

game into overtime. Down in overtime, the Patriots didn't fold. They fought and took the game into double overtime.

That is when they finished the job, because no matter how long the odds, do not ever count out Binghamton.

I congratulate Coach Paddick and his coaching staff, Binghamton teachers, staff, and administrators, and, of course, the students and players.

I thank them for bringing some joy to our community at a time when we really need it.

I will always be a proud Union-Endicott Tiger, but today we are all Binghamton Patriots because there is nothing more unifying than bringing home a State championship.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to read the Patriot's roster into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as follows:

Kamal Abdul-Aziz, Derek Abu Jr., Jah-lon Cook, Cashawn Fleming Jr., Zubayr Griffin, Elijah Johnson, Isaiah Joseph Selby, Vaughn Labor, Zahir Marshall, Michael Constantine, Ilyas Morgan, Elliot Nelson, Corien Noble, Benjamin Ondrusek, Connor Ondrusek, Duncan Paddick, Yusri Razzaq, Jayden Remplet, Shawn Remplet, Vince Saraceno, Devonté Santiago, Milo Wilson.

JOHNSON & JOHNSON GROUNDBREAKING

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, North Carolina's First Congressional District is one of the most economically distressed in the Nation. However, I have good news to share.

Recently, I was honored to join industry, State, and community leaders for the groundbreaking of a new, over \$2 billion, state-of-the-art Johnson & Johnson biologics manufacturing facility in Wilson, North Carolina.

It will bring more than 500 specialized jobs paying about \$109,000 a year into eastern North Carolina.

The first 10 years of operation are estimated to have an economic impact of \$3 billion statewide.

Johnson & Johnson is also committed to investing in local education, STEM, workforce, and research.

The new facility will support Johnson & Johnson's plans to advance transformational medicines for cancer, immune-mediated, and neurological diseases.

The investment will have a huge and life-changing impact for our region.

AND STILL I RISE: CENSURED BUT NOT SILENCED

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. GREEN of Texas was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, proudly I stand here today proudly to say: And still I rise.

And still I rise, a proud, liberated Democrat, unbought, unbossed, and

still unafraid. And still I rise, Mr. Speaker, not only as a proud, liberated Democrat, but also, Mr. Speaker, censured, not silenced, censured but not silenced. I still carry my cane, which has been called many things, but for me it provides comfort.

It provides comfort because I am a believer in the 23rd Psalm, that part about "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil . . . Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

This is my comfort.

Mr. Speaker, there are people who don't believe that I should have the free speech that the Constitution affords me, and I am not always in the company of people who can protect me. So my cane has become my staff and my rod that comforts me, Mr. Speaker.

I wish it were different, but it is not. We seem to live in a society now where if you are willing to speak truth to power there are consequences beyond simply having those who differ with you give their retorts. There are some who want to do more than give retorts. So we have to find ways to comfort ourselves when we no longer have those who are assigned the responsibility of providing us comfort. Protection is another way of saying comfort.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I want to expose what has been called to our attention in many different ways over the last many hours.

Mr. Speaker, we are at this moment in our country engaging in a big lie coverup. It is a part of a chat-gate, a big lie coverup.

Chat-gate, Mr. Speaker, is a security breach not defined as such because the person who would define it as such, if he should do so, would inculcate himself. So the Secretary of Defense, who has the responsibility of defining whether certain information is classified or not, chooses not to define that which is intuitively obvious as classified, he chooses not to define it as classified. He does not want to inculcate himself. So he has the ability to exculpate himself by simply saying something that clearly is classified saying that it is not.

Mr. Speaker, while he can say so, I think the American public will have the final word and will be the final judge.

I am honored to tell you who the players are in this coverup. One person is, quite frankly, a person who merits a lot of accolades. He is a person who ought to be acknowledged for the courage that he has demonstrated. He is a person who brought this to the attention of the public. He is a person who had no desire to be a part of this coverup, but he is only there in that he was the person who, in a sense, acts as a whistleblower. I am talking about Mr. Goldberg with The Atlantic magazine.

