

a reformed Palestinian authority empowered to both govern in the West Bank and Gaza.

The ultimate goal for all parties must be a lasting peace, and that can only be reached through a two-state solution.

We have the opportunity to change the trajectory of the lives of children like Malek. In 10 years, he will be 24. The choices we make in the coming weeks and months can either leave him desperate and hopeless, a prime candidate for recruitment from Hamas, or we can give him and the more than 1 million children living in Gaza the opportunity to grow up in a world that has prioritized peace and security. We must work toward ending this war and building a positive future for both Palestinians and Israelis.

#### CELEBRATING COACH LAMAR KIRKLEY'S 50-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Coach Lamar Kirkley's 50-year anniversary with the Savannah Country Day School.

Mr. Kirkley has spent the past five decades coaching and teaching students at Savannah Country Day. He had led the boys' basketball team as well as the boys' and girls' cross-country and tennis team.

Mr. Kirkley has earned a spot in the Greater Savannah Athletic Hall of Fame and received the Teacher of the Year award in 2020 from the Exchange Club of Savannah. He also won the Savannah Morning News Coach of the Year award several times and across many different sports.

Mr. Kirkley was previously a stellar basketball player during his years at Armstrong State University. He has expressed that teaching and coaching go hand in hand, and he has excelled at both.

Mr. Kirkley has an excellent ability to relate to students, colleagues, players, and parents, and continues to excel in his career.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Mr. Kirkley on 50 impactful years at Savannah Country Day, and I thank him for what he has done for our three sons.

#### MOURNING THE LOSS OF VINCENT FORT

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of Vincent Fort, who sadly passed away in December from cancer at the age of 68.

Mr. Fort was a former Democratic leader in the Georgia State Senate and a candidate for Atlanta mayor and Congress, who advocated for causes he believed in for many decades.

After his 1996 election to the 39th District in the State senate, Mr. Fort went on to be re-elected 10 times. Mr. Fort earned his undergraduate degree in history at Central Connecticut State College in 1978 and moved to Atlanta to

study African-American history shortly thereafter. There he wrote his thesis on the sit-in movement at the Atlanta University Center, where he later taught history.

Mr. Fort had several remarkable legislative achievements, including laws that took effect in 2002 targeting abusive lending practices.

Mr. Fort will forever be remembered as a remarkable man who was committed to leadership, justice, and service throughout his life.

Madam Speaker, I can attest to this as I had the honor of serving with Vincent Fort in the Georgia State Senate. CONGRATULATING UNITED WAY'S WOMAN OF THE YEAR STACY JENNINGS

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Stacy Jennings on being named United Way's 2025 Woman of the Year.

Ms. Jennings has been a longtime volunteer and the heart of community service in Savannah. She has spent 33 years with the United Way of the Coastal Empire, where she has served on the board, several committees, and helped fundraise.

Ms. Jennings is also the executive director of communications for the Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education. She has proven herself to be a dedicated leader and impactful server of the community by supporting families and students across the community within the school system.

Ms. Jennings' honorable achievement as United Way's Woman of the Year will be celebrated in March at the Women Who Rule event, hosted at the Savannah Convention Center.

She currently serves on the marketing committee and has not stopped her efforts to join new committees since she started at the United Way of the Coastal Empire.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Ms. Jennings on this incredible accomplishment and thank her for her dedicated service to the city of Savannah.

#### MOURNING THE LOSS OF SHERIFF CHARLES WILBERT "CHUNK" JONES

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of former McIntosh County Sheriff, Charles Wilbert "Chunk" Jones.

Mr. Jones lived an honorable life, serving in the U.S. Army's D Company. He also served in Vietnam back in 1968.

Mr. Jones' career in law enforcement began in 1971 with the Brunswick Police Department and he later joined the city of Darien Police Department. After joining the city of Darien, Mr. Jones was promoted to the chief of police.

After his time at the Darien Police Department, Mr. Jones joined the Georgia State Patrol where he graduated as a State trooper. He also returned to his hometown and accepted the captain position with the city of Darien. He then won his first sheriff's election to serve the community from 1993 to 1998.

