

our economy, our country, and, frankly, the futures of our own children, or are we going to choose the harder path?

As President Reagan said in 1964, it was a time for choosing. Frankly, we didn't actually heed his call. We chose poorly. We chose the path of a massive, bureaucratic tyrannical State. We have empowered government; we haven't reduced it. We have increased spending; we haven't reduced it. We should actually honor that time for choosing, and in the memory of my good friend who served with President Reagan let's re-ignite that call for a time for choosing, to choose that path, to choose the path of the Constitution of limited government, of freedom, of responsible spending, and turning over this country to our children better than we inherited.

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

GAS PRICES ARE LOWER FOR EVERYONE EXCEPT CALIFORNIANS

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. KILEY of California was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, there is good news for Americans when it comes to gas prices. They are down about 50 cents since last year, but unfortunately this good news does not extend to Californians. As you can see here, we remain a stark outlier with by far the highest gas prices in the country.

As of just a couple days ago, gas prices in California are 29 cents higher than second place Hawaii, an island State. Third place is Washington. Our gas prices are 52 cents higher than Washington. They are 88 cents higher than fourth place Oregon, 94 cents higher than fifth place Nevada, a \$1.16 higher than sixth place Alaska.

This is truly astounding and is one of the main reasons why it has become so hard for people to get by in our State. Now, it is no mystery why this is so: California has by far the highest gas tax in the country, our cap-and-trade program adds a huge amount to the price of each gallon, as well as the requirements of our fuel blend in California.

All of these taxes and regulations combine to give California by far the highest gas prices in the country already and now we have just learned that another refinery is closing. So two refineries have announced they are shutting down in California thanks to our insane energy policies. This certainly is not going to help matters.

It is time for Governor Newsom and the California Legislature to restore just a little bit of common sense when it comes to our energy policies because we cannot afford for these trends to continue. Indeed, it is one of the main reasons that people have been leaving our State in record numbers over the last several years.

UPDATE ON THE HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I will provide an update on the non-existent high-speed rail project in California. As I have noted on this floor before, I have introduced a resolution or legislation to cut off all future Federal funding for California High-Speed Rail. I was with Secretary Duffy when he announced an investigation into where the recent Federal funding has actually gone and I have called upon the FBI Director Kash Patel to launch an investigation into what happened to the \$17 billion that has already been spent.

At this point, the cost of the project is estimated to be about \$100 billion more than it was initially sold to the public.

But we did get some news this week and maybe I have been a little too unkind to high-speed rail.

The new CEO—and, by the way, this is the fifth CEO—so there have been five more CEOs than there have been riders. Five CEOs, zero riders. But the new CEO came out with some exciting news. He announced that he has a goal by the year 2045 of completing the line going from Palmdale to Gilroy.

So let's parse that statement, a goal of by 2045 going from Gilroy to Palmdale to Gilroy.

Well, 2045 is, of course, 20 years from now. I will note that when the project was passed in 2008, it was supposed to be done, the entire thing, by 2020. So the whole thing was supposed to be done 5 years ago, but now the CEO is saying I have got an exciting ambitious plan. We are going to have Palmdale to Gilroy completed in 20 years. And this is just the goal.

There have been a number of goals in the past, in the tortured 17-year history of this project, and they have blown right past them, missing deadline after deadline with more cost overruns than we can even keep track of.

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Then, finally, when you look at what his goal—which is very unlikely to actually be reached—is, it is to go from Palmdale to Gilroy. Where are these places?

Remember, the initial project was supposed to ultimately go from Los Angeles to San Francisco, the two main population hubs of California.

Well, Palmdale is a ways away from L.A. It is about 37 miles northeast of Los Angeles, so if traffic is good, it will take you an hour in your car or 2 hours if you are using existing public transportation.

Think about this. You are taking our high-speed rail which, by the way, isn't going to be that fast. It will probably be the slowest high-speed rail system in the world if it even gets built. Then you get out at Gilroy, and you have to somehow have a car there and drive another hour or you hop on public transit for another 2 hours of travel just to get into L.A.

It is similar on the north part of it. Gilroy is 70 miles from San Francisco,

and you would be going for at least another hour, probably more, you would certainly be driving more than an hour after hopping off there if you actually wanted to get into the city.

Of course, I am being facetious when I say that this is an exciting, ambitious plan. It is just another example of why we need to end this project once and for all. There is absolutely no reason that State or Federal taxpayers should continue to fund a project that is going absolutely nowhere, especially when our roads are in such bad shape, among the worst in the entire world.

It is time to redirect this spending toward transportation needs that will actually improve the quality of life for Californians.

COVERED CALIFORNIA TRACKERS

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, an investigation by CalMatters has revealed something extremely disturbing when it comes to the personal health information of Californians.

It has been revealed that the website of Covered California, which is the State's ObamaCare exchange, had a tracker that was collecting the personal health information of Californians, and then transmitting that information for marketing purposes.

Specifically, the CalMatters investigation discovered that trackers on the website of Covered California collected and sent personal information to LinkedIn through one of the company's trackers called an Insight tag. This information included very personal health information, whether the individual was blind, disabled, pregnant, whether they used prescription drugs, their gender identity, whether they are a victim of domestic abuse, how often they sought care at inpatient or outpatient facilities.

A spokesperson for Covered California even admitted they installed these trackers as part of a marketing campaign, and the trackers, by the way, were not removed until this CalMatters report was published. This illegal action was undertaken despite the fact that LinkedIn has publicly advised on their website that the Insight tags "should not be installed on web pages that collect or contain sensitive data and that pages offering specific health-related or financial services or products to consumers," that should not be there, either.

