

actions. We salute President Biden, and we recognize him for everything that he has done and committed to and the changes he has made.

#### GRATEFUL AND HONORED TO SERVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to serve Texas' 32nd Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives for the 119th Congress.

As a Texas-educated attorney for over 30 years, I know what it takes to fight for those who need it most. Throughout my career, I have stood up for workers, those living with disabilities, students who are being taken advantage of by for-profit colleges, and so many of my fellow Texans who needed someone fighting alongside them.

I took those skills to the Texas State legislature where I fought for Medicaid expansion, a fair judicial court system, consumer protections, and for women to make their own healthcare decisions free from government intrusion.

When extremists decided to target the LGBTQ community in Texas, I raised my voice and helped kill hundreds of anti-LGBTQ bills that would have hurt the members of my community and their families.

As the trusted voice for Texas' 32nd Congressional District in Congress, I am ready to deliver real results for my neighbors. That means working to lower costs across the board; support and expand infrastructure for the fastest growing metroplex in the country; secure our southern border; and make healthcare safe, affordable, and reliable for all Americans.

My home State of Texas plays a huge role in powering our Nation and our world. We have a massive economy that supports millions of jobs, and we are Mexico's largest trading partner.

Texas also has the largest border with our neighbor to the south, and it will be up to Texas and Texas Democrats to provide meaningful solutions to the problems that we face. I am ready to lead on these important issues.

I am thrilled I will be serving on three committees this Congress that will help me deliver these results to make life better for Texas' businesses, middle-class families, and our seniors.

On the House Homeland Security Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee, I will work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to keep our Nation safe and to strengthen our alliances around the world.

On the House Administration Committee, I will work tirelessly to protect the people's right to vote and to make sure this institution, the people's House, functions in a way that is better for Texans and all of our Nation's citizens.

Let me be clear: The work begins right now.

In Congress, I am committed to rising above the division and coming up with bipartisan solutions to solve our Nation's biggest problems. I will work with anyone, Democrat or Republican, who is willing to come together, put partisanship aside, and to make life better for the people that we all serve.

I want my constituents to know how grateful I am to have this opportunity, and I wake up every day with the mission and the purpose to serve them in this Chamber. I thank them so much, and I want them to know that I will always have their back here in the United States Congress.

#### CALIFORNIA FIRES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, we are all watching the ferocious Palisades, Eaton, Altadena, and Hurst fires expand along California's beautiful Coast. I can recall my many trips there. Surely we all love the Tournament of Roses Parade and the magic of Hollywood.

Our hearts go out today and forever to come to the thousands of displaced people, the brave, unrelenting fire and rescue crews, and the public officials trying to bring order in the midst of chaos.

Let me share. Having practiced as a city and regional planner long before my election to Congress, I was awestruck when I visited there at the large number of homes built high on forested mountainsides with many sizeable mansions at their very peaks.

In fact, most recently, as ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Subcommittee, I was flown on an extensive tour over Los Angeles by a U.S. Army Corps helicopter to evaluate freshwater challenges in that drought-prone region.

As the granddaughter of a forester, experience led me to question how such densely developed communities with housing perched on forested ascending hillsides could be evacuated in the event of emergency. My stomach became queasy at the thought, and my premonition is now being affirmed.

Last fall, I called for Congress to return to Washington to fully fund FEMA and the Small Business Administration to assist with disaster relief efforts. It took until late December to approve \$28 billion in funding, well below the \$40 billion the Biden administration requested, and now this horror has launched.

Statistics show in Canada and the United States, whether it is along our Pacific Coast, in Vancouver, or Quebec, historic precious forests are burning to the ground during this era of prolonged drought.

One estimate indicates the recent annual tree loss just in Canada equates to their forests' lost capacity to absorb the annual carbon dioxide from all jet aviation fuel spewed into the atmos-

phere across our globe. This chart attests to that.

Just a few years ago due to major forest fires in Quebec, our southern Great Lakes region in my home State of Ohio was covered with an eerie, hazy, atmospheric soot blowing south across the border with Canada. What an out-of-body occurrence never before encountered where we live. My own rhododendron plants were smothered by it.

Long ago, I learned in a forestry class there is only one way to regenerate a forest: burning it to the ground. Thus, allowing massive communities to be built in forests is always dangerous.

When I was born, California's population numbered about 10 million people. Today, it has quadrupled to over 42.5 million people, and Los Angeles County's dense population alone now numbers over 10 million people, larger than 80 percent of the States in our Union. California's population is projected to reach 60 million people by 2050, and that is six times its population in 1950.

Freshwater is running out.

Challenges to life on a changing continent and world are daunting, and we must all ask tough questions about how to build and rebuild places that are livable and survivable.

□ 1115

It will take years to salvage the Los Angeles neighborhoods, and some will never be rebuilt. Meanwhile, other regions across our Nation can welcome fire refugees.

The growing freshwater fights between communities and States that attend to life in the West are hastening. More people are demanding more freshwater when that is a physical impossibility as aquifers run dry.

