

In the month of January, more than 176,000 illegal immigrants attempted to enter the United States. That was on the heels of the month of December when more than 300,000 illegal immigrants again crossed the southern border.

Because of the open border policies championed by President Biden and enacted by Secretary Mayorkas, these illegal immigrants were bused to our major cities. The consequences of this decision have been felt in nearly every community in the United States.

Schools have been converted into shelters for illegal immigrants. In places like New York City and Denver, government services have been scaled back, and city employees, like librarians, have seen their hours cut in order to provide handouts to people who are in the United States illegally.

At a time when more than 300 suspected terrorists have attempted to enter the U.S., President Biden has thrown open our gates and encouraged this crisis to continue.

Ending catch and release, giving our Border Patrol agents the tools and resources that they need, and resuming construction of the border wall are vital to keeping our Nation safe.

It is time for President Biden to reverse his disastrous border policies and put a stop to this crisis.

CELEBRATING VIRGIN ISLANDS HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, this week heralds Virgin Islands History Month. It is the beginning of a monthlong celebration in the Virgin Islands of our history.

My being on the House floor as a representative, representing my people of the Virgin Islands, is the culmination of generations of people's work. My presence here is built upon the indomitable spirit of Virgin Islanders whose legacies are woven into the very fabric of our culture—marked by their bravery, visionary leadership, and profound sacrifice.

Our homeland is a mosaic of rich cultures and a history as diverse as its people, a history that is not just defined by the actions of a select few but a legacy that elevates the collective greatness of all Virgin Islanders. Above all, we are about self-determination that has been a chronicle of epic feats.

As early as 2200 B.C., the Virgin Islands was originally settled by pre-Columbian indigenous groups. In 1493, we had the first instance of self-determination on our island as Columbus' expedition encountered strong resistance from a Carib war party at Salt River Bay on the island of St. Croix, preventing his men from establishing a foothold.

Over the next 200 years, control of the islands shifted among various Eu-

ropean nations. The Caribs fought colonization, launching relentless raids until they were completely eradicated by 1590.

This enduring resistance is a hallmark of our ancestral legacy. During 1733, the enslaved also uprose on the island of St. John.

The Akwamu kings and Queen Breffu of present-day Ghana galvanized enslaved people on St. John to seize control of the island for over 6 months in their pursuit of self-liberation. This valiant act of defiance forced Danish authorities to call the Spanish Armada and the French fleet to quell the rebellion and reassert control.

This weekend, we celebrated their decision to commit collective suicide rather than go back into slavery. The burning desire for freedom and the belief that such should be a birthright, no matter the fabricated classification of their oppressors, was not lost in the passing of time.

On the island of St. Croix in 1848, enslaved individuals initiated an armed insurrection that ultimately led to their emancipation. This act of strategic ingenuity positioned the Virgin Islands as one of only two instances in the Western Hemisphere where enslaved people successfully fought for and gained their freedom through an organized revolt.

Although Virgin Islanders obtained liberation, they soon discovered that their emancipation and equality were not synonymous.

In 1878, in a revolt over labor laws, which left them pretty much as enslaved peoples living on plantations, a rebellion was led by what we call Queens Mary, Matilda, Agnes, and Susannah.

Even though the movement resulted in bloodshed, their deaths were not in vain. Their struggles and sacrifices for improved working conditions served as a foundational influence on the 1892 Coal Workers' Strike spearheaded by Queen Coziah. This was a pivotal source of inspiration to stand against oppression and fight for greater opportunities.

We continue to fight in the Virgin Islands, and although we still face hardships such as our continued battle to attain the fundamental and constitutional rights denied by the Insular Cases, rights that are given to all Americans except those who live in territories, we are in an era that will be a catalyst to spur on the next revolution.

To stop now, even for a moment, would be sacrilege to the countless sacrifices and bloodshed of our ancestors. We must not take for granted the gifts that they have given us through their bloodshed. We must fight on for full equality, self-determination, and our own liberation.

