

been diagnosed with stage IV colon cancer back in December, and the whole family is now wondering whether he is going to live long enough to see his kids graduate from high school.

It is sad. We sort of shared the pain of fathers who lost kids, worried about losing kids. There is no need to tell anybody here that cancer sucks.

That wasn't why he called. He called because his son's doctors told him that as you go through the course of this treatment, typically, chemo stops working after about 6 months. You see some tumor reduction, and then it stops working. At that point, you really need to start looking for alternatives.

Typically, those alternatives mean you start getting into experimental trials. Those are no longer available because Trump and Elon Musk's cuts to NIH are forcing the local hospitals, the local universities, and the drug companies that would have done these clinical trials, to shut them down.

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As he put it to me: As a father, I have to balance hope with reality, but it seems like all I have right now is reality.

Then he said to me: Do the Republicans you work with know that they can get cancer, too? Are any of them going to stand up? Don't they get these calls from their constituents? Why don't they care?

I see them all looking away. How would you have me answer that question?

I tried. I did my best to explain the psychology of folks I work with who fear Trump more than they fear cancer. Mostly I just got sad because this is a guy who said I want hope; all I have is reality. What I want for hope is medicine, and all I could give him was political science to give him some reality.

These stories are in all of our districts. All of our constituents want hope. It is the least we can give them, and we are failing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my Republican colleagues to just please grow a spine. Stand up. Give us some reason to hope. Give me a better answer to the next constituent who calls my office, or indeed yours, with those same questions.

HONORING THE LIFE OF THOMAS BURTON MERRITT

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Thomas Burton Merritt, a veteran, a physician, and beloved member of his community.

Born on May 11, 1934, Thomas Merritt was a proud graduate of Auburn University, where he was a strong contributor to the Naval ROTC program and track team.

After graduating, he joined the Navy, completed his medical degree and

served with distinction as both a naval aviator and a psychiatrist.

With over 20 years of military service, he was awarded the National Defense Medal, the Naval Aviator Medal, and the Expert Medal for a .45-caliber pistol.

In 2008, he met the love of his life, Robbie "Honey" Merritt. Together they traveled the world from England to France, always finding time to cheer on their beloved Tigers.

His love for animals, especially the geese and ducks at Emerald Lake, earned him the nickname "Father Goose."

Dr. Merritt's warm smile, great sense of humor, and adventuresome spirit touched everyone who was fortunate enough to know him.

Mr. Speaker, his legacy of purpose, compassion, and courage will continue to be an inspiration. My thoughts and prayers are with Dr. Merritt's loved ones during this most difficult time.

RECOGNIZING THOMASVILLE, GEORGIA

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Thomasville, Georgia, which was named one of the best small towns in the South.

Thomasville is a charming town located in south Georgia, celebrated for its quaint, timeless charm, vibrant downtown, and diverse food scene.

The town boasts a rich history, characterized by Victorian architecture and brick-paved streets that line specialty shops and local restaurants.

Thomasville's culinary scene is praised as one of the best, specializing in southern classics and comfort foods. The Main Street program has been instrumental in revitalizing the downtown area, rehabilitating numerous buildings, and establishing over 350 new businesses since its inception.

Thomasville was honored with the Great American Main Street Award, highlighting its commitment to preserving its historic character while fostering economic growth.

Thomasville is the official Rose City of Georgia, hosting annual shows and festivals, attracting visitors worldwide. The warm community spirit and welcoming atmosphere make it a standout destination in the South.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the city of Thomasville on this recognition.

RECOGNIZING EFFINGHAM COUNTY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WESLEY CORBITT

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Effingham County Commission Chairman Wesley Corbitt, who was recently honored for his 8 years of service.

During his two-term tenure as chairman, Mr. Corbitt embodied Effingham County's mission to provide through integrity, accountability, and transparency.

His exceptional dedication to public service promoted safety, health, and a high-quality of life for his customers and his constituents.

