

HONORING CHARLES BLOCKSON

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

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in honor of Charles Blockson, a native of Norristown, Pennsylvania, who dedicated his life to the preservation of African-American history.

A prolific writer, collector, historian, and activist, Mr. Blockson authored 13 books and was a leading expert on the Underground Railroad.

Charles Blockson dedicated his life and career to traveling and acquiring rare documents, publications, and photos to explore and expand the study of the Black American experience.

He donated his remarkable collection to Temple University in 1984. Today, the world-renowned Blockson Collection houses more than 700,000 items relating to the global Black experience, serving as a resource not just for Temple students and faculty but for the Philadelphia community and beyond.

An exhibition documenting Mr. Blockson's life's work can also be seen at the Centre Theater in his hometown of Norristown.

Charles Blockson passed away last summer. As a tribute to his tremendous legacy, I am proud to join my colleagues MADELEINE DEAN and DWIGHT EVANS to introduce a bill designating his hometown post office in Norristown as the Charles L. Blockson Post Office.

REMEMBERING LAKEN RILEY

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, what is it going to take to get people in this country on both sides of the aisle to understand that the Biden border crisis is killing people?

Laken Riley was a 22-year-old nursing student whose life was taken by an illegal immigrant, not a migrant. I hear this word "migrant" used all the time. This is a misnomer, trying to brush it under the rug. These aren't migrants; there is an illegal immigrant invasion of this country.

Earlier this week, another 2-year-old boy in Maryland was murdered by an illegal immigrant, not a migrant.

President Biden is down there in Texas pretending to do something about the border now in Brownsville. This is not a problem area like Eagle Pass, but a quieter area currently.

He is yelling at Republicans and saying: Well, you are not doing anything about the border. Well, his first day in office, he reversed all of President Trump's policies that were helping keep the border in check.

All these eight items on this list he could do by executive order. He could sign with a pen and do a legal constitutional executive action immediately.

Instead, he wants to blame Republicans or somebody else for the policies

he invoked on day one that have put us where we are.

Instead, he wants to sue the State of Texas because they say their State is being invaded, and they have laws at the State level to stop invasions. He is suing them to get rid of their razor wire measures along the border. What a joke.

CELEBRATING BLANCHE VANDER BENT'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

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

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the birthday of a beloved constituent, Blanche Vander Bent, who turned 100 years old this month.

Blanche Vander Bent's life has been one of service: to God, to her family, and to others. Blanche is a distinguished matriarch, a mother, a grandmother, and a great-grandmother.

She has a servant's heart and has spent countless hours volunteering at schools and food programs throughout west Michigan.

Blanche's commitment to service didn't just stop in west Michigan, though, as she and her husband volunteered throughout their life in disaster relief efforts all across the country, lending a hand to those whose lives had been upended.

Blanche defines what it means to put her faith into action, and I couldn't be more thrilled to celebrate her today.

A very happy birthday, Blanche.

HONORING DR. PETER PINGERELLI

(Mrs. LESKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable Arizonan whose passion for Arizona's education has left a lasting impact that will be felt for years to come.

Thanks to Dr. Peter Pingerelli, thousands of young Arizonans were able to receive a high-quality education, cultivating their skills in order to achieve their goals.

As a member of the West-MEC governing board and a professor at Grand Canyon University, Dr. Pingerelli was deeply passionate about education in Arizona.

Dr. Pingerelli's impact on education in Arizona cannot be overstated. He was a great friend, father, loving husband to State Representative Beverly Pingerelli, energetic educator, and valued community member. He will be dearly missed by everyone who had the privilege to know him.

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RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, on the second anniversary of Russia's invasion, I reaffirm America's steadfast support of Ukraine.

This is not merely a gesture of international solidarity. It is a strategic imperative of the U.S. Our commitment to Ukraine extends beyond the defense of global freedom and democracy. It is fundamentally aligned with America's national interests.

With an investment of less than 5 percent of our defense budget, we have catalyzed a significant shift in the balance of power, crippled over half of Russian military forces, fortified Europe's stability and prosperity, protected our NATO allies, and ensured the stability of global food prices and supplies.

Let me be clear: A stable, democratic Europe is not just beneficial but essential to America's economy, food security, and national defense. The battlefields of Ukraine are the front lines of our freedom itself, and their struggle is our struggle.

As the deadline looms for Federal funding, House Democrats have consistently extended bipartisanship to ensure our government remains open and our national security protected.

The time for decisive action is now.

HONORING DANIEL AVEGALIO AS VETERAN OF THE MONTH

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

Mr. ALFORD. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to honor our Veteran of the Month, Daniel Avegalio, a marine who served bravely in Operation Iraqi Freedom not once but three times. Daniel's dedication to our country is a testament to the spirit of American service.

From Pettis County, Daniel has not only served his country in uniform but continues to serve by guiding fellow veterans in their life after the military. His commitment shines through his work with the Sedalia Military Affairs Committee and his educational leadership as a George W. Bush Presidential Center Scholar.

Today, he furthers his impact with Western Governors University, helping military members transition to civilian life.

Daniel represents the best of us, the best of America. His sacrifice and ongoing commitment to his fellow servicemen and -women exemplify the enduring American values of loyalty, service, and community, for which I thank Daniel.

CHEERING FOR PARKER BYRD ON HIS RETURN TO BASEBALL

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, breaking news: An East Carolina University baseball player was involved in a boating accident.