Mr. Goldberg is the person who had messages sent to him that he did not seek and that he did not ask for. According to the reports that I have read and you have probably seen and heard

televised, he was there minding his own business when he received messages, messages that were intended for a select group of people, many of whom I will name in just a moment.

In receiving these messages, he was made privy to information that should not have been exposed to the public. In the opinion of many experts, they should not have been exposed to the public.

I will read some of the information that was captured by Mr. Goldberg.

Mr. Goldberg captured this, and this comes from The Atlantic magazine. They published this information. It has been made public. My belief is that the persons who engaged in this coverup had no desire to have this published, but once it was, there was a decision made by the person who had the power to do so to say: Well, it is simply not classified information, so no big deal.

Here is the big deal. Mr. Goldberg indicates that at 11:44 a.m. eastern time—he gives the name of the person, it is the Secretary of Defense, posted in the chat in all caps: "TEAM UPDATE:" Then, Mr. Goldberg indicates that the text beneath this began: "TIME NOW (1144et): Weather is FAVORABLE. Just CONFIRMED"—with, it says w—"w/CENTCOM we are a GO for mission launch." We are a go for mission launch.

Let's go on. These are excerpts. I shall not read it all.

The next comment reads: "1215et: F-18s LAUNCH (1st strike package)".

Thereafter: "1410: More F-18s LAUNCH (2nd strike package)".

Thereafter: "1536: F-18 2nd Strike Starts—also, first sea-based Tomahawks launched."

Now, all of this was intended for a select group of people. It was not intended that this be published, but since it has been published, the Secretary of Defense has indicated that this was not classified information. Now, if the Secretary of Defense who was a participant in this chat, what I call the "chat-gate," if the Secretary of Defense sincerely believes that this is not classified information—and there is more of it, I have only read you some excerpts—if he sincerely believes this, then he is not the person who should be charged with the responsibility of making a decision as to whether this type of information is classified.

That is because there is no way a person who has intelligence at heart and an understanding of it within the mind to conclude that this is not classified information.

Too many experts differ with him. We had persons who are on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in the House to indicate that this was clearly classified information. In fact, they indicated that things that are less serious in nature have been classified. But the Secretary of Defense has the ability to exculpate himself, so his exculpatory statement is that this is not classified information.

I believe that if any other person beneath the Secretary of State had allowed such information, the same information, to be exposed to the public, then I don't think the Secretary of State would have come to the same conclusion.

The Secretary of State has sacrificed his honor and his dignity by indicating that this is not classified information. But he didn't do it without the aid and comfort of some others.

Let's just talk about the other people who were on this call—pardon me—this chat with the Secretary of State:

We had the Vice President of the United States of America as a part of the chat. Now, I don't believe that the Secretary of Defense and the Vice President of the United States would get on a chat and have this type of information that I have called to your attention much more available, they would not get on a chat and have this be exposed to the public. There was no desire that it be exposed to the public. They said it is sensitive information. It is sensitive because it is classified information that has not been declared such because it would inculpate the Defense Secretary.

So you have the Vice President of the United States on the chat, then you have the CIA Director. Now it is the Vice President of the United States, Secretary of Defense, and the CIA Director, and this is not classified information that they are discussing. They are just having a little talk that could be exposed to the public, but they chose not to but for it having been sent to Mr. Goldberg.

Mr. Goldberg, by the way, deserves a Congressional Medal of Honor. He is the hero in this story. He is the person who has had the courage and also the wisdom and insight to understand that before you release this, you need to do some checking. So he did his due diligence before releasing information.

Mr. Goldberg, the person who released it, has been called many names by people who would not have him release the information. Mr. Goldberg has been scorned. He is a person who called to our attention something that was done improperly, and yet he is being made the villain. He is not the villain. He is the hero in this process, and he ought to be acknowledged as such.

I am going to have a flag flown over the Capitol of the United States of America in honor of Mr. Goldberg for what he has done. I will not allow his reputation to be tarnished without a fight to protect it. I am going to do what I can to protect his reputation.

