

are really trying to do. Our real goal is to root out this waste, fraud, and abuse to protect benefits for our eligible recipients.

Kathy Hochul said it herself in her own words. She pointed out how fraudulent the program is. In July 2024, the Governor said that the State's Medicaid Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program has "become a racket." She said it is "one of the most abused programs in the entire history of the State of New York." She said that the current trajectory of Medicaid spending is "not sustainable."

Other Democrats have pointed out the same things. Attorney General Garland, President Biden's Attorney General, in a 2024 speech regarding healthcare fraud, announced charges against 193 defendants for over \$2.75 billion in false Medicare and Medicaid claims, and that was just one event.

New York Attorney General Letitia James, in a January 2025 speech, said: "Companies that illegally profit by exploiting Medicaid patients steal taxpayer money and undermine the healthcare system that all New Yorkers rely on."

To my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, let's work together to actually fix this. Let's work together to go after those fraudsters to eliminate this abuse that we are seeing in this system so we can preserve this very important program that our seniors, our disabled, our children with developmental disabilities, and vulnerable Americans rely on. Let's not play partisan politics with something that is so critically important to so many New Yorkers and Americans across the country.

ISAIAH MISALEGALU'S VOICE IS SAMOAN SILK

(Ms. LEE of Nevada was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate who I believe will be the next winner of "American Idol," Sierra Vista High School's own and Nevada Third District constituent Isaiah Misalegalu.

Over the weekend, I watched Isaiah get his golden ticket to Hollywood after singing "A Song for You," with his uncle playing the guitar by his side. With a voice like his, it is no wonder they are calling him Samoan Silk.

Not only is Isaiah a powerful and talented singer, but he also shines on the football field and volleyball court and in leading his school's Polynesian Club.

No matter what Isaiah does, I hope he knows that the entire southern Nevada community is behind him chasing his dreams. I wish him the best of luck on his "American Idol" journey.

□ 1045

CR FUNDING FOR DEFENSE AND VETERAN PROGRAMS

(Mr. LAMALFA of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, as we take on the continuing resolution, once again it is not the best way of doing business around here. We should be grinding through the twelve different points that the appropriations process has.

At least there is good news as CRs go in that part of it that is being plussed up includes the issue with our military.

A lot of times when CRs occur, our military is the one that gets shorted on that. They have to plan for the long term for weapons systems, what they need in upgraded facilities, and take care of the personnel in the process. This does boost up our military needs to an extent in the CR.

It will upgrade all four branches—Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines—that are on the front lines. It will strengthen their readiness and help modernize some of their infrastructure. Delays, of course, put these projects at risk. That is why it is important that the CR be done timely.

As I mentioned, family housing is a very important aspect for the comfort and efficiency of our personnel. It is directed towards improvements in the living conditions for the servicemembers and their families. Stable funding makes sure these projects stay on track.

The Arlington National Cemetery, of course, has amazing meaning to our whole country, especially those that have fallen and would be interred there. There are improvements there for a better process for people to be able to get in and out of the facility, as well as the ceremonies that might be held there.

We have a significant improvement in veterans' healthcare, medical services, community care, and facility improvements to ensure veterans can get the good healthcare that they need and deserve. Uncertainty does not help that to remain. That is why passing the CR at this time is important.

For retirement homes for veterans, it ensures they will have facilities that continue to stay on track, whether new ones are built or continued upgrades and maintenance is not passed over.

One of the aspects that we are disappointed with not getting into the continuing resolution has bipartisan support. I am pleased to work with my colleague from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE) on what is known as Secure Rural Schools. That is a fund that we do every single year. It is nothing new. It is nothing that is going to plus-up spending around here or require additional budget effort. It is something that is basically there to supplement the income at the local level, for counties.

It is called SRS, Secure Rural Schools. A large part of it goes to help local schools, as well as county roads. This funding used to come from the timber industry which overlaps so many of the areas that the SRS fund would go to.

