

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

Kadya 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.

Kadya 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 Kadya 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 starred 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.

In a thrilling set of matches, Salpointe defeated Canyon del Oro by a score of 5–2.

This is the first State championship since 2011 for Coach Theresa Spurduto. I know it must have meant a lot to be crowned as a champion once again.

Congratulations to all of the coaches, players, family members, and everyone who played a part in this special season. They have made their school and community incredibly proud. Go Lancers.

CONGRATULATING CATALINA FOOTHILLS  
DIVISION II CHAMPIONS

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Catalina Foothills Falcons boys' tennis team for winning the Division II State Championship game.

In a thrilling set of matches, the Falcons beat the number two ranked Notre Dame in a decisive manner by a score of 5–0.

This victory earned Coach Ben Loeb a remarkable milestone, 20 high school State championships. This State championship marked the Falcons' 10th title in 11 years. Now, that is impressive.

I congratulate and thank Coach Loeb, the players, and everyone who played a part in this special season. They made their school and community extremely proud.

I say to the Falcons, enjoy this victory. You earned it.

CONGRATULATING PUSCH RIDGE DIVISION III  
WOMEN'S TENNIS TEAM

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Pusch Ridge Christian Academy Lions' women's tennis team for winning the Division III State championship game.

From starting this season with a loss in Nogales, this remarkable team overcame adversity and roared back to be crowned champions.

I congratulate Coach Andy Fetsis, all the players, and everybody who played a part in this special season. They should know that they have made their school and their community incredibly proud.

I say to the Lions, enjoy this victory. You earned it.

CONGRATULATING BUENA HIGH SCHOOL COLTS  
ALL-STATE TITLE

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Buena High School Colts relay team on a remarkable achievement, winning the All-State Title in the 4 by 400 relay race.

After securing the Division II last year, they faced off against top schools from across the State and came out victorious and took the top honor, adding yet another trophy to their cabinet. What a remarkable achievement.

I congratulate and thank Coach Thomas; the relay squad, Ricardo Brooks, Armani Ramirez-Sperle, Vijay Carrier, and Jayden Thomas; and everyone who played a part in this remarkable season. They have made their school and the Sierra Vista community incredibly proud.

Congratulations to the Colts. May they enjoy this State championship. They earned it.

RECOGNITION OF MAY AS  
WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as Wildfire Awareness Month.

For many States and regions around the Nation, our forests play a critical role in supporting communities and the rural economy. Our Nation's forests provide us with homegrown timber, essential for wood products, such as lumber, flooring, furniture, pulp and paper, biomass, and so much more.

The U.S. forest products industry employs more than 925,000 Americans, generating a payroll of nearly \$80 billion nationwide.

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Harvest on national forestland is also critical for supporting rural school districts through county payments derived from timber sales.

Our forests also provide countless recreational opportunities, such as camping, hiking, fishing, and many other activities available in the great outdoors.

However, many of our Federal forestlands remain unhealthy and continue to be at risk of catastrophic wildfire due to severe overgrowth and decades of mismanagement. Consequently, the United States has continued to see some of the largest and most intense wildfires in history over the past few decades.

During that time, these incredibly destructive wildfires have led to significant property loss; recovery costs; and, in some cases, the loss of human life.

I visited some of the afflicted areas, including Paradise, California, where the devastating Camp fire occurred in 2018. It is our responsibility as elected officials to do everything that we can to make sure that tragedies like this do not occur again.

Wildfires are truly an urgent crisis that must be immediately addressed, and Congress must do more to better support the Forest Service, our firefighters, and rural communities in forested areas.

Between 2013 and 2022, we saw an average of 61,000 wildfires annually with an average of 7.2 million acres impacted each year.

So far this year, we have seen more than 25,000 wildfire incidents with more than 1 million acres burned before fire season ever began.

The wildfires we witnessed in Los Angeles this year were just the latest reminder of the devastation that can occur when we don't proactively manage our forests and do everything possible to prevent them from breaking out in the first place.

Make no mistake that the wildfire crisis is just that, a crisis that must urgently be addressed. The good news is that, with the right management, we can do so much more to improve the

health of our forests and combat the wildfire and forest health crisis head-on.

This means using all of the tools in the toolbox. That includes mechanical thinning, prescribed fire, and cross-boundary authorities. That also includes expanded use of good neighbor agreements, stewardship contracts, and other innovative agreements to maximize management possibilities through partnerships between stakeholders, private forest owners, Tribes, and local, State, and Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the forestry title that passed out of the Agriculture Committee last year which was crafted to expand those tools and authorities and encourage the Forest Service to do more productive management. Such reforms will enable the agency to improve forest health, reduce the threat of wildfire, increase the pace and scale of restoration, and ultimately protect communities, property, and lives.

Many of these concepts can be found in the Fix Our Forests Act, which was passed on a bipartisan basis this past January.

Additionally, I applaud the recent actions by the Trump administration to dramatically scale up the management across the National Forest System.

Encouraging this ramp-up will enable the Forest Service to better manage, support local counties and economies through increased sustainable harvest levels, address invasive species and forest health, and ultimately reduce the severity and instances of wildfires.

During this Wildfire Awareness Month, it is important that Members understand the great challenges that our Nation has with wildfire and that there are many steps that the Federal Government can take to proactively mitigate it.

Perhaps most importantly, we must also recognize the dedication and sacrifices of our wildland firefighters to act when disaster strikes and keep communities safe.

Mr. Speaker, I thank our firefighters, first responders, and all who are working to confront this crisis as we recognize Wildfire Awareness Month.

RECOGNIZING WASHINGTON ARMY  
NATIONAL GUARD 1ST BATTALION,  
161ST INFANTRY REGIMENT

(Mr. BAUMGARTNER of Washington was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, as we prepare to mark Memorial Day, a time to honor those who gave their lives in defense of our country, I rise today to recognize the enduring service and sacrifice of the Washington Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment.

For nearly 90 years, this unit has called the city of Spokane home. Once stationed downtown, it now stands watch near the banks of the Spokane