So we have the Director of National Intelligence on the call, on the chat. The Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of State were on the chat.

Again, the Defense Secretary, the Vice President, the CIA Director, the Director of National Intelligence, and also Special Envoy Witkoff were on there. Witkoff was on there, and by the

way, he was in Russia at the time he was on. We all know that you should not be on an unsecured line if you are going to be in Russia talking. Those of us who have been to Russia are very much aware. Of course, the Secretary of State was on.

□ 1200

These are the players. All of them were on a chat and all of them are engaged in the coverup of this big lie. It is a coverup because they all have at one time or another implied or stated explicitly that this was not classified, that this was not classified. They had the cover of the Secretary of Defense to give them this opportunity to contend that it wasn't classified because he had to protect himself. To protect himself, he declassified what should have been classified. He avoided being inculpated by declassifying this information that should have been classified.

Now, this is egregious. It is always said that the coverup is more egregious than the action that precipitates the coverup. It is true. The coverup is more egregious than the action that precipitates the coverup. There is something that occurred here that is more egregious than the action that precipitated the coverup, than the coverup itself, and that thing is the ability of all of these actors to do this and commit any Federal crime with impunity. As a matter of fact, we could say it is with immunity.

These actors, these participants, they all have the blessings of the President of the United States of America. The President of the United States of America is now under the impression that he has absolute immunity, knowing that he is not likely to be prosecuted for anything other than impeachment while he is holding the office of the Presidency. Knowing this, believing he has absolute immunity and having already demonstrated that he will accord exoneration by way of pardon to people who would assault the citadel of democracy, the Capitol of the United States of America, assault it, and he, the President of the United States, used his awesome pardon power, the awesome power accorded him in good faith under the Constitution of the United States of America, he uses it to release, and to a certain extent to exonerate, a limited extent, persons who actually assaulted the Capitol.

Now these participants in this event, they know that they have got the President backing them up. They know that even if they commit a Federal crime all the President has to do is pardon them. It is really that simple. You have got a President now who sits on high, understanding that all beneath him, all of his minions, all of his plutocrats and others who are beneath him, he has the ability to protect them from breaches of the Federal law.

This is more egregious than the action that precipitated the coverup and

the coverup itself, to know that we now have an administration where all of the parties involved can rely on one person to protect them regardless as to what they do if it is a Federal offense.

Yes, there was a coverup.

Yes, that coverup is something that they understood they could get away with even if they were caught red-handed. They knew they could get away with it because they knew that the President was there to back them.

By the way, the President is also there to do what he normally does, and that is throw his acolytes, his underlings, his persons who are beneath him, if you will, throw them under the bus, and he did. He threw them under the bus. He doesn't know anything about this. He just happens to have heard about it. The President gets briefings on all important issues, but for him to sit and say, oh, I know nothing about it, which is what he always does, and then he pushes someone else under the bus, but he knows that he can push them under the bus and then extricate them because he has the magic wand, the power to pardon. He will use it, as has been demonstrated by his causing many persons who assaulted the Capitol, persons who came here with gallows, persons who came using flags and trying to stab and all sorts of sprays, persons who came into the Capitol and defecated, he caused all of these persons to be released, if not all, I would say to you nearly all. I don't have the exact numbers, but he went on a rampage and just started pardoning people who engaged in this assault on the citadel of democracy.

We have ourselves now a circumstance where people who are trusted with the Nation's most sacred secrets—sacred, they are so important that they are really sacred, sacred secrets—these persons have demonstrated that they will forfeit their dignity, their self-respect, and their honor. They will forfeit these things to protect themselves and to protect the President, themselves and the President.

What we have when this occurs with all of these people doing this, we have now a group of people who have sacrificed their honor. When you sacrifice your honor in this fashion, the people who serve under you lose respect for you. They lose respect for you. There are men and women, persons in our military, who no longer respect the persons who serve in these high and lofty positions. They don't respect them because they are persons with a reasonable amount of intellect, superior intellect, and understand that this whole scenario, this fiasco, this level of buffoonery, they understand that this is not based on truth to say this was not certified, this was not classified information. It wasn't certified as such, but it was classified. The only reason it was not certified as such is because the Secretary of Defense would inculpate himself if he should do so. He would put himself in harm's way.

