

MAGAnomics is about more than just causing a recession. Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and House Republicans are trying to take away billions of dollars from Medicaid, which will threaten, as we know, care for millions of people. That means higher healthcare costs, with many losing coverage completely.

MAGAnomics is slashing employees and programs from the Federal Government. It is about destroying the social safety net and the programs which we rely on, such as medical research, the Department of Education, air safety, and so much more. They are attacking the foundations of our economy and the foundations of our lives and our families.

Republicans in Congress need to join us and say enough is enough.

End the chaos. End the incompetence. Put American families first. Let's stop and reject Donald Trump and Elon Musk, and let's reject MAGAnomics right now.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE WES WATKINS

(Mr. COLE of Oklahoma was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, this is a little bit unusual. I have comments on my friend Wes Watkins, as well.

I want to talk a little bit off the cuff about the man that my good friend and colleague FRANK LUCAS was talking about a few minutes ago.

Wes Watkins liked to think of himself as an ordinary man and a typical Oklahoman. I can assure everybody here he was neither ordinary nor typical. He was extraordinary.

Wes Watkins was born, as my friend Mr. LUCAS said, in very humble circumstances, yet he succeeded in every single thing he did over the course of his lifetime. He succeeded in college. He succeeded as a businessman. He was a family man, and he was extraordinarily successful at that. He was in the National Guard. Finally, he began a political career, first in the State senate and then in the Halls of this distinguished institution.

Wes Watkins served two different stints in Congress, but what my friend Mr. LUCAS didn't say was that he served the first seven terms as a Democrat. Then he went home to run for Governor. He is the only person I know of in Oklahoma history, maybe in American history, that ever carried his congressional district first as a Democrat, then as a Democrat running for Governor, and then as an independent seeking the governorship, and, finally, later as a Republican.

He was so impressive on the campaign trail in his second term that the person who won the election, former Governor Frank Keating of Oklahoma—who was actually my friend, my mentor, and my client at the time—was so impressed that he would come back from the campaign trail and say:

I love Wes Watkins. He is for everybody I am for. He is such a great guy.

As soon as Frank became Governor Keating, he offered Wes Watkins a cabinet position in his own administration. Wes was the only person ever turned down who had been a State senator for a cabinet spot because Democrats were so mad at him at the time. Frankly, he got the last laugh because, the very next year, he ran for his old congressional seat and won.

Republicans thought so much of him. I remember calling Newt Gingrich, who was the Speaker of this institution at the time. I was Wes' campaign consultant and a good friend of Speaker Gingrich. I said: He really wants to go on the Ways and Means Committee. Speaker Gingrich said: If he runs, he has got it. I will absolutely put him there.

Wes was one of the best Members of Congress. He was a pretty extraordinary guy.

I will tell you, of all the different candidates I have worked with and for over the years, nobody ever worked harder and longer. As a matter of fact, on one occasion, I remember getting a call at 5:30 in the morning—actually, on more than one occasion. I would also get calls late at night. I called his beloved wife, Lou, once and said: Lou, I am getting calls at 5:30 in the morning and 10 at night. She said: TOM, he keeps a list of people he can call before 8 in the morning and after 8 at night, and somehow you have gotten yourself on both those lists.

That is how hard he worked. That is how relentless he was.

While he changed political parties over the course of his lifetime, I can tell you he never changed his political principles. Quite frankly, he symbolized and propelled the transformation of Oklahoma from a Democratic State to a Republican State. I never met Democrats who didn't like him or Republicans who didn't like him. He was simply a revered individual.

I remember Wes Watkins with a great deal of fondness.

In the course of his life, there were three things he loved the most.

First was his family. When you think of his family, you always think of his wife, Lou. They were inseparable.

Then, he loved the State of Oklahoma, and he served it proudly, as well.

Finally, and I say this as an OU alumnus and a fierce Sooner, he was the proudest, most ferocious Oklahoma State graduate I ever met. He absolutely revered that institution and spent a lifetime working for it.

