

other programs American families depend on.

There is no fiscal responsibility in this bill, and this bill will add \$5 trillion to the Federal debt.

This credit downgrade should be a warning to reverse course. Instead, we seem to be heading straight for fiscal disaster, and we need to stand up to this.

#### RECOGNIZING WINNERS OF 2025 FOURTH DISTRICT CONGRESSIONAL SPEECH COMPETITION

(Mr. ALFORD of Missouri was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the winners of our 2025 Fourth Congressional District speech competition for the great State of Missouri. This is our second year to do this. It is a great competition.

Our next winner is Lucas Tate, who is a junior at Odessa High School. Lucas wrote: "Freedom is a word that rings loud in the hearts of many Americans. We all know what freedom is. We all know what the absence of freedom feels like, but what does it mean to stand up for your freedom? Standing up for your freedom is not always loud, not always quiet. Standing up for your freedom is swimming against the school, looking for those who may follow. It is a war cry against the face of tyranny and injustice. It is a tough battle, one that we as Americans must be proud to face every day because, simply, it is American."

Our next winner is Tanner Gill, who is in ninth grade at Raymore-Peculiar High School. Tanner wrote: "Standing for freedom means protecting the rights and values that make America strong. In our country, this means making sure that people have justice, fairness, and the ability to speak freely. Everyone can help by being active in their community and standing up for what is right. Around the world, the U.S. supports freedom by helping people who live under unfair governments by promoting democracy. As a leader, America has a responsibility to set an example and defend human rights. Standing for freedom isn't just about words. It is about action. By respecting our history and working to protect freedom, we help make the world a better place."

Our next winner is Riley Olendorff, who is a junior at Glasgow High School. Riley wrote: "Standing for freedom is having courage, integrity, and speaking out against injustice. Freedom includes protecting the rights of others, even when it may be hard and challenging. We have to be able to defend our rights for ourselves and others when there is risk of being taken away. Freedom is not just about personal choices, advocating for fairness, and presenting different opinions now and for future generations. Past history has presented sacrifices from leaders and soldiers who defend our na-

tions. True freedom grows when people are willing to stand up for themselves and others. As an American, I am fortunate enough to live in a free country, and I stand for what freedom means."

I thank everyone who participated in this year's congressional speech competition, and I congratulate our winners.

#### RECOGNIZING ALEWEL'S COUNTRY MEATS

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Missouri's Fourth Congressional District May Small Business of the Month, Alewel's Country Meats.

What better month to highlight this amazing small business than National Beef Month?

What began as a small downtown grocery store in 1932, Alewel's has grown into a fixture of Warrensburg's local community.

This federally inspected meat processing and retail facility developed old German recipes to create quality fresh meats and homemade specialty products.

Randy Alewel, the third-generation CEO of Alewel's Country Meats, has expanded the facility four times now.

Today, we congratulate Alewel's Meats and thank them for their contributions to Missouri and the Fourth Congressional District.

#### RECOGNIZING RICK FULLERTON

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize our May Veteran of the Month, Mr. Rick Fullerton of Independence, Missouri. He is a World War II vet and lives at the Missouri Veterans Home in Warrensburg in our district.

Mr. Fullerton attended Smith-Cotton High School in Sedalia and graduated in 1945. That September, he began his service in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He served as an accountant in Mobile, Alabama, and he is so proud of the fact that he was instrumental in making sure our servicemen got paid for their sacrifices.

Mr. Fullerton created a wonderful family with his wife, Betty, and 2 children, 4 stepchildren, 13 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren.

I am proud to honor Mr. Fullerton on the floor today, and I thank him for his service to our great Nation.

#### THANKING EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL

(Mr. PATRONIS of Florida was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. PATRONIS. Mr. Speaker, in honor of National EMS Week, I rise today to thank the great men and women of the emergency medical services.

As the former CFO and State fire marshal for the State of Florida, I saw these men and women firsthand in action during major events, such as during the aftermath of Hurricanes Michael, Ian, Idalia, Helene, and Milton, and, of course, the tragic building collapse of Champlain Towers in Surfside.