He chose to keep himself out of harm's way. His cohorts agreed with him. They all now are going to contend that there is nothing to see here, just a chat between persons who happened to want to discuss sensitive information, and the reporter who reports it, he is the culprit in all of this.

The people who serve in our military, they know better, and they know now that the people at the top are not honorable people. That has an impact on morale. Don't you think for one second that someone in the military will not at some point in time use the same argument that you are using. They are going to mention how this very incident occurred and how people just walked away from it unscathed. That is what they will do. People are not going to allow this to just be a one-off. If something happens and they should be charged and they believe this scenario can aid and comfort them with their defense, they will use it.

We now have at the highest levels of our government people who have given up their dignity, their self-respect, and they no longer have the honor and respect of a good many people that serve under them.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very sad time in the history of our country, very sad. Here is a final reason why it is sad. I was silenced in a sense when I was shouted down by my colleagues. They shouted me down when I was trying to explain to the President—I never called him a name. I merely said to him: "You do not have a mandate, you do not have a mandate" to cut Medicaid. My colleagues were shouting loudly to prevent my voice from being heard, at least that is the way I received it. So I repeated what I said. Their voices grew louder. I repeated it again, and I was removed. I am not mad at the Speaker. I am not angry with them. I am not angry with anyone. I was censured for what I did. I was censured, not silenced. My voice will not be silenced. I was censured, but not silenced.

Here is the point: What I did this Congress decided—not all, not all, let me not include everyone, but all of my colleagues across the aisle and 10 colleagues from this side of the aisle, they decided that I should be censured. I hold no animus toward any of them.

I want to make a point. The President of the United States and his men and women are now going to perpetrate this coverup and walk away unscathed except for loss of dignity, self-respect, and honor.

Mr. Speaker, I would rather be censured than lose my dignity, sacrifice it, my self-respect. I admitted that I did what I did intentionally. They won't admit that they were in this chat and that it should have been in a much more secured location. They won't admit it. They don't have the self-respect and the dignity to just tell the truth about what happened. I admitted that I did it intentionally. I said that when you do things and you do them with intent and if it is a form of pro-

test in my case then you have got to be prepared to suffer the consequences. I have been prepared to suffer the consequences. It doesn't mean that I agree. You don't have to agree with the consequences you suffer, but you have to be prepared. They chose not to be prepared, chose not to suffer any consequences by covering up with a big lie.

I respect Mr. CASTRO. I saw him. When he questioned those persons who were before him yesterday and when he questioned them about this he called each name—I have such great respect for Congressman CASTRO. He had the courage to tell them to their faces that they were lying. It takes courage to do what he did. Courage is what is missing. You have got to have courage if you want to make big change. You have got to be willing to stand and say it as he did. This is not to say that others did not deliver great commentary. I singled him out because of the way he did what he did and in the presence of the people. He didn't wait until he was out behind their backs to say what he said. He said it in front of their faces. In my neck of the woods when you tell a person something to his face or her face or their face, that says something about you as a person. This is why I wanted to tell the President to his face that you don't have the mandate to cut Medicaid and Medicare, by the way, as well, and Social Security. He doesn't.

All of this, all of this, this censure of a person for speaking out against a President who, by the way, on that same evening called Democrats lunatics—there was no censure of the President, no reprimand, nothing said from the House, just the President being himself. Others on the other hand can be censured for calling things to the President's attention. I am also the only person to have ever been removed, evicted from a joint session of Congress, the only one.

□ 1215

I am only saying this because I don't want anyone to believe that this censure and this eviction is the end of the story. It is just not.

I am grateful to all of those who have been kind to me and for the well wishes that I have received and all of the persons who have indicated that they would have me speak at various events.

I am grateful to you, but I want you to know that the story does not end with the censure, just as the story with these persons who engaged in this coverup will not end with them simply saying that this was not classified information. It will not.