With the decimation of the timber industry starting really in the late sev-

enties and the eighties, and the spotted owl movement and other environmental concerns that have made it just nearly impossible in some cases to do the timber harvest that is really needed to be done, this program came along and replaced those receipts.

It is fairly tough every year to come here. Our county supervisors come here hat in hand every year and ask us to support the SRS one more time. These are dollars that have to come from the U.S. Treasury rather than from the forest and the industry.

Until such point as we can get a much more viable timber industry going again in this country with a much more streamlined process of permitting, especially on Federal Forest Service land, why should it be difficult to do things that make good sense as far as thinning our forests and harvesting from it? It is a renewable resource. We plant it back, and the trees grow again.

What we do instead is we seem to ignore that fact and just let them burn year after year, especially in the Western States. In my own district, we had a million-acre fire 3 years ago; a 400,000-acre fire last year; a 600,000-acre fire a couple of years before that, time after time.

All my colleagues in the Western States pretty much can point to that same thing happening in their States as well, millions of acres burned every year in the West. For some reason, the U.S. is now the number one importer of wood and paper products and the number one importer of lumber. What are we doing here?

We have to come hat in hand each year and ask for funding from the Treasury to replace an industry that we need and to replace wood and paper products that we use regularly in our daily lives. Heaven knows, this place goes through a lot of paper. Why should we have that come from foreign forests somewhere?

When I am at the railroad crossing back home waiting on a train, I see all these loads of lumber and Canadian wheat coming south. Why aren't we doing that at home? We need to get SRS in the next round.

MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD

(Ms. KELLY of Illinois was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today in defiance of the House Republicans' partisan funding bill.

Democrats pulled up a seat for Republican leadership at the negotiating table to discuss a bipartisan solution, but Republicans walked away.

What did Republicans propose instead?

A blank check to Donald Trump and Elon Musk to take money away from you and spend as they will.

For years, I have heard my Republican colleagues talk about the power of the purse and how that power belongs to Congress and Congress alone.

Republicans loved to talk about Article I of the Constitution and insisted on clear checks and balances.

What do I hear now? Silence.

Now that Republicans are in control of Congress, they decide to bend the knee to Donald Trump. Republicans are giving Donald Trump and Elon Musk the power to decide who gets money and who doesn't. Based on these last 8 weeks, we know who Trump prioritizes: his billionaire friends and big corporations. He does not care for veterans, workers with disabilities, children, senior citizens, farmers, or families just trying to make ends meet.

Republicans will try to call this a clean continuing resolution. Believe me, that is a bunch of fill-in-the-blanks because this is far from clean. The Republican funding bill has dirt all over it.

With this bill, the Trump administration will decide construction funding by the Army Corps of Engineers. Trump will cut funds for lead pipe replacements for schools, better water mains to prevent flooding, and better streets for our communities.

Elon Musk and DOGE have proven how little they care for our veterans. They made sweeping staffing cuts to veterans' centers across the country, including in Danville, Illinois. My office has gotten calls from workers and some vets who were fired for no justifiable reason, impacting their own families and the veterans they care for.

The Republican funding bill goes even further, cutting \$23 billion in veterans' benefits. It gives Trump permission to eliminate programs for veterans, including homelessness prevention programs, which could lead to more than 32,000 veterans losing their homes. These are people who defended our country.

Trump would also have the power to reallocate funding dedicated to maternal and child health programs, including Healthy Start, rural maternal health initiatives, and maternity care training.

For over a decade, I have rolled up my sleeves to save mothers who are dying from preventative pregnancy-related causes. In the middle of a maternal mortality crisis, Trump would sign away all the programs that help mothers and babies.

Trump likes to talk a big game about border control and our country's fentanyl crisis. He plays as the world's biggest bully and hits our closest allies with tariffs. Meanwhile, Republicans give Trump the power to steer funding dedicated to stopping the flow of fentanyl and instead spend that money on mass deportation initiatives.