There is only so much freshwater. If one looks at places like the Great Lakes, we say: How does our Nation best invest in sustainable water and energy systems for the coming century and beyond?

We must think forward, not backward. America must have a more comprehensive approach to build forward sustainable communities.

Step one is to rescue the West, but there must be attention to resettling in freshwater regions that are more sustainable.

For example, advancing freshwater settlement for our Great Lakes region will require standing up the Great Lakes Authority and infusing it with the ability to relieve bonded indebtedness of struggling freshwater communities. They must be able to financially reinvest to upgrade their freshwater systems in places like Flint, Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland, Youngstown, Milwaukee, Kenosha, Chicago, and so many more. Freshwater is life.

The old expression, "Go west or south, young man," still applies, but our planet is teaching us there are limits to what the Earth can sustain.

Living in the past is not an option. Onward, America, together.

## RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 16 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LOUDERMILK) at noon.

## PRAYER

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

God, our teacher, Lord, and friend, we pray that we would walk where You lead us this day. Open our eyes to see Your guidance, to look at each encounter, regard each situation with Your eyes.

Open our ears to Your instruction, to receive every word spoken, every concern voiced, and hear as You would hear.

Open our hearts to Your wisdom, to understand the problems, to discern the solutions, and to respond to each one as You would respond.

May the perceptions of our world, the reception of those whom we meet, and the interpretation of the work You would have us do reflect that we are willing and open to learn the unforced rhythms of grace which You, Yourself, have taught each one of us.

In Your divine friendship, abide with us. We rejoice that You have called us friends and have made Yourself and Your will known to us in the name of which we offer this prayer.

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 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FLOOD) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. FLOOD 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.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests

for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

## REPUBLICANS WILL ENFORCE BORDER SECURITY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, according to a report released by the House Committee on Homeland Security, more than 125,000 illegal alien crossings took place in October alone, bringing the total number of illegal alien crossings since Biden-Harris of over 11 million nationwide, with Speaker MIKE JOHNSON warning of over 16 million illegal aliens.

Dangerously, these catastrophic border crossing figures do not account for the illegal got-aways, including drug smugglers and identified terrorists who threaten every American family.

Sadly, with the duplicitous policies of Biden-Harris, among those illegal transgressors are unaccompanied children who are suffering at the hands of cartel smugglers.

Additionally, after meeting with President Donald Trump this weekend on Sunday at Mar-a-Lago, I know he is committed to securing the borders and protecting families and making America great again.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent, as warned by the FBI. Trump will reinstitute existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

## MEAN, CRUEL BULLYING TACTIC

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise that the Republican Party of Matt Gaetz and former GOP Speaker Dennis Hastert is the same party that is obsessed with passing a bill today which I call the child predator empowerment act.

Republicans are passing a bill that allows any adult in a school to inspect the genitals of our kids before they are allowed to play sports. That is right, Republicans' creepy, weird obsession with your kids' private parts now means they are passing bills that let them inspect what is in your kids' pants.

What is wrong with them? As a parent, I find this terrifying and downright sick. Let me be clear, every kid should be able to play sports, and this bill is just a mean, cruel bullying tactic.

My Republican colleagues are obsessed with passing a bill to protect predators. How about they pass a bill to protect jobs or pass a bill to fight wildfires or lower grocery prices? No,

no, no, Republicans are weirdly obsessed with talking about transgender people and using that as an excuse to protect and even empower child predators.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that we all know the reason why.

## HONORING NANCY AND JIM THOMPSON

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

Mr. FLOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two stalwarts of community service in Sarpy County, Nebraska: Nancy and Jim Thompson.

Nancy and Jim have dedicated their lives to giving back to Nebraska throughout their nearly five-and-a-half decades of marriage.

As educators, they played key roles in forming the Papillion La Vista School Foundation, helping charter it nearly 40 years ago.

Their commitment to public service is equally impressive. Nancy and Jim were both elected to local and county office. Nancy had the distinction of being the first woman elected to the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners, and she later served as a State senator in our unicameral from 1997 to 2006, where she and I served briefly together.

This week, their lifelong dedication, especially to Nebraska's children, will be honored with the 2025 Reflection Award from the Midlands Community Foundation.

On behalf of Nebraska's First District, congratulations to both Nancy and Jim. I thank them for their remarkable service.

## HONORING JOHN WILLIS MENARD

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

Mr. FIELDS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the profound legacy of Mr. John Willis Menard, who in 1868 became the first African American elected to Congress.

Even after winning 64 percent of the vote, Members of this body denied him the rightful opportunity to take his seat by a vote of 57-130. Nevertheless, Mr. Menard bravely defended his right to represent the people of Louisiana and became the first African American to speak on this floor. His fight for representation, even when denied his dignity and his seat, paved the way for people like me.

While in 1868 there was not a single African American in Congress, today there are 67 African Americans serving in the 119th Congress, a record number, largely due in part to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and heroes like John Willis Menard.