I know the people of Oklahoma will miss Wes Watkins. He was, in many ways, a favorite son of the State. He certainly distinguished himself in public service and in his devotion to the interests of the State.

I am going to miss Wes even more than that. I will miss him as a friend. I will miss him as a mentor. I will miss him as a role model. I will miss him first, foremost, and always as a great Oklahoman.

#### PROTECTING AND SERVING OUR FIREFIGHTERS

(Ms. ELFRETH of Maryland was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Mark Falkenhan, a Baltimore County volunteer firefighter and Secret Service agent who perished on the third floor of an apartment building in 2011.

I rise on behalf of Nathan Flynn, a Howard County firefighter who tragically died in the basement of a large house fire in 2018.

I rise on behalf of Frederick County firefighter Captain Josh Laird, who we lost in 2022 when he, too, fell through a floor and into a basement fire.

After each of these tragedies and tragedies just like them across this country, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, or NIOSH, produced a report examining what went wrong and, crucially, how to prevent these tragedies from occurring moving forward. Those reports went on to save untold lives.

In Mark's case, the NIOSH report spurred a new emphasis on identifying and communicating the presence of a basement upon first arrival.

In Nathan's case, the NIOSH report exposed how outdated practices in building ventilation and fire flow management were killing firefighters across the country, ushering in nationwide changes in fire ground operations.

In Josh's case, the NIOSH report was instructive in identifying and operating over a basement fire.

Maryland's fire community, like so many in our country, is small and well-connected. Each fatality is felt widely and personally.

Following a tragedy, it can be difficult without the proper technical resources to make accurate and objective recommendations and changes, which is why the NIOSH investigations and reports are so crucial.

These NIOSH reports are critical for firefighting communities in Maryland and around our country because they save lives. When released, crews across this country gather around kitchen tables and read the reports together.

In Maryland, our firefighters have told me that in those moments and for the first time they were able to walk through an incident guided by photographs, construction drawings, time-tables, graphs, and supporting scientific evidence and that recommendations from these reports can be revolutionary to how they fight fires and save lives.

NIOSH produces these reports through its Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program, which was already significantly understaffed, with only five investigators investigating these incidents across the Nation. At this staffing level, it would take up to 4 years to thoroughly research and release a report after each line-of-duty death.

That was until 2 months ago.

Under the banner of government efficiency and the claim to reduce waste, DOGE has fired three of the five investigators, which means longer wait times for our first responders who deserve answers as to how their brothers and sisters died in the line of duty and, critically, what changes need to be made to prevent such a death moving forward.

Another victim of the reckless work of DOGE was the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer, which tracked cancer cases and deaths of firefighters.

Cancer is now the leading cause of death for firefighters, and this database was critical to tracking health and safety improvements for firefighters and improving working conditions. In another sweeping effort to cut costs, DOGE eliminated the entire office. Now, this cancer registry is no longer maintained or updated.

When the President talks about DOGE and government efficiency, I am thinking about the firefighters whose lives he is putting in harm's way. We owe it to firefighters across this country who sacrifice so much to keep our families safe. At the very least, we can be there for them when they are exposed to cancer or lose members to line-of-duty deaths.

These jobs are difficult and inherently dangerous, but they do not need to be deadly.

These actions by the administration are cruel and unsafe. This is not what the American people wanted. This is not what they voted for.

Lost in this desperate mission to cut costs at all costs, we have forgotten the greater public good, the public good that government must maintain and deliver for our constituents, our obligations to one another, and, most importantly, our obligation to those who run into burning buildings and who keep our communities safe.

The Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program and the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer are the Federal Government at its best.

These civil servants who serve our first responders should not just be reinstated. Frankly, their offices should be doubled.

Perhaps these positions were eliminated as an oversight. Perhaps these hardworking, passionate civil servants were merely line items on a budget to some cost-cutter who didn't know any better.

That is why I rise today to give voice to these cuts, to put faces to these draconian measures, and to plead with my colleagues across the aisle and with the President himself to do what is right.

Restore these offices. Reinstatement these civil servants. Protect and serve those who protect and serve us.