However, despite these warnings, Covered California proceeded. I believe this raises a serious issue under HIPAA, a law designed to protect the privacy of individuals' personal health information.

I have written to Secretary of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to ask for an investigation into what happened in California, into how this was allowed to happen and to any illegal violations that may have occurred. Specifically, I am asking Secretary Kennedy to investigate whether Covered California violated

HIPAA or any other laws, who authorized the use of the trackers, what controls exist to protect privacy in California's Affordable Care Act exchange? How did Covered California evade those controls? How many people have been impacted? Have they been notified? Has there been any restitution? Why did Covered California use the trackers contrary to LinkedIn's explicit guidance? I am asking how this sort of violation can be prevented in the future. This is truly unacceptable, and I am looking forward to getting some answers from this investigation.

CONGRATULATING MARK AND MARCUS HANEY

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take a moment today to commemorate John Adams Academy for its inaugural Servant Leadership Award Gala, which is taking place this weekend.

Now, John Adams is an exceptional school in my district. As a matter of fact, they have three schools now—in Roseville, El Dorado Hills, and Lincoln—and there are hundreds of families on the waiting list. This is a charter school. The school is so popular that there are hundreds of families who want to go there, as well.

If you walk through one of their campuses, you will see quotes from the Founding Fathers on the walls, and you will see all signs of the classical education philosophy that guides the school's instruction.

I have had the chance to work with John Adams over the years in many ways. I have judged the Constitution Bowl at their school. I have been to their ceremonies for veterans. I have met with their student council and participated and helped judge debates that they were a part of. It is truly a special place. This Servant Leadership Award really embodies the spirit of the institution.

John Adams was founded by Dr. Dean Forman, and he is spearheading this Servant Leadership Award, which will be awarded this weekend, and the inaugural recipients will be Mark and Marcus Haney. Mark Haney runs the Growth Factory in Rocklin, which helps early-stage entrepreneurs build startup businesses. They work with them to build the funding case and leadership capacity to attract the capital and team needed to support scaling a high-growth company.

Then his son, Marcus Haney, started AllegiantVETS, which is a way to provide a bridge for veterans leaving military service to be integrated into jobs in their local communities.

Mark Haney, his father, says:

We have imagined the impact that the most resourceful regional leaders could have if united to help one promising entrepreneur.

The Growth Factory is the realization of that vision multiplied by a hundred.

I am a little biased in this respect because I have seen the impact that the Haney family has had on our community in so many different ways. In fact, I honored Marcus Haney with the Veteran of the Year award when I was a member of the State legislature.

I wanted to also give you a description that Dr. Forman has given for what a servant leader is because I think it is a timely reminder in these times in many ways of what we should aspire to in public service or in other forms of community leadership.

The description of a servant leader is as follows: Robert K. Greenleaf said: "The great leader is seen as servant first."

"A servant leader is a servant first, driven by an inner compass of virtues or core values, with a natural desire to serve and empower others. This is not about being subservient but about sincerely wanting to help others by identifying and meeting needs.

"A servant leader has the gift of persuasion through moral authority: the principled use of natural virtues unique to them for the benefit of others. Positional authority: titles, credentials, degrees give only the opportunity to lead but it is the actions in behalf of others that can command, inspire and motivate change and moral behavior in others. A servant leader has submitted himself to his higher nature and asks, 'What is wanted of me?'"

"A servant leader has vision. They have knowledge of the past, recognize what is needed to improve their life, family, community and world and act to bring about a better future for others.

"A servant leader applies true principles such as: public and private virtue, natural law, liberty, life, personal responsibility, et cetera.

"A servant leader has the ability to build coalitions and inspire others to follow as first among equals. They see where things are in their condition, where they should be, and then insert themselves to voluntarily move self and others to the ideal. They model what they teach. Every servant becomes a leader because of their example and influence.

"A servant leader understands that life is not just a quest for pleasure or power but of meaning. Meaning and happiness is found when one is dedicated to a cause greater than oneself. The servant nature is not bestowed and cannot be taken away; it is who one is deep inside. Once this is recognized the servant intentionally chooses to lead. American Classical Servant Leadership is about becoming."

I just say thank you to Dr. Forman and John Adams Academy for providing this tremendous recognition. I look forward to seeing the award promote this idea of servant leadership in the years to come.

Congratulations to Mark and Marcus Haney on being the inaugural recipients.

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today I am calling on the House of Representatives to act with urgency to reauthorize Secure Rural Schools. The program, unfortunately, because of the House's lack of action, has been allowed to expire. Even though the Senate did pass it last year, the House failed to do so.

Secure Rural Schools provides critical funding for a number of counties in my district and across the country. It was enacted in the year 2000, and it compensates counties with large amounts of national forest land for lost revenue due to declining Federal timber sales. The funds support local schools, roads, and essential public services.

Congress reauthorized the program through fiscal year 2023, but, as I mentioned, the authorization expired in September 30, 2023, and final payments were paid in April of 2024. Congress must reauthorize this to avoid critical funding shortfalls.

For example, in some of the counties of my district: Plumas County relies on Secure Rural Schools for \$3.7 million, Sierra County for \$942,000, Yuba County for \$122,000, Nevada County for \$393,000, Placer County for \$839,000, El Dorado County for \$2.1 million, and Alpine County for \$493,000.

Many of those counties are small counties. This provides critical funding that they need because they have a large amount of Federal land and don't have a large tax base.

I am calling on House leadership and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to act with urgency to get this measure passed and make sure that these communities receive the funding that they need and that they rely upon.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 57 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, May 5, 2025, at noon for morning-hour debate.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Official Foreign Travel during the fourth quarter of 2024 and the first quarter of 2025, pursuant to Public Law 95-384, are as follows: