As I am wrapping up, I will say that there are many reasons to be concerned, but it is also important to remember that there are reasons to celebrate. I will take a moment to recognize a reason to celebrate.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 111th anniversary of the Village of Elmwood Park and to celebrate the 25,500 Illinois' Third Congressional District constituents who call this village home.

Elmwood Park is a wonderful place to live, to shop, and to do business. They have built unique intergovernmental and cross-sector partnerships, and I am proud that our commitment and collaboration with President Saviano, Village Manager Volpe, and Senators Durbin and Duckworth have secured $13.1 million for a transformative project that included grade crossing improvements to enhance resident safety in Elmwood Park.

I thank all the hardworking employees of the village whose public service enables residents to access critical services and programs. I remain committed to continuing to deliver the resources our communities need to improve public safety, create well-paying jobs, and expand economic opportunity for Elmwood Park and across Illinois' Third Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Elmwood Park for these 111 years of community. I look forward to many more years of partnership and to continue to fight in the Halls of Congress for every constituent in my district.

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

□ 1815

DISPENSING WITH MORNING-HOUR DEBATE ON TOMORROW

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the order of the House of January 3, 2025, regarding morning-hour debate not apply tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

CUTS TO FOREST SERVICE ENDANGER MILLIONS

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Ms. SCHRIER of Washington was recognized for 30 minutes.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my frustration and outrage with the Trump administration's reckless cuts to our Forest Service.

The workforce that takes care of our forests, harvests timber, and makes them resilient to wildfires is treasured in my State of Washington and, I would say, in the entire Western United States. Cuts to this workforce endanger my constituents, endanger millions of Americans, and put our forests at high risk of catastrophic wildfires.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. WHITESIDES).

Mr. WHITESIDES. Mr. Speaker, my name is GEORGE WHITESIDES, and I represent California's 27th Congressional District.

Just 3 days after I was sworn in to Congress to serve my first term this year, wildfires broke out across southern California, forcing 200,000 people to evacuate, burning over 57,000 acres of land, damaging or destroying 18,000 homes, and taking the lives of 30 individuals.

Two weeks later, the Hughes fire erupted in my own district near Castaic, right near where this picture behind me was taken. It forced over 30,000 people to evacuate.

Compared to most, we were relatively lucky. Given wind conditions and the brave work of our firefighters, many of whom were employed by the U.S. Forest Service, the fire was quickly contained.

As southern California began to emerge from the devastation and focus on rebuilding, firefighters and other fire service workers with the U.S. Forest Service were abruptly terminated by the Trump administration. Days or weeks after saving our lives, they were left out to dry with no explanation.

One of these employees in my own district was Jasmin Dominguez, a GIS technician, who literally mapped out the fires as they spread. I brought Jasmin as my guest to the State of the Union where we talked about how difficult it would be for local fire chiefs to control the fires without the maps that she provided.

Now, we are preparing to go into another bad fire season. People are scared. If you look at the conditions on the ground in the American West, they are very concerning. Fire scientists are concerned. Firefighters are concerned. Between the January fires and the extreme dryness that we have experienced this winter, we are poised to experience earlier and more intense wildfires than before.

The worst thing that we could do for our communities that have already suffered so much is to reduce our capacity to fight and contain these fires when, not if, they occur.

The unconscionable and, frankly, offensive decision to terminate our Forest Service workers will make us less safe and more vulnerable to the natural disasters that we are guaranteed to experience.

The administration may claim that firefighters were exempt from their cuts, but we know this is not true. I am in constant communication with Federal wildfire community members, and here is what they tell me. Their grants have been frozen; existing agreements with the Federal Government, frozen; purchasing cards that they use to buy lifesaving equipment, frozen.

Hiring for fire season is often cyclical, meaning the Trump administration's earlier decision to freeze Federal hiring left even our local fire stations understaffed and unprepared for the fire season that has already started.

For the safety of the families and the individuals across all of our districts, and for the brave work that so many of these Forest Service employees do every day, we must speak out against these unfair terminations.

To every Forest Service worker who is laid off and for everyone preparing to undergo even more of these so-called reductions in workforce, know that we hear you, are with you, and are fighting for you.

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo some of those comments because I am also in the West, in Washington State, and we are seeing the risk of catastrophic wildfires increasing every year.

Because all of this is being done under the guise of DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency, let me be clear that we all want our tax dollars to be spent wisely.

Let me also be clear that the people in the Eighth District of Washington State think it is a super wise investment to invest in our Forest Service that will thin the forest, prevent catastrophic wildfires, and then fight catastrophic wildfires when they occur.

I would say, and my constituents would also say because we all choke on smoke every summer, that this is not a time to cut the Forest Service. In fact, it is a time to hire up at the Forest Service because we need them more than ever right now.

We need them for fighting fires as I discussed, for maintaining our forests, but also for supporting recreation, maintaining roads and trails, and producing timber that we all need for affordable housing, and for water restoration, watershed restoration, and more.

We have heard from the administration that firefighters were exempt from the cuts, but here is the thing: About 75 percent of the people who were cut had firefighting training. In fact, they may have had different titles, but they had something called red cards, which meant they were ready, firefighting trained, and they leapt into action whenever wildland firefighters needed their help to work side by side with them. They are really indispensable employees.

I also want to say that the people who we are losing, many of them have had years of experience. They choose to work for the Forest Service, for the Federal Government, because of their passion for taking care of our public lands. They are talented. They are critical. They are experienced. They

choose to do this, frankly, for lower salaries simply because they want to serve. These are civil servants.

We are losing these really talented and critical staff through layoffs. Now, with the uncertainty, we are seeing early retirements. Frankly, given the disrespect and uncertainty, and now the impossible workload, can you imagine taking on all of the workload of your colleagues? Why would they stay? This is a very tough time to work for the Federal Government, especially in these dangerous jobs.

I am so fortunate to represent Washington's Eighth Congressional District. We have some of the most stunning nature in the country. In fact, we have the North Cascades National Park, Mount Rainier National Park, and two national forests stretching over 2 million acres. That is a fifth of the national forest, approximately 10 million acres in Washington State.

The U.S. Forest Service manages these public lands. We also have agreements and rely on relationships between Federal, State, and Tribal organizations and governments to manage our public land. When you cut Federal staffing, it really has ripple effects and leaves State, Tribal, and local governments lacking.

I want to express gratitude to U.S. Forest Service staff because they are also keeping our cherished public lands accessible for outdoor recreation.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you have ever been to Washington State. If you have, you will know that outdoor recreation is our pride and joy and is what sustains us. Those beautiful springs and summers, that is what sustains us when we have the rainy fall and winter.

We have already seen some of these outdoor trail accesses closed. In fact, there is one called the Denny Creek Trailhead that has experienced closures due to these staffing shortages, and that is only going to be worse as we head into outdoor recreation season.

Again, I have mentioned already the role that the Forest Service plays in wildfire mitigation; that is, thinning the forest, doing prescribed burns, doing the work that will prevent catastrophic wildfires.

In my district, Fire Chief David Walker says the Forest Service is the primary firefighting force for something called the Lake Wenatchee area. It is a favorite vacation spot for Washington families.

When you gut the Forest Service's fire response operation, that means you are taking away public safety. You are taking away safety from the people who are camping in the Lake Wenatchee area.

Mitigating risk in our forest has become ever more important with the increasing intensity of wildfires and the longer and longer wildfire season throughout the West.

In our State, we used to see wildfires mostly in the dry part of the State, east of the Cascade Mountains. Now, we see it in the entire State.

We have seen devastating fires in recent years. In fact, six of the highest risk fire sheds in the entire country are in my district.

Now is the time to strengthen our wildfire mitigation efforts, not kneecap the agency that is responsible for maintaining forest health. Firing support staff involved in wildfire response or mitigation does just as much harm as firing those that we think of as being on the front lines. They work together.

I also want to mention, imagine if you were a firefighter depending on that support staff to tell you when the weather conditions change, when the winds are shifting, because that matters for your own survival as you are fighting these fires. The support staff is every bit as important.

We are anticipating there to be further staffing cuts right before wildfire season kicks into gear, and these reduction-in-force plans are being made with little forethought and no agency engagement. We are seeing the arbitrary firing of probationary employees in every agency and then struggling to rehire them because they have cut HR.

This administration is not getting the message that every carpenter in my district knows: Measure twice, cut once. Figure out where it makes sense to make cuts before making those cuts. This is not efficiency. This is actually the opposite.