Mr. Jones was also a commercial shrimp fisherman and captain of his

shrimp boat, Lady Vanessa, which was named after his daughter.

Mr. Jones married his high school sweetheart, the late Brenda Marie Jones, with whom he shared three children: Christopher, Vanessa, and Felica.

Madam Speaker, today we honor his life and hold his family in our thoughts and prayers.

#### CONGRATULATING SYDNEY STERLACE WHO FINISHED THIRD ON "THE VOICE"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the incredible journey of Sydney Sterlace, who finished third on season 26 of "The Voice."

Sydney, a young singer from West Seneca, New York, in my district, has inspired not just our community but viewers across the country.

Her extraordinary talent was undeniable from an early age. With the support of her loving family, especially her mother, she began her singing journey at the age of 7, participating in local talent shows.

By the time she was 10, she won first place in the Erie County Fair talent competition.

Since then, Sydney has performed the national anthem at a Buffalo Bills football game, countless times for the Buffalo Bisons baseball team, and this year at a Buffalo Sabres hockey game.

She is also a regular performer at the annual Music is Art festival, organized by Robby Takac, one of the founding members of the Goo Goo Dolls, who is also from my district.

At just 16 years old, Sydney accomplished what so many dream of: a four-chair turn at her blind audition for "The Voice," and a run all the way to the finale of one of the biggest singing competitions in the world.

Over the course of this season, Sydney showed her incredible range and artistry, and her duet with Gwen Stefani, who also served as her coach while on the show, was the perfect way to cap off a season of unforgettable moments.

Throughout it all, Sydney had the endless support of her family, friends, and our entire community. From accompanying Sydney on her journey to California for the competition to welcoming her home at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport upon her return, her friends were always by her side to cheer her on, especially Kate, Lily, Izzy, Alannah, Holly, and Erin.

Sydney's success extends beyond "The Voice." Last year, she won a challenge promoted by Broadway Evolved, which led to a weeklong Broadway workshop with Tony-nominated actress Betsy Wolfe, but what stands out most is Sydney's humility and heart.

Sydney has made our entire community so proud with her talent, her hard

work, and her poise throughout the entire competition. She has carried herself with grace and determination, inspiring the next generation of talented artists.

While this chapter of “The Voice” may have ended, I have no doubt the next chapter of a long and successful career is ahead of Sydney.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of all western New York, I thank and congratulate Sydney for sharing her voice.

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REMEMBERING CORNELIUS J. KEANE

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise in remembrance of Cornelius J. Keane, whose life was defined by service, family, and enduring dedication to our community.

As someone who was blessed to call him a friend, I can tell you Neil’s love for his family was matched only by his unwavering dedication to serving our community, a calling he fulfilled with distinction throughout his remarkable career.

A Buffalo native, Neil’s career with the Buffalo Fire Department spanned nearly four decades, where he rose to the position of commissioner, embodying courage and leadership every step of the way. As commissioner, he led with compassion and integrity, always putting the needs of others first, and setting a standard of excellence for those who followed in his footsteps.

Throughout his decades of service to the Buffalo Fire Department, Neil dedicated himself to protecting the safety and well-being of the community he loved, the City of Good Neighbors.

Neil’s work extended far beyond the firehouse. His commitment to Buffalo was evident in his efforts to make the city a safer, stronger, and better place for all its residents.

He was a proud member of the Buffalo Professional Firefighters Association Local 282, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the East Coast Retired Firefighters Association. He was a devoted fan of the Buffalo Bills, the Buffalo Sabres, and the New York Yankees.

Neil’s life was an inspiration to all who had the privilege of knowing him, and his legacy will live on through the many lives that he touched.

Neil was a loving husband to his wife of 54 years, Ellen; a devoted father to Sheila, Bob, and Terry; and a cherished papa to his beloved grandchildren. He was one of 16 children and had a deep commitment to the values instilled in him as a member of the Keane family. That sense of duty guided his extraordinary legacy of work and public service.