The mental and physical fortitude that these heroes display daily is inspiring. It is a testament to who they are as individuals.

The theme for National EMS Week is "We Care for Everyone."

God chooses special angels among us to serve, to heal, and to care for those who are sick or injured.

□ 1100

They rush into danger at a moment's notice without hesitation, giving hope to those who need it the most.

These heroes work 24/7 365 days a year, missing holidays, birthdays, and other special occasions to ensure our communities are safe.

On behalf of a grateful nation and myself, I thank EMS workers. I thank these Americans in the EMS field for all that they do.

As long as I have a voice in Washington, D.C., I will always support our EMS professionals and every first responder working to serve our local communities, the State of Florida, and our great country.

#### RECOGNITION OF JUDGE REMINGTON

Mr. PATRONIS. Mr. Speaker, I end on a solemn note as we honor the life of Honorable Circuit Judge Tom Remington, who passed away on May 7, 2025, in Pensacola, Florida.

Tom dedicated over 60 years of his life serving our Nation and our State, first as an artillery and infantry officer in Vietnam, where he earned the Combat Infantryman Badge, two Purple Hearts, two Bronze Stars with Valor, and the Silver Star. His service was featured on the History Channel and in books like "Hill 875" and "Dak To."

After his military service, Tom graduated from Florida State University College of Law, joined the Florida bar in 1971, and gained courtroom experience as both a public defender and as assistant State's attorney.

In 1995, he became a partner in the renowned law firm of Smith, Anchors, and Remington, serving as general counsel to longtime Okaloosa County Sheriff Larry Gilbert.

Tom was appointed to the circuit court by Governor Lawton Chiles and served over 20 years in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. He held numerous leadership roles, including chief judge and officer in various legal organizations. Known for his humble and principled approach to justice, Tom was deeply respected and affectionately called "T.R."

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of northwest Florida, my wife, Katie, and I offer condolences to his wife, Dinah; the Smith Remington firm; and children, Scott, Mary, and Sara.

I urge all in Florida's District One to join us in honoring Judge Remington's remarkable commitment to service.

#### CONGRATULATING KADYN KULZER

(Mrs. FISCHBACH of Minnesota was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kadyn Kulzer from Paynesville on being awarded the State FFA Degree, the FFA's highest honor.

Kadyn has been a member of the Paynesville FFA since seventh grade and has been a great chapter officer for the past 2 years. She has demonstrated years of commitment to the FFA chapter in Paynesville.

Kadyn plans to attend college to earn a degree in exercise science and eventually pursue a career as a chiropractor. I am sure she will excel in her career, just as she has excelled in the FFA.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Kadyn on her hard work and dedication to the FFA and the community.

#### CONGRATULATING DOROTHY VANDENDRIESSCHE

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Dorothy Vandendriessche of Marshall, Minnesota, on receiving the Minnesota Woman of the Year Award at the Catholic Women's convention. This award recognizes significant and outstanding contributions made by a councilwoman in areas of service to the church, the Council of Catholic Women, her parish, and the community. This honor is given to women who serve as an inspiration to others.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Dorothy on this outstanding achievement and for her contributions to her community and her church.

#### CONGRATULATING MASON MILLER

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Mason Miller of Ada, Minnesota, on signing a free-agent contract with the Detroit Lions.

Mason stepped in all 16 games of the NDSU Bison season last year and was named a first team All-American. Mason played an important role propelling the Bison to their tenth FCS National Championship.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Mason on this incredible accomplishment and wish him well as he begins the next chapter of his life.

#### UPDATE ON CALIFORNIA'S HIGH-SPEED RAIL

(Mr. LAMALFA of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, once again, I am here to address the situation of California's wasteful spending. A new bit of information has come out that the interim segment of high-speed rail is going to be built between a town called Merced down to another one near Bakersfield called Shafter. This segment would end in an almond orchard out there in the middle of nowhere. The price for that segment has gone up to about \$38.5 billion, just for this segment, which is going to be in a low-population area comparatively when the whole concept of California High-Speed Rail was one that would go from San Francisco to L.A., the population centers.