BORDER CRISIS IS TOP ISSUE

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, this Chamber will host President Biden as he delivers his third State of the Union Address.

He will likely tout his anti-energy agenda and out-of-control government spending that has resulted in crippling inflation not seen in decades, not seen since I was a senior in high school.

He will also attempt to blame congressional Republicans for his own failure to secure our borders, which, as most Americans know, is a crisis caused by this President.

In a rare recent visit to the border in Brownsville, Texas, President Biden expressed a dire need for Republicans to "show a little spine" and pass legislation.

Some of the folks living in that border town saw straight through the visit. One resident put it best. "By a stroke of the pen," he said, "you could stop this. You don't need Congress." Others called the visit too little, too late. I couldn't agree more.

This isn't just an important issue for the folks living along the border. In fact, this issue is the number one issue facing the country.

It is an issue in my home State, where 50 Tennessee National Guard soldiers volunteered recently to deploy to the southern border to help Border Patrol officials combat drug, crime, and human trafficking.

Tennessee is known as the Volunteer State because of its deep tradition of volunteer military service, a nickname that comes with a lot of pride. It is just unfortunate that 50 men and women are having to do what the President could do—but won't—and work to secure the border.

This is a self-inflicted crisis that has turned every State, including my own State of Tennessee, into a border State.

The President halted border wall construction and ended the successful remain in Mexico program. Since taking office, he has also admitted more than 1 million illegal immigrants into the country in a blatant abuse of the executive parole authority that Congress had granted to the executive branch.

Despite having no way of tracking many of these people, the Biden administration continues this historic catch and release scheme.

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It sends a message to the rest of the world that our borders are open. None of these disastrous policies require an act of Congress, just as reversing them won't require new legislation.

There have been more than 8.7 million illegal border crossings nationwide under President Biden, more than 7.2 million crossings at the southern border alone. That is greater than the population of 36 States in our Nation.

More than 20,000 Communist Chinese nationals have illegally crossed the southern border just since October 1 of last year. They make up the fastest growing demographic entering our

country illegally. You don't need a spy balloon if you can just walk right into the country.

For 35 months in a row under this administration, the number of illegal immigrants encountered at our southern border was higher than the worst month under the previous President, President Trump. We are on track to break more records this fiscal year, as CBP has already reported more than 1 million encounters.

I would argue we no longer have a border crisis in this country, Mr. Speaker, we have a border catastrophe.

OPPENHEIMER'S UNTOLD STORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIMENEZ). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, this weekend, Oppenheimer is expected to win multiple Oscars.

In the film, we watched the pain and guilt in J.R. Oppenheimer's face when he heard what the atomic bomb did to the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

What the film didn't show—and the story that remains untold—is how thousands of New Mexican families were exposed to harmful amounts of radiation.

We didn't see how radioactive ash rained down on children, families, and farms from that first atomic bomb tested in New Mexico.

We didn't see the tears and pain as those families saw their loved ones die of cancers and rare diseases tied to radiation exposure.

So I present this film one more award: the award for the most incomplete story—for the missing, the countless American lives lost as a result of the Trinity test.

Congress can write a better ending to this story. A bipartisan coalition of Senators and Representatives have amendments to the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, which would finally compensate New Mexico downwinders and uranium workers, as well as workers in Missouri, Alaska, Kentucky, and Tennessee, and downwinders in other States who were left out of that original Radiation Exposure Compensation Act.

Earlier this year, these amendments were included in the NDAA as passed by the Senate. Sadly, Republican leadership for some inexplicable reason stripped these amendments from the final NDAA.

But today, soon, Congress can write a happier ending. We can now include it in our future funding bills.

Let's write an ending that honors those who sacrificed everything for our national security. Congress can do it. I call on my colleagues to join this bipartisan effort for justice.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, as we begin Women's History Month, we must remember something historic that has happened to women and to women's freedoms.