□ 1245

### MANCHESTER SQUIRES STATE CHAMPIONS

(Mr. YAKYM of Indiana was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride to recognize and congratulate the Manchester Squires on an extraordinary achievement: winning the Class 2A basketball State championship this past weekend.

This victory marks a historic milestone because it was the first boys' basketball State championship title in the school's history.

The journey to a championship is never easy. It requires months, if not years, of dedication, sacrifice, and relentless effort. The championship win is not just about the trophy or the title. It is about the countless hours of practice, the late nights and early mornings, and the unwavering belief in one another.

It is about the community that stood behind them: the fans who filled the stands, families who provided constant support, and coaches who guided them every step of the way.

I especially congratulate Coach Henson for his leadership.

I also congratulate the players, specifically Gavin Betten and Ethan Hendrix, who scored 21 points apiece. The players all made their school, their families, and their entire community incredibly proud.

The encouragement of the families, fans, and support staff was invaluable to this accomplishment. Their legacy as the first State champions in Manchester boys' basketball history will inspire future generations of Squires.

This victory is not just for the team, but for Wabash as a whole. They should enjoy this moment. They have earned it. I congratulate them once again.

### SOUTH BEND SAINT JOSEPH HUSKIES STATE CHAMPIONS

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate the South Bend Saint Joseph Huskies on their remarkable triumph in the Class 3A State basketball championship this past weekend.

The Huskies made history with this win, the first-ever boys' basketball State championship. Winning a State title is an achievement that only a select few teams get to experience. Yet, for the Huskies, this championship was even more meaningful as it came just 1 year after the heartbreaking loss in last year's State championship.

Coming back just 1 year later, rising to the challenge, coming back, and securing the ultimate victory speaks volumes about the character and the commitment of this team.

The road to a championship is never guaranteed. It is earned through hard work in the gym, trust in one another, and the ability to rise to the occasion when it matters most. The Huskies did just that.

I congratulate Coach Eric Gaff for his leadership. I also congratulate the

players, whose determination and refusal to give up have written a new chapter in Saint Joseph's history.

I saw the putback dunk made by Chase Konieczny.

The unwavering encouragement of the families, fans, and support staff helped fuel this team.

The South Bend community celebrates this moment with the Huskies, and their victory will serve as an inspiration for years to come.

I congratulate the Huskies. This is an accomplishment that will never be forgotten.

### IMPACT OF TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ANTI-DEI ACTIONS

(Ms. STANSBURY of New Mexico was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, among the daily assaults on our communities, on our economy, and the daily distractions and absurdities that we see from this administration and from my friends across the aisle in this Chamber, it can be easy to lose track of the bigger picture of what is happening across our country right now and the historical inflection point on which we stand.

If Members zoom out and look at the bigger picture and the larger movement of this moment, my colleagues can see the ways in which this administration is trying to roll back the clock on American history, to redefine whose histories count, whose languages count, whose cultures count, whose identities count, whose personhood counts, whose very civil rights count, and who belongs in this great country.

We see it in this Chamber this week with a GOP that is trying to roll back the voting rights of Americans across the country, and we see it in the insidious rollback of civil rights across the administration, in our workplaces, in our schools, and all across this country, as the administration has armed itself with Project 2025 and has sought to redefine American society and roll back advancements of the civil rights era.

We see it in the executive orders that Donald Trump signed in his first days in office, terminating diversity, equity, and inclusion across our Federal agencies, putting thousands of Federal workers on leave, shuttering offices and freezing Federal funds, and scrubbing websites of American history.

We see it in the military in the treatment of our veterans, firing one of the highest-ranking generals serving on the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the first females in military leadership across multiple armed services divisions, the banning of our trans and LGBTQ+ servicemembers from serving openly, the scrubbing of DOD websites trying to erase the history of our veterans with 26,000 images and web pages of our history to be erased including the Tuskegee Airmen, Jackie Robinson, and the Navajo Code Talkers. Republicans even want to delete a picture of