Communities across eastern North Carolina watched, cheering on Parker Byrd through 22 surgeries over 45 days. He survived, but Parker lost his right leg.

Our community not only cheered for Parker, but we have joined his family in praying for him, and yes, the Lord answers prayers.

Madam Speaker, on February 16, another news flash: Parker Byrd, No. 16, returned to the baseball field. As he stood in the batter's box at the season opener, he became the first-ever Division 1 baseball player to play with a prosthetic leg.

Parker is a testament to the resilience of eastern North Carolina and the miracles of God.

America loves Parker. We are cheering for him, Coach Cliff Goodwin, and the entire Pirate baseball team.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL FFA WEEK

(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. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to celebrate a week honoring one of our Nation's most significant youth organizations, the FFA.

National FFA Week, celebrated February 17 to 22, recognizes the far-reaching impact of this organization. FFA has chapters in all 50 States, and today, there are more than 900,000 active FFA members.

Because of the incredible investment FFA has made and continues to make in agricultural education, more of our Nation's young people have the skills, knowledge, and opportunity to pursue careers in agriculture and related fields.

Access to agricultural education is vital to our country's future, not just our rural communities. Agriculture is the food on our table, the clothes on our backs, and, increasingly, the fuel in our cars. It is also science, technology, and innovation.

Madam Speaker, agriculture is nothing without the next generation, which is why I am so proud to celebrate the FFA.

The blue FFA jackets symbolize hard work, competent leadership, and a commitment to serving one's community.

FFA members are some of the premier leaders in this country. It is an honor to celebrate the past successes of FFA, while looking forward to how future FFA leaders will enact positive change.

RECOGNIZING TOM SKILLING

(Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Madam Speaker, many things have changed in Chicago over the past 45 years. We are grateful that Tom Skilling has been there for all of that time to help us weather the storms and enjoy the good days, as well.

Tom is "Chicago's Very Own." He is our weatherman.

Our city's pride in Tom is evident. He has had a sandwich named after him. He has his own bobblehead, his own beer, his own asteroid. Perhaps most fittingly, he has his own city snowplow named after him that was unveiled just a few days ago. Its name: Skilling It.

These accolades are well deserved. Tom started his broadcasting career when he was just 14. For his entire career, Tom has embodied the professionalism, kindness, and knowledge we have been lucky to watch on TV every day.

I say to Tom: Enjoy your retirement. Of all people, I am sure that you will be able to find warm beaches and beautiful sunsets.

HONORING STEPHEN COLE FOR HIS SERVICE

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

Mr. RYAN. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize and honor the impressive record of one of my constituents, Mr. Stephen Cole, for his service to our Nation.

During the Vietnam war, Sergeant Cole was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division as part of a small patrol reconnaissance and ambush unit operating in Vietnam's Central Highlands near the Cambodian border and the La Drang Valley.

While in Vietnam during a routine reconnaissance patrol, Sergeant Cole suffered wounds during a firefight when he was impaled by a punji stick after stepping into a boobytrap. Had he moved a millimeter to the right or left, he likely would have lost his life.

He was subsequently evacuated to the field hospital in An Khe for medical treatment.

For his service there and his heroism, Sergeant Cole was awarded the Bronze Star for his heroic achievement, heroic service, and meritorious actions, in addition to the Purple Heart for the wounds he received in action on July 14, 1970.

Sergeant Cole received numerous other awards for his service, including the Army Commendation Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with Bronze Star attachments, the Combat Infantryman Badge, and a Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon.

Madam Speaker, all these awards speak to the true grit and service of Mr. COLE. I had the honor to present him and his family with these awards

myself. It was a powerful moment in recognition of his service, and to thank him on behalf of our entire Nation and thank all of our Vietnam veterans for their heroism and service.

It is my honor to recognize him here today in front of all of my fellow Americans.

RECOGNIZING CLAYTEE WHITE, DIRECTOR OF ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

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

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Madam Speaker, today, in honor of Black History Month, I rise to recognize Claytee White, director of the Oral History Research Center at the University of Las Vegas.

Claytee has spent the last 20 years developing an extensive knowledge of the city's history and its people, with an expertise on African Americans.

She studied and documented the role of Black performers in desegregating Las Vegas, expanding worker rights, and the continued fight for equality.

Madam Speaker, her positive impact on our community doesn't end there. She is the founder of the Las Vegas Black Historical Society, a hub for those to learn more about the valley's Black community.

She has held numerous leadership roles at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and she is past president of the Southwest Oral History Association.

I thank Claytee for all she has done to lift up and preserve the rich history of African Americans in Las Vegas.

BRING BACK THE HOSTAGES

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise on behalf of my constituents in Miami and Miami Beach. Many are my neighbors, and they are grieving their relatives and friends who are being held hostage by Hamas.

Their stories are heart-wrenching and chilling. The suffering is immense, and the grief of not knowing, not seeing, and not hearing from their loved ones is torture.

Many of you will remember my hard-fought battle against Boko Haram and my many trips to Nigeria on behalf of the Nigerian school girls. In the spirit of my 7-year journey declaring, "Bring Back Our Girls," to find the Nigerian schoolgirls who were kidnapped in Chibok by the terrorist group Boko Haram, I am launching today the same kind of advocacy and demanding the release of the Israeli hostages kidnapped by the terrorist group Hamas, and I say: Bring back the hostages.

It is time now to turn our attention to the Middle East. We need humanitarian aid, and we need to bring back the hostages.

Next Wednesday, I invite you to join me at a press conference to show our