

than 36 years ago. When everyone else was skeptical, including my own family, she believed in me.

Marie is passionate about saving our landscapes and our environment. She has been the champion of the Piedmont Environmental Council for decades. She has served on the boards of the League of Conservation Voters and the Trust for Public Land.

She is also a master gardener. While working in her garden high above the Potomac River, she was bitten by a copperhead a few years ago and rushed to Sibley Memorial Hospital for the antivenom. When she was struck again by a copperhead a few years later, the emergency room doctor noted that he had only treated two snake bites in his life; both were Marie. It will come as no surprise that he was, yet again, the attending physician on her third snake bite. I do my best to avoid her garden.

Marie's public service history is both remarkable and intriguing. She was the deputy to the national director of Head Start where she also served as the direct liaison to First Lady Lady Bird Johnson for 4 years.

Later, she led the Sasha Bruce House, a compassionate home for lost children in our Capital City, the abused, abandoned, neglected, and run-aways.

Marie has won many awards in her fight for democracy, and in 2019, I was privileged to award her the Clara Mortenson Beyer Women and Children First Award for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to empowering women.

On a recent visit to her McLean home, we were regaled with the most recent bow and arrow and deer story in her garden—that same cursed garden. It was in season, of course.

Megan and I are most fortunate to count Marie Ridder as our beloved friend. Our America is the long beneficiary of her creativity, her energy, and her tireless commitment to others.

When you earn her trust, Marie will even tell you about her date with John F. Kennedy.

ARE YOU BETTER OFF TODAY

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

Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, in the final week of the 1980 Presidential campaign, former President Ronald Reagan posed an important question to voters: "Are you better off today than you were 4 years ago?" We don't have to wait until November to answer that same question today. The answer lies right outside this building.

If you are not sure whether you are better off than you were 4 years ago, consider that last year, Washington, D.C., saw 274 homicides. That is the highest number in almost 30 years.

Homicides are up 23 percent from 2019 in Chicago. In New York City, homicides are up 23 percent from 2019. Felony assault is up 35 percent. Car thefts

have almost tripled. A record 5,363 NYPD officers were injured on the job last year. In major cities across this country, organized retail theft has claimed more than \$112 billion in property, up from just \$94 billion in 2021.

There are two reasons for this, Madam Speaker: bad policy and bad messaging.

House Republicans are committed to restoring law and order and opposing all efforts to defund the police and cracking down on rogue prosecutors who refuse to hold criminals accountable.

We passed into law a bill to stop the D.C. Council's dangerous plan to change the criminal code. It would have ended mandatory minimums for many offenses and reduced maximum penalties for burglary, carjacking, and robbery.

According to a recent article from The Washington Post, the D.C. Council is finally starting to reverse its position on these radical, progressive criminal reforms that it has been considering. It turns out that advocating for criminals isn't the best approach to stopping crime.

D.C. lawmakers are also starting to see the damage caused by catch and release. If things keep moving in this direction, we might even begin to see those accused of violent personal crimes remain behind bars while they await trial.

Last year, this city also experienced the worst officer shortage it has seen in 50 years. This is a direct result of the defund the police movement. It was more than a ridiculous slogan. It was a dangerous slogan that, unfortunately, garnered some traction around the country. It has become a cynical rallying cry, and I believe it is the reason law enforcement agencies across the country are having difficulty filling open positions.

Another reason is, frankly, it is a more dangerous job today than it was a few short years ago. Last year, 378 officers were shot. Madam Speaker, 46 of them lost their lives. That is up 20 percent from 2020.

So, no, we are not better off than we were 4 years ago, Madam Speaker. In fact, those who live and visit our Nation's Capital are not better off than they were just 2 years ago.

House Republicans are proud to stand with the men and women who keep our communities safe. We are also committed to taking on the extreme policies of the Biden administration, including bail reform and our wide-open southern border.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ZINKE) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Guard both our hearts and our mouths today, O God. Let no thought enter our hearts that may hinder our closeness with You, nor let any word come from our mouths that is not meant for Your hearing. But set a guard over our mouths; keep watch over the door of our lips.

Do not let any unwholesome talk leave our mouths, but only that which is helpful to the value of the institution and the benefit of the people we have been called to serve.

