

Federal workers in the face of escalating threats on their service.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. STEEL) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. STEEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank my constituents, colleagues, and friends for the wonderful 4 years I have spent serving in the people's House. It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve Orange and Los Angeles Counties in Congress.

From helping my constituents to passing life-changing legislation, the work we have done has truly mattered.

Only in America can a first-generation immigrant who speaks English as a third language rise to become a Member of this body.

When my parents fled communist North Korea for freedom in South Korea, they never would have imagined that their daughter would be standing here today.

On behalf of my beautiful, diverse district, my team and I have accomplished a great deal. We have delivered significant funding to improve our Orange County beaches through sand replenishment. We have also provided important infrastructure investments to our communities. We have expanded healthcare access by expanding telehealth coverage. We have led the fight for lower taxes.

Legislation I have sponsored on its way to becoming law includes legislation to expand language access in telehealth for non-English speakers and expand mental health support for youth in foster care.

I have been a strong advocate for defending human rights across the globe and taking on the communist regimes who abuse them.

These accomplishments are not mine alone. I want to give a heartfelt thank you to the members of leadership, committee chairs, and my colleagues who helped pave the way, and, of course, my wonderful staff.

Speakers KEVIN MCCARTHY and MIKE JOHNSON have ably led this body and supported me every step of the way. The same is true of STEVE SCALISE, TOM EMMER, and ELISE STEFANIK. My friend CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS has also been a great mentor to me and helped me along the way. My colleagues in the California delegation have likewise joined me in supporting causes important to our State.

I have been also blessed to serve on great committees. On the Ways and Means Committee, we have promoted an economy that benefits all Americans. Under the leadership of chairman JASON SMITH, Congress will reauthorize the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act with improvements that benefit American workers and job creators.

We have also done great work on the Education and the Workforce Committee to promote quality education for all students. This includes fighting

the rise of anti-Semitism on campuses, a fight that Chairwoman VIRGINIA FOXX has strongly championed. Dr. Foxx has been a partner for me in helping reduce Communist China's influence in education through my DETERRENT Act.

As we have talked about so much on the Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, the CCP is truly America's number one adversary.

I have passed legislation to ban our military from using seaports reliant on Chinese technology. I have also worked to strengthen Taiwan's military readiness through the TAIWAN Security Act.

Congress must keep their eye on the CCP and build on this progress.

For now, I will be heading back to my home in sunny California. While my time in Congress is ending, I will always look for ways to serve the country that I love. I will always treasure the friendships I have made both in Washington and Southern California. Like all journeys, this one is ending for a new one to begin.

AUTO INSURANCE

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

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, my residents still pay the highest auto insurance rates in the Nation. Auto insurance discrimination continues to keep our residents in the cycle of poverty.

I want to ask the American people and the auto insurance industry: What does your education level, your marital status, your occupation, your employment status, your credit score, your ZIP Code, or your homeownership status have to do with whether or not you are a good driver?

Right now, the auto insurance industry is determining rates based on these nondriving factors, so I introduced the Prohibit Auto Insurance Discrimination Act with my good colleague Representative WATSON COLEMAN. One of the factors, again, to determine driving ability should not be these nondriving factors, yet my residents still see and face higher insurance rates.

University of Michigan's Poverty Solutions did a study showing somebody with a DUI, driving under the influence, was paying three times less than the person with no DUI violation. The difference was the person with the DUI had a higher credit score than the person that had a better driving record. Again, these factors should not be determining people's auto insurance rates.

Again, that is why it is important for us to be able to support the PAID Act to prohibit auto insurance discrimination. My colleagues must join me in passing this important critical bill to address these shameless practices by the auto insurance industry.

SOCIAL SECURITY IS VITAL

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, Social Security is a vital part of our social safety net in our country. It keeps more people out of poverty than any other governmental program, nearly 23 million people.

I wasn't surprised when the number one question and concern that was brought up in our telephone townhall throughout the district—over 9,000 people participated—was what is going to happen to Social Security. For most seniors, Social Security is their largest source of income.

Cutting Social Security would be a disastrous policy choice for our communities, and it would absolutely be a choice that is decided here, not a necessity.

We should be strengthening and expanding Social Security, not cutting it.

That is why I support the Social Security Expansion Act. It is very critical because it would increase benefits by \$2,400 annually and ensure that program is funded for the next 75 years.

We must protect Social Security. Every senior in our country deserves to retire with dignity, and every person living with a disability deserves to live with economic security. I won't let them cut Social Security on my watch.

WATER IS LIFE

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, we all know that water is life. Safe, accessible, affordable drinking water is a human right.

In 2021, I was proud to be able to work with the Energy and Commerce Committee and Congresswoman DINGELL to establish the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program where we helped establish a \$1.2 billion program to help many of our families pay off their water bills and debts and keep people's water connected, especially during the pandemic.

This program saved countless lives. Millions of Americans today are still struggling to keep up with their water bills and many have their water shut off.

We introduced the Half-Century Update for Water Access and Affordability Act to establish a permanent low-income drinking water assistance program within the EPA. Our program will dedicate funding every single year to keep people's water flowing. We do it for gas. We do it for electricity. Why don't we do it for water? The program will include reconnection assistance, but what I also love, it will help with water efficiency upgrades like plumbing repairs to many of our families that live in old homes.

We are going to set up a community advisory committee made up of residents, nonprofits, utilities, and other local stakeholders to help advise the EPA how to implement this program more effectively.

