the eyes of children and grandchildren.

Many of you know that I chose to run for Congress because I lost my 24-year-old nephew to a fentanyl overdose in 2016. In 2021, I cofounded the Bipartisan Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Task Force with ANNIE KUSTER to bring Democrats and Republicans together to fight the mental health and opioid epidemic, and we did.

Together, we passed dozens of bipartisan bills, delivered billions of dollars to communities to fight this crisis on the front lines, and united hundreds of our colleagues annually during National Recovery Month for Congress Goes Purple.

This past year, our State and country saw the first decline in overdose deaths. I would like to think that the work of our task force had a small part in that.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have stood by my mission to lead with compassion, civility, and competence and put people over politics. I was proud to deliver \$53 million in community project funding, Federal funding going directly to where it is needed most in my district. By working as a team, we were able to make life-changing impacts in our communities.

In the last 6 years, I also led 30 bills that were signed into law, bills on issues that we can't afford to ignore—mental health, addiction, and criminal justice reform.

Suffice it to say, our work is not done. I leave Congress knowing that countless lives have been and will be changed as a result of what we have accomplished. I have served during a time in which Congress, like our Nation, has grown increasingly divided, and many Americans fear for their future.

We must all remember that what unites us is greater than what divides us. Despite our differences, I developed productive, meaningful relationships with many of my colleagues across the aisle. The sheer number of chili cheese dogs I have eaten in the Republican Cloakroom to get bipartisan support is one I will take to my grave.

Through it all, I remain certain that the path forward for progress lies in common ground. I thank my Republican friends for their partnership, for putting country over party to work together. I urge all of my colleagues to look to their counterparts on the other side of the Chamber and commit to

fighting together, not against each other, to empower America to reach its full potential. If that is not why we are here, we don't deserve to be.

I am thankful for the privilege of representing my constituents, and I wish for all to have a safe holiday season.

ADVOCATING FOR WESTERN AND RURAL CAUSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FONG). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reflect on my 4 years serving as chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus. It has been a tremendous 4 years, filled with memories and accomplishments that certainly will last a lifetime.

The caucus' work on behalf of the issues impacting Western and rural America is invaluable, and it has been a great honor to be a part of this effort. From supporting the multiple use mandate for public lands to upholding the rights of private landowners, supporting American farmers and ranchers, and pushing for American energy and mineral dominance, the caucus advocates for a stronger and more prosperous West and America.

While I could reminisce for hours about the caucus, I want to highlight some of my favorite memories and achievements over the past 4 years.

For the first time in its history, the caucus reached 100, actually 110, members. What once started out as a group small enough to literally meet in a closet is now the second largest caucus on Capitol Hill.

Last year, we also celebrated the 30th anniversary of the caucus, a noteworthy milestone. We have participated in numerous field tours hosted by our members over the years to connect our policymakers and staff with Westerners to learn firsthand about the issues impacting the region, bringing the voices of the people back to Washington, D.C.

We have visited miners from northern Minnesota, cattle ranchers in Fort Worth, park officials in Yosemite and Yellowstone, and those who use and benefit from the Columbia River system, all to get a better understanding of policy issues in these communities.

We have supported many pieces of legislation to unleash the full potential of domestic energy, support American farmers and ranchers, and end the assault on multiple use mandates for public lands.

I thank my colleagues who have joined and worked hard for the caucus over the past 4 years. It has been my pleasure to serve as your chairman.

I also thank the staff, who have made hard jobs easier and have accomplished much. I also want them to know that our successes on behalf of rural and Western America would not have been possible without their dedication.

Lastly, I congratulate my good friend, DOUG LAMALFA of California, on

his election as chairman for the next Congress. I am excited for the future of the caucus and know it is in good hands.

While I no longer will be serving as chairman, I will continue to be a strong advocate for Western and rural America.

THANKING AMANDA BIHL

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to extend one more thank-you to my chief of staff, Amanda Bihl, for her leadership and service to my office and the people of Washington's Fourth District.

Rising through the ranks over the years, Amanda has been a strong leader who has delivered on our priorities and been an incredible mentor to my staff. I am fortunate to have had her by my side and will certainly miss her dearly.

Joan and I wish Amanda the best as she continues her journey with her husband, Peter, and her growing family, and we remind her that she will always be a member of Team Newhouse.

FOCUSING ON THE GOOD

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

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, I dedicate these remarks to my wonderful community in Pennsylvania-Seven and to my mother and father, who didn't live long enough to see me elected.

I grew up in a true bipartisan household, with a father who was an old-school Republican Air Force officer and a mother who was a Quaker pacifist liberal. It was an interesting childhood, as you can imagine.

You hear a lot of bad about Congress, but I am going to choose to focus on the good, what we can actually get done for the people.

My district office should, first and foremost, be thanked. My district office back home is often the closest contact that any constituent has with the Federal Government. They hear from our local voters, our local constituents, sometimes with frustration, sometimes with happiness when there is a good result, and sometimes with anger. They treat every single person in Pennsylvania-Seven as though they are family. I have been told that multiple times.

Legislatively, here in Washington, I have to speak of some of my proudest moments. I was sent to Congress with a mandate to work on reducing prescription drug prices. I heard from so many people on the campaign trail about the struggles that they had, and I am so proud to have been part of a Congress that passed the IRA, which was the first time that we have ever managed to get prescription drug prices down.

That effort continues and every year will increase. I beseech my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to please keep that intact.

I am proud of having raised awareness of mental health issues and suicide prevention. I am so proud of the work done to pass the CHIPS Act,