Mr. Corbitt's focus on disciplined zoning and master planning for industrial growth resulted in significant

achievements for Effingham County. These achievements include setting the stage for major upgrades in recreation, contributions to transportation challenges, and commonsense solutions to resolve water and sewer debt.

Mr. Corbitt's leadership and character were integral to the Effingham County Board. He encouraged the board to disagree without being disagreeable, creating an environment that promotes honesty, selfless service, and dedication to doing things the right way.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. Corbitt for his years of selfless public service to the people of Effingham County.

HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF CEO SUE ELSE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Sue Else, an extraordinary leader who is retiring as CEO of the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia.

Under Ms. Else's leadership, the Girl Scouts continue to thrive, expanding opportunities, deepening community impact, and building the next generation of women leaders.

The Legacy of Leadership event that will be held in Savannah is not only a celebration of Girl Scouts' values, but a tribute to Sue's lasting impact on thousands of lives.

Ms. Else's passion, integrity, and vision has steered this organization through change and growth, always placing the girls at the center of her work.

As the birthplace of Girl Scouts founder Juliette Gordon Low, Savannah is the perfect setting to honor Ms. Else's legacy, which is marked by courage, commitment, and leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I join the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, the Savannah community, and grateful families across the State in thanking her for her service. We wish her the very best in her well-earned retirement. Her legacy will continue to inspire young girls for years to come.

DTE RATE INCREASE

(Ms. TLAIB of Michigan was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, here we go again. DTE wants another rate hike, 11 percent this time. Our families can't afford more power outages in Michigan that wipe out groceries, spoil medicine, and leave our neighbors without critical medical devices, all because DTE would rather pad the pockets of their shareholders and executives than invest in reliability for our families.

We know that DTE charges some of the highest rates, Mr. Speaker, in the Nation, while they have some of the most unreliable service and they perform hundreds of thousands of utility shutoffs per year.

The company made \$1.4 billion last year alone. Their CEO made \$12.5 million last year. Investor-owned utilities like DTE will always put profits over the people they are supposed to serve.

These are companies that don't see providing us power as essential to our daily lives. We are just another account number to them.

Now DTE is seeking another massive \$574 million rate hike. It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that it was just a few months ago that the Michigan Public Service Commission approved a \$217 million rate hike back in January. The Michigan Public Service Commission must do the right thing and reject this outrageous, unreasonable rate increase.

Access to utilities is not a privilege; it is a fundamental human right. Every single family should have access to electricity, heat, and water. We need public power to all. We need utilities that serve people, not shareholders. We need to take the profit motive out of the services we all need to live and thrive on.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S FIRST 100 DAYS

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe that it has only been 13 weeks.

President Trump's first 100 days in office have eroded constitutional rights, illegally and lawlessly dismantled Federal agencies, and consolidated power into the hands of the billionaire class. I like to describe it not as shameful, lawless, and reckless, which it is all those things, but it is also the cruelty of how it is being done.

The President has relied on executive orders to push through illegal and divisive policies that circumvent this Congress. He has empowered an unelected billionaire like Elon Musk to fire Federal workers without cause and dismantle the programs our families depend on. That is probably why they are losing in court. We are winning in 93 percent of these courts because, again, much of what he is doing is illegal.

President Trump has attempted to override the Constitution through executive order to end birthright citizenship, deport American citizens without due process, including a 4-year-old with cancer, and he has openly defied Supreme Court orders.

This is a constitutional crisis; that is a fact. We don't need to be cutting services and critical programs for our families. We need to make them work better for our families. Instead of gutting healthcare and Medicaid and food assistance in our public school system, Congress should make the ultrarich pay more taxes and make these programs work better for the people.

Mr. Speaker, 60 percent of working families are living paycheck to paycheck. Working families are worried about paying their rent, covering the costs of groceries, and what they are going to do if they get sick. No one plans to get sick, Mr. Speaker.