Show us how to speak in such a way that edifies the conversation. Despite our differences, may we vow to benefit those with whom we dialogue.

Inspire us to energize and not jeopardize discussion, to invigorate and not denigrate our interlocutors. May we cultivate dignity and demonstrate respect for all with whom we engage this day.

Encourage us to build one another up, according to their needs, that we may succeed in strengthening the body and repairing the divisions that weaken our purpose to do good works in our service to You and to this country.

O God, our guardian, guide, and stay, abide with us this day, and grant us the blessing of Your divine guidance.

In Your sovereign name we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr.

THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNIZING ROBERT DAVID LAUGHLIN

(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. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Robert David Laughlin of Boalsburg in Centre County, Pennsylvania.

A lifelong central Pennsylvanian, Robert was born on March 9, 1924, in Altoona, and will be celebrating his 100th birthday this coming Saturday.

At 18, he enlisted in the United States Navy and was selected for officer training. He received his commission at the U.S. Naval Academy under an accelerated program for wartime midshipmen. At that time, he was one of the youngest commissioned officers in the fleet.

He served during World War II in the Pacific region as radar officer aboard the USS *Pittsburgh* and later aboard the USS *Pasadena*.

A Penn State graduate, Robert spent his career as a physicist studying electro-optical research for early airborne reconnaissance platforms and holds several U.S. patents. He later served as science adviser to the Governor of Pennsylvania under three administrations.

Most notably, he helped coordinate the initial State government response to the Three Mile Island accident in 1979.

Today, Robert is actively working on computer repairs, studying quantum physics, and spending time with his 8 grandkids and 10 great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Robert a happy birthday.

WORLD STAGE WEAKNESS

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, before President Biden took office, there was no war in Ukraine, Israel had not suffered a brutal attack from Iran-backed Hamas terrorists, and America was respected on the world stage.

Now, 3 years into the Biden administration, a message has been sent far and wide to our enemies and adversaries around the world: America's leadership is weak. Whether it was the botched Afghanistan withdrawal, the appeasement of Iran, or the delay and downright refusal to stand up to Moscow, the world has been plunged into chaos.

Now, we must deal with the consequences. Military servicemembers'

lives are at risk, Mr. Speaker. Our enemies are emboldened more than ever. That is why House Republicans are pursuing policies that counter China, promote peace through strength, and support our troops and allies to deter increasing global threats.

We are committed to the security of the United States of America.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1500

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas) at 3 p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Avery M. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

SECURING THE CITIES IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4403) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make improvements to the Securing the Cities program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4403

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Securing the Cities Improvement Act".

SEC. 2. STC PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY, METRICS, AND CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.

Section 1928 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 596b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking "high-risk urban areas" and inserting "jurisdictions designated under subsection (c)";

(2) by amending paragraph (7) of subsection (b) to read as follows:

"(7) establish performance metrics and milestones for the STC program, monitor expenditures for the program, and track the performance against program metrics and milestones; and";

(3) in subsection (c)(1), by striking "from among high-risk urban areas under section 2003" and inserting "based on the capability and capacity of the jurisdiction relating to preparedness and response, as well as the relative threat to such jurisdiction, vulnerability of such jurisdiction, and consequences for such jurisdiction, regarding terrorist attacks and other high-consequence events utilizing nuclear or other radiological materials"; and

(4) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

"(d) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report regarding participation in the STC program, the establishment of metrics and milestones for the STC program, performance against such metrics and milestones, and plans for any changes to the STC program."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CARTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4403.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4403. Since 2007, DHS has operated the Securing the Cities program to help cities prepare for and respond to nuclear or radiological threats.

H.R. 4403, the Securing the Cities Improvement Act will remove the requirement for a jurisdiction to be designated as a high-risk urban area by FEMA, diminishing the uncertainty for cities to be removed from the STC program.

Additionally, this legislation will provide transparency by requiring the department to establish performance metrics and milestones for the STC program to track its performance and monitor its expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman CARTER for his work on this. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4430, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are here today to consider my bill, H.R. 4403, the Securing the Cities Improvement Act.

My bill will help cities build and maintain their security capabilities against nuclear or radiological threats.

While I will emphasize the critical nature of my bill, its effectiveness