For 50 years, women enjoyed limited but certain reproductive freedoms. A Trump-packed Supreme Court overturned that history, overturned Roe v. Wade, and all of a sudden history, a sad history was made when for the first time in history women lost an essential right.

We are going back to a very sad time when women cannot make decisions about how and when and if to have a family without governmental interference.

We are going back to a sad time in history when women who were suffering complications from pregnancy, who were suffering miscarriages, cannot get healthcare, but instead, get handcuffs.

We are suffering a sad time in history when IVF is now prohibited in places like Alabama; and let us remind everybody, almost 200 Republicans in this very Chamber have voted for, have co-sponsored legislation which mirrors the Alabama law, which prohibits IVF.

As we begin Women's History Month, let's not turn back the clock on women's progress.

CONGRATULATING BRUCE REDMOND

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Bruce Redmond on becoming the 2024 Georgia Farmer of the Year.

Bruce owns Shiloh Farms, which is a 2,800-acre farm located in Effingham County consisting of wet and drylands.

Larry Redmond passed down the art of farming to his son, instilling in him the essential skills and values needed to cultivate the land.

Bruce is a very successful farmer, having been named the Young Farmer of the Year for Effingham County, Georgia Outstanding Young Farmer, and Effingham County Friend of 4-H.

Shiloh Farms is one of the three certified TifQuik growers in the world and the largest producer of Bahia grass seed in the southeast.

The University of Georgia's Cooperative Extension named Bruce as Farmer of the Year because of his cooperation with conservation research initiatives and dedication to sustainable farming.

He will represent Georgia in competing for Southeastern Farmer of the Year in October.

I wish Bruce luck, and I thank Bruce for his dedication to Georgia agriculture.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF JOY POVEC

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of Joy Povec.

Joy grew up in Savannah, Georgia, where she graduated from Robert W. Groves High School and went on to earn a degree from Draughon Business College.

Joy and her husband, Michael, lived in many different States during which Joy held a variety of positions.

After working in real estate, Joy went on to work for Lockheed Martin as a technical writer during the Space Shuttle program.

Joy was also an active member of her community. She was a dedicated member of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, the Chatham County Republican Party, and the Froebel Circle.

In 2009, Joy was honored with the J.C. Lewis Outstanding Republican of the Year Award by Chatham County.

Joy also served as a delegate to many local and State Republican conventions, and she was proud to attend the second inauguration of George W. Bush.

My thoughts and prayers go out to her husband of 55 years, her children, grandchildren, and all else who loved her.

RECOGNIZING JOHN FORBES

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize John Forbes for being designated as the grand marshal for the 2024 St. Patrick's Day Parade in Savannah.

For his service and community involvement, the Savannah community is proud to extend Forbes the opportunity to serve as the face of this St. Patrick's Day Parade on its 200th anniversary.

Forbes is continuing a family legacy by serving in the St. Patrick's Day ceremony. His father, John J. Forbes, Jr., was the St. Patrick's Day committee chairman in the early 1990s and was selected as grand marshal for the 1998 celebration.

Following the example set by his father, Forbes became involved in the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee in the 1980s and was subsequently named the general chairman for the committee in 2007.

Though filled with fun activities, the parade has a deeper meaning for Forbes. The holiday is one of remembrance and fellowship as locals and visitors gather to reflect on the area's Irish ancestry.

Forbes is a true community man, embodying the current celebration and preserving the meaning and purpose of its history.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate John.

CONGRATULATING MARK HENDRIX

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mark Hendrix for recently being named Superior Court Judge for the Atlantic Judicial Circuit.

Established by the Georgia General Assembly, the six-county circuit covers Liberty, Long, Bryan, Evans, McIntosh, and Tattnall Counties.

Hendrix received a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida in 1995. In the years prior, he earned his juris doctor from Mercer's Walter F. George School of Law in 1999.

His past work and experience illustrate that he is a valuable addition to the judicial system. Along with starting his private practice, Hendrix has served as solicitor general for Liberty County, Long County, and Richmond Hill.