Mr. Speaker, the H2O UP Act will ban the practice of water shutoffs as punishment for not being able to afford your bills. This is the richest country in the world, and we know it is just

simply inhumane to have many of our families not have access to water.

Watching a couple in their seventies in the city of Detroit after working all their lives retire to have to melt snow in a white bucket so they can flush their toilet is inhumane. Again, it is inhumane for us not to have a program to help people with their water bills.

Congress just approved nearly a trillion dollars for weapons in war. Please, for all of my colleagues, I don't want to hear that we don't have the money to help our families here at home. We must again ensure access to water. It is critical for public health. It is critical for our families.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

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

Mr. CARL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the House one final time. When I came to Washington, a former colleague of mine told our freshman class how fortunate we all were to be part of this body. I will never forget him saying he always felt humbled each and every time he saw the Capitol and when he walked on this floor. He warned us all: The day that you don't feel humbled walking on this floor or when you see the Capitol, it is time to retire and go home.

This comment stuck with me, and I still get chills every time I walk on this floor or I see this glorious Capitol at night.

In this very Chamber, so much of the history of our country and the history of the modern world has been made: The decision to start and end wars, the decision to end slavery, the decision to give women the right to vote, and much more debated and agreed upon in this very room.

I never thought that I would end up here. I spent most of my life building small businesses, growing my family, and doing what I could do to give back to my community. Then I got frustrated with the direction of our government and the decisions our leaders were making at that time, so I got involved and tried to make a difference.

If I could go back in time to when I was 25 years old and tell myself that I would be standing here on this floor today, I never would have believed myself. It is impossible to believe. In fact, all the odds are against me. In fact, I have better odds of starting on an NBA basketball team than I do to be a Member of Congress. Those are some pretty large odds.

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Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the accomplishments that my team and I have made over the past 4 years. We have written and passed legislation that has unleashed American energy, protected Alabama's resources, reduced the size and scope of the Federal Government, and returned millions of tax dollars back home for important projects.

We have also helped countless veterans get the benefits they earned, recovered millions of dollars from the IRS, expedited hundreds of passport requests, secured FEMA disaster relief after natural disasters, protected small businesses from unnecessary red tape, and on and on.

As any Member of this body knows, none of this would be possible without the countless hours of our hard-working, talented, and dedicated staff. To each of my current staff and to each of my former staff, I thank them. I thank them for their dedication to Alabama's First Congressional District and for being part of my team.

My hopes and prayers for this country are so positive knowing that we have a generation of young people like them and with their passion coming up behind us.

I lovingly give most all of them nicknames, like Junior, Little Bubba, Chilia, Cooper, Bogie Bogie, Chief, Busy, Jesus, and, yes, my favorite vegan, T-Bone. They are all forever part of Team Carl. I am proud to have played a role in each of their careers.

I also could not have done anything without the love and support of my wife, Tina, and our family. My family has always believed in me and supported me, and I look forward to spending more time with them very soon.

Tina, start your grinning because Big Daddy is headed home.

To the folks in the First District, I thank them for giving me the chance to represent them, to bring our shared values to Washington. I do not take lightly the job that each of them has entrusted me with, and I am grateful for the opportunity.

The future of south Alabama, our entire State, and our Nation is so bright. I truly believe our best days are ahead of us.

God bless Alabama. God bless the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Bible Week. I am proud to be able to stand up here and proclaim my own devotion and adherence to the Bible and Biblical principles.

I appreciate my colleague, Mr. DOUG LAMBORN of Colorado, who led a Special Order on National Bible Week last night here in this Chamber. I am sorry I wasn't able to take part at that particular time, but I wanted to continue that.

Mr. LAMBORN has been a faithful servant in making sure that National Bible Week is always proclaimed and recognized each year here, and I appreciate him as a colleague. Of course, we will miss him, as he has decided to go off to other pastures from this body. God's blessings on him and his family.

As we know, during this National Bible Week, throughout American history, the Bible has been a guiding light, shaping our culture, government, and moral foundations to the good.

We hear a lot of talk about separation of church and state. That isn't really a truism. It is more about the State shall not establish a particular religion, but it is certainly fine for the Founders and our leaders to use that as a guiding principle. Indeed, they did, from Washington all the way through.

As we reflect on this week, it is important to remember that the Word of God has always provided clarity, strength, and direction to this Nation. In Psalms 119:105, we are reminded: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

In a world filled with uncertainty and confusion, the Bible serves as a beacon of truth and wisdom. It calls us to live with integrity, to honor one another, and to acknowledge the divine responsibility we have to God. Indeed, the Bible is the inerrant Word of God.

As leaders, citizens, and people of faith, we must continually seek guidance from our Scripture. It is extremely important and a guide in my own life, as well as that of my family.

The Word of God is not just a historical document, although it has always been found to be proven historically accurate. It is also the foundation of our morals and the source of wisdom that has indeed shaped our country.

During National Bible Week, let us renew our commitment to uphold these principles to guide our actions with the truth of the Bible and to honor God in all we do.

On top of that, it will soon be Christmas as this body tries to complete its work for the end of the year. Let's remember the reason for the season, as it is put. That is the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amongst all the hustle and bustle of Christmastime, let's not lose sight of the fact that, indeed, that is why we celebrate.

Merry Christmas.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a national bestseller, a book that has changed the world and had a tremendous impact on my life, the Bible.

I regularly pray the Apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5:9: "Whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him."

I want God to be glorified through every meeting I go to, every speech I give, and every vote I make. My husband and I strive to instill Biblical values in our seven children, and that foundation has provided them with the stability they need to weather life's storms, something they are passing on to our 20 grandchildren.