The original cost, I will remind you too, when it was placed on the ballot in front of the voters, was that it would be \$33 billion to build the entire system from San Francisco to L.A., not just that 150-mile segment between Merced and Shafter.

Who is being shafted in this deal? Those being shafted, of course, are the taxpayers, as always, since in their quest to not let this go, to not let it die, they are going to continue to seek more and more money for this project.

Now, in the 17 years since this was passed and placed on the ballot in front of the voters—and it won by a very narrow margin, 2 or 3 percent—it was to have an initial \$9 billion bond of State money to go towards the \$33 billion, and then the rest would be raised from the private sector, that price is today seen as \$128 billion. In those 17 years, they have only managed to raise \$17 billion or so towards the project, in 17 years. Since the project is about \$110 billion or so short, where are they going to get \$110 billion more when it took 17 years to raise \$17 billion? Where is that going to come from?

California has a scheme called the cap-and-trade tax that taxes the privilege of making carbon dioxide if you are a manufacturer or some other large entity that produces carbon dioxide as a byproduct of your industry. Let me remind you, carbon dioxide is only 0.04 percent of the atmosphere.

All of these things are being done to cut carbon, including this whole rail project itself, which is supposed to be a big carbon saver, yet they are chasing a goal that is incredibly small and incredibly out of touch.

Here we are. They are going to come to Washington asking for more and more money. So far two Democrat Presidents have given the project about \$3.5 billion on one occasion each. They are going to fall far short of raising \$110 billion more since cap-and-trade, as I mentioned, in California only brings in about a billion per year on taxation on CO<sub>2</sub>. If they manage to get a couple \$3.5 billion segments from the U.S. Government, it is a long ways from getting done.

We should be solving other issues in California instead of building this dream rail system running through the middle of communities, having to take so much land by eminent domain, messing up farmland, messing up the middle of the cities that it is going through, having to take out a high school in one case, and a rendering plant in another case. These are all things that are making it actually worse for people, just so they can have the idea of, oh, we have to be like China and have a high-speed rail system.

It isn't working out in California. It won't work out. The price is horrendous. The tickets themselves for people to be able to ride the train are going to be a lot more expensive than what they are trying to tell us they will be, especially when you have low-cost airline

tickets like Southwest and others going back and forth pretty often.

Why don't we solve other problems, like California's water issues, the water supply? For that kind of money, you could build 26 new dams that would hold who knows how many acre-feet, how many millions of acre-feet. Let's just try and build two or three dams that will hold 3, 4, 5, 6 million acre-feet and solve California's water problems, solve California's continued transfer of agricultural water to fish supplies. We could actually get something useful done.

People that use the roads and the highways and freeways would probably like to see some of the potholes fixed, for example, that always get worn into the right lane of a freeway. Maybe we could get some of those fixed. Maybe we could add lanes here and there where there is more dense traffic with a fraction of that money.

No one is going to ride this thing for the cost and for the time it takes to still get back and forth between San Francisco and L.A., and they don't have a car at the other end. You might as well take the airplane and save money and get there even faster.

Mr. Speaker, of all the things we could be investing in, whether it is water supply or managing our forests better so we don't have to burn them down every year and suffer with air quality that we have—each year there is a million-acre fire, including the Dixie Fire in my district about 4 years ago that hit this town. The smoke plume hit this town because we don't manage the forest.

There are so many other things we could be doing besides high-speed rail.

#### RECOGNIZING EMPIRE HIGH SCHOOL'S SOFTBALL TEAM

(Mr. CISCOMANI of Arizona was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Empire High School's softball team for winning the 3A State Title.

The Ravens scored a run in the bottom of the eighth inning to defeat Yuma Catholic 1-0, earning their second straight State title and the fourth title in the last 10 years.

This victory caps off an amazing season for the Ravens who finished with an incredible record of 28 wins and only 1 loss.

I congratulate Coach Shannon Woolridge, the players, and everyone who played a part in this special season. They have made their school and community incredibly proud.

The Ravens should enjoy this victory they earned. Congratulations to the Ravens.

#### CONGRATULATING SALPOINTE WOMEN'S TENNIS TEAM

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Salpointe's women's tennis team for winning the Division II State Championship game.