Trump's proposed tax plan only benefits the richest Americans. It is a true fact; look at it. Even powerful corporations are going to see a big tax break. He plans on giving \$7 trillion, not millions or billions, in tax cuts to billionaires while making working families pay for them by cutting \$880 billion

from Medicaid and \$230 billion from food assistance.

Mr. Speaker, don't get me going about the environmental protections. They have rolled those back, too. Our children deserve clean water, and they deserve to breathe clean air. They are showing, again, a reckless disregard for our planet and our public health.

Yet in the face of this harmful and oppressive agenda, we have seen power in the resistance not only through litigation but in the streets. Americans have mobilized in unprecedented numbers from protests to townhalls across our Nation. Our communities are organizing, Mr. Speaker, not only to fight back against these harmful policies but to build a better and more inclusive future.

Now is not the time to give in to cynicism. We must stay engaged and speak truth to power and come together in solidarity to fight for a country that our communities truly deserve that is for the people and by the people, not the powerful.

I always remind my residents, Mr. Speaker, that we didn't get the Civil Rights Act or transformative change in our country or the right to organize unions because of what folks do here in this Chamber. It is because the streets demanded it. That is how we got the Civil Rights Act and the right to organize labor unions in our country. Again, continue to rise up and continue to resist this fascist government.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DESJARLAIS). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION IS THERE TO HELP, NOT HURT, AMERICANS

(Mrs. SYKES of Ohio was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. SYKES. Mr. Speaker, we started this year on a high note.

On January 5, President Biden signed the Social Security Fairness Act into law, expanding Social Security for thousands of Americans whose benefits, that they earned through years of hard work, were cut because of bad policies.

The Social Security Fairness Act is estimated to result in an average increase of \$360 per month for more than 2.5 million Social Security recipients, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

These are our teachers, firefighters, and other public service employees who have dedicated their careers and their lives to serving and ultimately improving their communities. At a time when people have been struggling to make ends meet, these benefits could not have come at a better time.

This was a major victory for Ohio's 13th District and all of America, one that I was proud to support as a cosponsor, then by signing the discharge petition to bring it to the House floor before finally voting on it here on be-

half of the constituents that I represent.

I have heard from countless people in my community, they are thrilled that they were finally able to get the Social Security benefit that they deserve and earned. There wasn't anywhere that I could go in the community: church, the grocery store, the gym, restaurants, someone always stopped me to thank me for voting for the Social Security Fairness Act and to tell me a story of how it is going to change lives.

You can imagine my disappointment as the Social Security Administration has taken recent actions to hurt, not help, the American people, including those in Ohio's 13th. From cutting phone helplines, to requiring certain services be conducted in person, to slowing down processing times, and closing offices, the American people are not getting the service they earned from the Social Security Administration.

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Now, to add insult to injury, the Trump administration is vowing to withhold the benefits of Americans as a result of mistakes made by the Social Security Administration. Instead of making the Social Security Administration work better and remain solvent, the Trump administration is accusing seniors of fraud and calling their earned benefits waste.

The fraud is an unelected billionaire, the richest man in the world, who is cutting services to low- and middle-income families. The waste is the garbage coming out of people's mouths who don't care about seniors and say things like it is just a complicated Ponzi scheme. It is abuse by the Federal Government, abuse of people who worked hard their entire lives to support themselves and paid into a system that promised to one day support them.

Our seniors rely on Social Security to pay their bills, to put food on their tables, to keep a roof over their head, and if the Social Security Administration makes a mistake, it can be addressed in time. However, our seniors can't afford to foot the bill for when they make errors. With more than 97,000 residents of my district living under the poverty line and 175,000 residents relying on Social Security, these payments are, in fact, a lifeline.

In what world is this going to improve America? In what world is taking a lifeline away from seniors improving our economy, and in what world is constantly raising and lowering the hopes of some of our most vulnerable neighbors making America great again?

I have already heard from constituents who have been contacted by the Social Security Administration who are concerned about the changes and the cuts. They have been told that 100 percent of their benefits will be withheld until overpayments were paid back in full. These overpayments were as a result of a mistake by the Social