Last September, Kankakee County in my district received funding to help law enforcement crack down on illicit drug trafficking and address the overdose epidemic. That funding would stop under the Republican bill.

You heard at the joint address to Congress last week that RFK, Jr., is free to run with his conspiracy theories

and anti-vaccination lies. This bill would give him broad discretion to spend money as he wishes at the CDC, ignoring critical lifesaving programs like ending the HIV epidemic initiative, Alzheimer's disease programs, and cancer prevention.

If you are not part of the 1 percent, House Republicans and Donald Trump simply do not care about you. It does not matter if you are Democrat, Republican, or Independent. This partisan funding bill proves it. Republicans are giving Donald Trump the green light to do as he wishes, and we all know that he does not have the American people in mind.

I, alongside House Democrats, have also been at the negotiation table, but we will never negotiate away veterans' benefits, healthcare, or people's Social Security. I refuse to betray my constituents. Please stand up, speak out, and make your voices heard.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CISCOMANI). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities towards the President.

CELEBRATING ACCESS INDEPENDENCE'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. CLINE of Virginia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 40th anniversary of Access Independence, a dedicated organization serving people with disabilities in Virginia's Northern Shenandoah Valley.

For four decades, Access Independence has been a beacon of hope and empowerment, promoting independent living through essential services and resources.

Founded in 1985 as one of 17 centers for independent living in Virginia, Access Independence has continuously expanded its impact, offering independent living skills training, peer mentoring, information and referral, and advocacy services to the counties of Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, Warren, and the city of Winchester.

Led by Middletown Mayor Charles Harbaugh and guided by core values of empowerment, integrity, respect, and equal rights, Access Independence's dedicated team has touched thousands of lives. Last year alone, it served 678 clients and generously provided over 200 pieces of medical equipment to those in need.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Access Independence on this significant milestone and wishing them continued success in the years ahead.

REPUBLICANS' EMPTY PROMISES

(Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK of Florida was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, over the last few weeks, Americans have actively watched the

dismantling of Social Security and direct attacks on our seniors, our families, and also our veterans.

I have heard directly from my constituents, and they are scared. They are worried about their next meal. They are worried if they will be able to see their doctors. They are worried if they will be able to retire with dignity. They are worried about the skyrocketing cost of living and the price of groceries. It is because they have heard so much about the cuts to Medicaid, the cuts to SNAP, and the cuts to the VA, all being proposed by the House Republicans.

Let's take a closer look at what the House Republicans are proposing. House Republicans are proposing Medicaid cuts of \$880 billion, SNAP cuts of \$230 billion, Social Security cuts of \$1.5 trillion, Medicare premiums raised by 22 percent, and 83,000 veteran employees being fired.

Let's take a closer look at what they actually promised the American people.

House Republicans have promised the American people to actually put forward bills that will make their life better.

Let's take it to the board. Nothing, nada, nothing has been proposed to help them with their financial situation. To make a visual of it, nothing has been proposed for the American people.

I dare my House Republicans to join House Democrats to put forth bills that will actually help the American people. The American people do not want \$880 billion cut from their healthcare. The American people do not want \$230 billion cut from SNAP and other assistance programs. They want to actually live the American Dream, and they want opportunities.

Right now, House Republicans have offered nothing but a blank piece of paper.

Why, you may ask? Elon Musk says the only way to save America is by jeopardizing our most vulnerable. It is by eliminating entitlement programs. In fact, Mr. Musk said that the biggest issue that he has and what he must do is eliminate these programs.

What types of programs are we talking about?

It is Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans' benefits.

For the American people, this is ridiculous. These are our most vulnerable populations. We had promised our warriors and our heroes that we would be there for them and that we would provide their benefits for them.

What are we doing? I dare House Republicans to join the Democrats and stand up for the American people and to stand with us as we fight for the American people.

□ 1100

I dare House Republicans to stand up for Social Security, to stand up for Medicaid, to stand up for our heroes.

The time is now. Let's stop the madness and make sure that all Americans