There are many roles that the Forest Service plays in research. They research how to fight pestilence that weakens our trees. They research which varieties of trees will survive best in fire. They also do research into which of these fire-prone areas is the most at risk so that they can treat those areas first.

I want to emphasize how important these Forest Service employees are to our district, the entire West, and, frankly, the entire country.

□ 1830

Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk a little bit in a moment about our Forest Service employees, some that I have spoken with since they were let go. First, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CARSON) to speak about Forest Service cuts.

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman SCHRIER for her leadership, her friendship, and for being an advocate on behalf of her constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to demand answers on the recent funding and staff cuts to the U.S. Forest Service. Last week, I led a letter to the administration urging a reversal of these shortsighted decisions. We are still waiting for a response.

In my district, a wonderful, nonpartisan organization called Keep Indianapolis Beautiful has helped people and nature thrive. They work with local government, businesses, community groups, and schools to plant trees, clean up litter, and transform vacant lots into vibrant community green spaces.

Mr. Speaker, they work so hard. Their work makes our neighborhoods healthier, safer, and more connected, but this administration terminated grants that made this great work possible. It appears that DOGE has flagged words like ''equity'' and ''diversity'' in grant applications even when it is biodiversity and tree equity. That is just not bureaucratic overreach, it is absurd.

Tree equity is the idea that every neighborhood deserves trees. Without them, underserved areas become heat islands—trapping heat, raising energy bills, and degrading quality of life. This is not theory. It is science.

Investing in greener, healthier neighborhoods benefits Hoosiers and Americans. These cuts undermine that very goal.

I urge the USDA to reverse its course, and I call on our colleagues to join us in demanding the restoration of these critical investments in our communities.

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Speaker, I will tell you something about the town of Roslyn in my district. It is a small town, completely surrounded by forest, and this forest is at high risk for catastrophic wildfire. In fact, it was incredibly important to the residents of the town not only to firewise their own homes but to treat the forest around the city to protect it.

I actually got to go out with nonprofits and Forest Service employees, use that drip torch myself and participate in prescribed fires in order to work to make sure that this area would not go up in flames and threaten the entire city. It is this sort of work that some of the employees in my district who were fired were doing. They were protecting homes and protecting lives. Then, after years in the Service, they were let go.

I even have constituents, a husband and wife who both worked for the U.S. Forest Service. They were both let go. They both did that work and trail maintenance. They also protected people during snow season in snow parks. These are year-round, family-sustaining jobs, and these are people without whom we all suffer.

There is another worker from my district who was fired who was actually working on harvesting timber. That timber is then sold and actually makes money for the Federal Government, but those workers were let go.

I mean, that is not efficiency. It is definitely not saving taxpayer money. It is really beyond foolish, and it is emblematic of what this administration and Elon Musk have been doing. This is not government efficiency. It actually hampers the ability for the Forest Service to be efficient and to fulfill its mission.

Taking a hatchet to these Federal agencies across the board, labeling probationary employees as if they are in

trouble for some reason, when really it just means they have been there devoting themselves to civil service for less than a year, only causes harm and disparages them. That is why I was so proud to lead a letter with my Washington colleagues calling for Forest Service terminations to be rescinded and for the administration to halt any further cuts.

This has disproportionately hit Washington State. I will continue fighting for the employees in my district, for the people in my district, for Washington State to protect our forests, to fight these cuts, and to protect the U.S. Forest Service employees who have dedicated their lives to public service.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. MIN).

Mr. MIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the Trump administration to consider reversing its reckless and dangerous terminations of Forest Service employees.

I represent an area in Orange County that is prone to the same types of wildfire risks that we saw devastate Los Angeles not too long ago. We are about a month or two away from fire season. We have had a number of fires similar, but smaller in scope, to the one that just hit Los Angeles due to the Santa Ana winds that come through our area in southern California every year and also due to drier conditions because of climate change and droughts. We know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and so we need to have these types of resources in place.

As wildfires grow more and more intense, as the risks of wildfire become more and more ubiquitous, our firefighters are tired. They are understaffed, underresourced, and underpaid. We need more funding to protect our communities from megafires. Instead, this administration is choosing to strip our key first responders in the U.S. Forest Service of resources that make millions of Americans safer, including the ones I represent in Orange County.