The story is still unfolding and still being told. In the end, posterity will judge all of us. Posterity will see and know the truth. Time tells. History judges. The truth is known. The truth will be known.

At some point, someone is going to reveal even more information about what happened on that chat. It will happen maybe not now, maybe not this year, but at some point in time, the

story is going to be told. All of them will have to face a shaming that they have tried to avoid by contending that classified information was not such.

You cannot get away with this kind of thing. "The arc of the moral universe . . . bends toward justice." What you have done is unjust, and it will be told. The story will be told truthfully.

I close with this: We who are given the honor of serving have been accorded the trust of the public. It is said that we hold public trust. When we hold public trust and we make mistakes, believe it or not, you can say that you made a mistake, or you can say: I didn't make a mistake. I did this intentionally, and I am going to suffer consequences. I am prepared. I may not agree with them, but I am prepared.

We hold public trust. Those persons who participated in this coverup are not persons worthy of holding public trust.

Mr. Secretary of Defense, you, sir, should not hold public trust. You are not the person to determine whether something is classified or not. You have demonstrated, wittingly or unwittingly, that you are not capable of doing it. You just don't have what it takes within to speak the truth when you have committed a transgression. You shouldn't hold public trust.

Sir, you should do the honorable thing. You should resign. If you don't resign, the people of this country, notwithstanding all of the President's power, the people of this country, we the people, will have the last word.

You are going to see protests. You are going to see more protests because we the people refuse to allow coverups to go unnoticed. You are going to see more protests, but I say to everybody: Make it a peaceful protest. Do not protest in any way other than with peace in your mind and your head and your heart.

Peaceful protests. Peaceful protests can make a difference.

It made a difference for the farmers when they came here with Tractorcade and protested their farmlands being foreclosed on.

It made a difference when the military veterans came to Washington, D.C., to protest the bonuses that they were promised.

It made a difference when Dr. King came here and stood on the Mall and read his "I have a Dream." Actually, he didn't read it. He actually stated it, his "I have a Dream" speech, when he gave that "I have a Dream" message.

It makes a difference. Peaceful protest makes a difference. It is as American as the pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock.

Peaceful protests will continue. I will be a part of it. If I should get in the way, as John Lewis says it, I will be prepared to suffer the consequences, but I refuse to give up my right to protest. We the people will have the last word.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS OF WESTERN CAUCUS

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. LAMALFA of California was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak here as we conclude the week.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take the time today to highlight some of the work that we are doing in the Western Caucus, made up of over 90 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

I have been privileged to become the chair of that group this year. Chairing the caucus, I get to bring up a lot of key issues on the floor and kind of illustrate to the people who are watching and wish to pay attention how important the issues are that we are taking up and continue to advance while working with the Trump administration.

One of the cornerstones, indeed, is energy. We call ourselves the Western Caucus, but the issues are a little beyond the Western States. Indeed, they are rural issues. They are issues that affect all of our States and the opportunity to strengthen our entire economy with what we have available in the Western States and in rural areas. Indeed, our oil and our energy come from many, many parts of the country. The original oil patch was actually in western Pennsylvania.

The Western Caucus is less about maybe what the real estate is, but more about the concepts of advancing rural issues and the ability to extract resources and to utilize resources in an ecologically sound way. We are all about that, too.

The U.S. gets a bad reputation sometimes that people who are in these industries are misconstrued by environmental groups and such as being against the environment and against doing things properly. The bottom line on that topic is that unleashing American energy and our mineral resources, strengthening agriculture, and tackling the real challenges facing our country, like the devastating wildfires in the West, are key issues that the Western Caucus faces.

One of the things that can help with some of these issues will be modernizing the Endangered Species Act that has been around for over 50 years, and I see the futility as it is interpreted these days in layer after layer of court decisions and lawsuits that basically just hamper the ability for us to do the things we need to do to have stronger energy availability and have the other resources that are key to a strong economy for our country and not import all of these products.