May we all take inspiration from Neil’s devotion to his family, his steadfast service to our community, and his unwavering commitment to making the world a better place. May he rest in peace.

CALIFORNIA RESTRICTIONS ON GAS VEHICLES

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, this morning I highlight a piece of legislation I intend to cosponsor that is sponsored by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE), my good colleague. It is known as the Preserving Choice in Vehicle Purchases Act.

The bill aims to prevent the U.S. EPA from issuing Clean Air Act waivers that would enable State-level bans or restrictions on gas and diesel vehicles. This bill would ensure that Americans can select vehicles based on their individual needs and financial situations without undue government interference.

My home State of California is once again leading on the wrong things. The agency called the California Air Resources Board is intending to ban the sale of gas and diesel-powered cars, trucks, and SUVs by 2035, only 10 model years from now.

Now, who the heck is CARB, especially since this has far-reaching effects across the rest of the country? There are six or seven other States that are seeking to emulate what CARB is doing.

This regulation seeks to force a transition to electric vehicles regardless of their affordability, availability, or practicality for many residents and families. The Biden administration EPA has granted the necessary waiver very recently at the end of this era, allowing CARB to enforce this mandate at the State of California level, which sets a precedent that can lead to similar bans in other States across the country. Believe me, it will happen. Several other States are already looking at this.

You end up with the manufacturers having to produce two different types of vehicles for this State or that State, making them more expensive, and heaven knows the difficulty that is producing electric vehicles anyway.

Rural Americans and rural Californians face long commutes and rely heavily on reliable, affordable vehicles. I represent a very rural area. There are people who are afraid to take electric vehicles very far with the inability to know if they can charge them and make it back.

The mandate poses significant financial challenges, as EVs remain more expensive than their gas- and diesel-powered counterparts. They have more expensive tires, and they are harder to get parts for, among other things.

There is a very, very limited charging infrastructure. The fact that the Biden administration has put aside billions for charging stations and only built about seven or eight in the whole country over the last 3 years shows that it is very impractical.

EVs are an unviable option for many. The mandate would not only increase

the cost of living for individuals and families but reduce transportation options for many rural residents and even urban residents that maybe have a car that is already paid for that they would soon see they wouldn’t have the ability to keep. Additionally, part of the mandate is quietly eliminating fueling stations, making fuel more expensive, and making fuel harder to produce. In my home State of California and the country, when they ban the pipeline coming from Canada, it makes fuel harder to get. It is coming from all edges. Taxing people out of this is part of their goal.

Of course, the power grid of my home State, California, is already struggling to deliver electricity to meet existing energy demands, with the currently frequent blackouts and energy shortages. We have these blackouts in my part of the State, and we are starting to see them in southern California with the unfortunate massive suffering going on due to the wildfires. They have to preemptively shut off the power to particular areas if they think the wind is going to blow too hard and cause foliage to blow off trees, shrubs, and whatever onto the power lines and cause an outage or a blackout and, therefore, a fire along with it, as has happened many times in my district.

Mandating this shift to electric vehicles would place additional strain on the grid, leading to more outages and much higher energy costs. California has not demonstrated the capacity to expand the grid infrastructure. Indeed, they are tearing down dams in my district—and they have their eye on more—that make clean, CO<sub>2</sub>-free hydroelectric power. The grid gets even tighter due to this. This raises serious concerns about the feasibility of this mandate, yet they force it forward.

The practicality of converting to all these electric vehicles, as well as the appliances that California, Biden, and others are trying to do with electric stoves, water heaters, and all that, means where are the materials and the minerals going to come from to produce these electric appliances and vehicles.

We can’t mine as it is. On average, it takes 29 years to build a copper mine in this country. Are we going to import it all? Are we going to have poor kids and slave labor in other countries continue to supply us so we can be pristine?

CARB’s members are not actually directly accountable to the public. The resources board is appointed by the Governor. They don’t have to answer to anybody, and they frequently don’t. We have a direct threat to consumer choice.

Indeed, this is what Governor Newsom wants us to have, fires that burn out our vehicles. We need to have him stand aside and let President Trump lead the way on allowing us to have our vehicles.