Let's be clear, if we are looking for efficiency, this is the opposite of efficiency. There is nothing efficient about firing essential public safety officials right before fire season. These are the people we deploy to try to clear the brush. They are the first responders who alert our fire departments of early onset wildfires before they become deadly multibillion-dollar disasters. That is why we rehired so many of the very same people that DOGE tried to fire in the first place due to the inefficiency, the gross incompetence of Elon Musk and the people who are working with him.

This administration is also lying about retaining employees to help fight fires on the ground. Around 75 percent of those who were let go had firefighting experience, and now we are having to rehire some of them. This is what happens when you have 21-year-old hackers named ''Big Balls'' deciding how to cut our agencies as opposed to experts who know what they are doing. The incompetence of DOGE and Elon Musk is exposing Californians and millions of people around the country to unprecedented danger. We have to do something about it before it is too late.

I urge Congress to intervene, reverse these cuts, and stop this administration from putting more Americans in harm's way.

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Speaker, we have all talked about thinning forests, making them more resilient. We talked about the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

We passed a big infrastructure bill a couple years ago, and part of that was not just protecting roads and bridges. It was also protecting our natural infrastructure because of its connection with our urban areas and the wildland-urban interface and more. That involved more management of our forests, more thinning of our forests. It required more hiring up of Forest Service staff, which really emphasizes the point my colleagues have made about how this is doing the exact opposite.

I wanted to connect a couple other dots for you, just to really bring home this point. President Trump promised all along the campaign trail that he was going to bring down costs for the American people. These are costs at the grocery store, costs everywhere really.

We could talk about tariffs, but what I really want to focus on, which is a big issue in my district and my State, is the cost of housing. Young people today cannot afford to buy a house. That means they are going to struggle to build their nest egg for retirement.

One of the ways to bring down the cost of housing is to use that 8-inch diameter or smaller timber that the Forest Service brings out of those national forests, mill those, turn it into cross-laminated timber, mass produce walls, roofs, and the building materials you need to build houses quickly and cheaply.

You can do rezoning, permitting for land to use for housing, and then you can build houses quickly, starter houses, houses to just help young people get their piece of America, their safeguard for their retirement.

However, this is doing the opposite. If we are not bringing the wood out of our forests, like the Forest Service employee I just told you about who lost her job, then we don't have that cross-laminated timber.

What is happening now, we are going to rely on Canada for timber at, what, a 25 percent surcharge because of these tariffs? This is doing the opposite. It is not bringing costs down for American families. It is driving costs up to the tune of close to $4,000 per family across this country. This is damaging. Then you add on what is happening in the Forest Service, and it just drives up the cost of housing.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I first just extend my gratitude to the people who step up to serve our country, who work for the U.S. Forest Service, who protect our forests, protect our homes, protect us from choking on smoke all summer long, and now stretching into other seasons. I emphasize that it is important to use tax dollars wisely and to have an efficient government, but sometimes that means hiring up instead of firing. Certainly, indiscriminate firing is crazy, wrongheaded, and reckless. I once again object to these indiscriminate cuts, and I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at noon.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC–690. A letter from the Senior Bureau Official, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report titled ''Voting Practices of UN Members''; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC–691. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a notification titled ''Support for United States Nationals Unlawfully or Wrongfully Detained Abroad and Their Family Members''; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC–692. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's FY 2024 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, Sec. 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3241); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC–693. A letter from the Acting Chairman, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's 2024 Annual Report, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1115(b); Public Law 111-352, Sec. 3; (124 Stat. 3868) and 12 U.S.C. 1827(a)(2); Sept. 21, 1950, ch. 967, Sec. 2(17)(a) (as amended by Public Law 101-73, Sec. 220(a)); (103 Stat. 264); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC–694. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting 2024 Emmett Till Annual Report for Congress, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 509 note; Public Law 110-344, Sec. 3(c)(2); (122 Stat. 3934); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. BARR (for himself, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mrs. MCCLAIN, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. ROSE, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. FITZGERALD, Mr. MOORE of North Carolina, Mr. MESSMER, Mr. OGLES, Mr. DOWNING, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. LAMALFA, and Mr. GROTHMAN):