Indeed, with the goals set out, at least by some, to have further elec-

tricity usage for appliances, which we have talked about this week on this floor, there is requirements. There is people being mandated to change what their appliances are powered by.

When you have a gas-powered stove, gas water heater, and on and on with mandates, whether it is my home State of California or has come through the previous Biden administration, this has taken away consumer choices and taken away the best choice for a lot of people for how to power these devices.

That extends also to automobiles, trucks. If you have it, a truck brought it. That is an important aspect to remember, as well, is that just by merely sweeping away the ability to have gasoline and diesel, as California is doing and that they are trying to do and that the Federal Government had been doing until the end of the Biden administration, that is going to cost a lot. It is going to make it a lot less convenient and a lot more difficult to get raw materials and products from where they are created to where they are needed.

The Endangered Species Act is part of the issue that needs to be modernized, as well as getting over the lawsuits and litigation that is used as a weapon, whether it is by Federal agencies or by so-called NGOs or environmental groups.

We have been working in this Chamber, as I mentioned, this week to help deliver solutions to lower energy costs, cut red tape, and reverse the Biden administration's relentless overreach, from blocking costly energy efficiency mandates on consumer products to stopping unnecessary restrictions on American manufacturing and energy production.

We want these things to be manufactured here by American workers, using American technology, American efficiency, and the cleanliness that comes with it. We are much more efficient and much cleaner than what happens in Chinese manufacturing. Our natural gas that we use in this country is actually cleaner than Russian natural gas. We should be exporting more of that to Europe and helping them out instead of them becoming dependent on the long reputation we have had with Russia there.

When we are talking about these overreaches by government by these regulations, it really drives up prices, burdens businesses, and makes us more dependent on foreign products, foreign energy, et cetera.

Let's restore American energy dominance, support these industries that put food on the table, clothing on our backs, and shelter above us. We should support them to make our country stronger and more independent. We will push back against the policies that are failing and harming rural America.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from my colleagues, some of whom will be joining me during this time here, and what they are working on as part of our Western Caucus partnership here.

I see a couple of my colleagues have arrived here. I would like to recognize, if the gentlewoman is ready, my executive vice chair. The gentlewoman from Utah (Ms. MALOY) is with us here—I am pleased to have her as a partner and friend on the Western Caucus—to inform us on the issues that are particular to Utah, but also the Western States, as well.

I am really, really pleased that she has stepped up to be in this role here, and I appreciate her quite a bit.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Utah (Ms. MALOY).

Ms. MALOY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to be here today, and I commend my colleagues in the Western Caucus for their unwavering dedication to preserving the values and livelihoods of rural America, the Western States, and our Western values that we both represent.

I will highlight today three pieces of legislation that I have introduced. One of them addresses abuses of the Antiquities Act, one of them addresses the inefficiencies and unfairness of our permitting system, and the other one addresses the need to get geothermal energy up and going more quickly and more efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, I will start with the Antiquities Act. For decades, the executive branch, Presidents of the United States, mostly Democrats, have used the Antiquities Act of 1906 to designate vast areas as national monuments, and that is in an authority that we delegated to them in the Antiquities Act of 1906.

The abuse of that narrow delegated authority has resulted in restricted access to lands, hindered economic opportunities, and it has left local voices unheard and frustrated.

In my district, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument was created by Bill Clinton in 1996, over the objections of Utah's Governor, Utah's Federal delegation, and local, county, and State-elected officials. Those frustrations and scars and wounds have not healed in the years that have passed since then.

Mr. Speaker, my Ending Presidential Overreach on Public Lands Act ensures that the decisions of this magnitude affecting public lands are made collaboratively, respecting the role of Congress with our jurisdiction over public land, and taking input from local voices. It should be Congress that makes those widespread, large-scale land management decisions.

Mr. Speaker, the next one I will talk about is the FREE Act, which encourages agencies to look at the permits they issue and determine which ones can be done by permit by rule, which means they have a predetermined list of requirements for a permit and firm timelines on making those decisions. An applicant can bring an agency everything on that list, and the agency can either say: Yes, this is adequate for