

years, Megan and I have visited Marie's home myriad times, always surrounded by the most interesting people. It was there I first met and heard Dr. Howard Dean, perhaps the strongest voice against our invasion of Iraq and for healthcare for all Americans.

Marie is passionate about saving our landscapes and our environment. She has been the champion of the Piedmont Environmental Council for decades and led the successful fight against the 1990s Disney effort to blanket the Virginia Piedmont with houses. She has served on the boards of the League of Conservation Voters and the Trust for Public Land.

Maria is a master gardener, working in her garden high above the Potomac River in McLean. It was there that she was first bitten by a copperhead snake and rushed to Sibley Hospital for the antivenom. When she was struck again by a copperhead a few years later, the emergency room doctor noted that he had only treated two snake bites in his career. Both were on Ms. Ridder.

It will come as no surprise that he was yet again the attending physician on her third snake bite. This is the same garden where Marie or her gardener—it is not clear who—killed an invasive deer with a bow and arrow. I do my best to avoid that garden.

Marie's public service history is both remarkable and intriguing. She was deputy national director of Head Start, where she also served as the direct liaison for First Lady Lady Bird Johnson for 4 years. Later, she led the Sasha Bruce House, a compassionate home for the lost children of our Capital City—the abused, abandoned, neglected, and runaways.

Marie has won many awards in her fight for democracy. In 2019, I was privileged to honor her with the Clara Mortenson Beyer Women and Children First Award for her outstanding accomplishments and commitment to empowering women.

Megan and I are most fortunate to count Marie Ridder as our beloved friend. America is the longtime beneficiary of her creativity, energy, and tireless commitment to others.

When you earn her trust, Marie will even tell you about her date with the bachelor John F. Kennedy.

HONORING TIM BAUER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my good friend, Timothy "Tim" Cliff Bauer, of Winnie, Texas, who passed away at his home on December 19, 2024, after a hard-fought battle with cancer, surrounded by his loving family.

Tim was born to Patricia and Leroy Bauer on September 13, 1951, in Beaumont, Texas. He grew up in the Winnie-Stowell community and was a devoted member of Grace Methodist Church.

While attending East Chambers High School, he met the love of his life,

Vicki Cuniff. After graduation, Tim attended Texas A & M University, earning his bachelor of science in agronomy in 1973. He married Vicki during his senior year, and they returned to Winnie, where Tim farmed rice and raised Red Angus cattle.

In 1998, Tim and Vicki moved to the original Bauer Ranch homestead and lovingly restored it, going to great lengths to preserve its wonderful history and significance to the local agricultural community.

Tim founded Texas Financial in 2002 and revived the Bauer Ranch's cattle operation in 2011. He created the F1 Braford herd. He retired from his financial advisement business in 2015 but continued to ranch for another 7 years.

In 2023, Tim and Vicki moved to Kerrville, Texas, where he enjoyed the golden years of his life.

Tim was a man of conviction, stewardship, and passion. He held leadership roles in many organizations and was very well known for his love of hunting, fishing, and Western art.

Tim will be remembered for his sincere adoration for his family, unwavering faith, and steadfast presence. He was a true cowboy, a man's man, and tough as a boot. I am incredibly proud to have called him my friend.

May the Lord bless his memory and his wonderful family. We will all miss him.

Farewell, Tim.

CALLING FOR WILDFIRE RECOVERY AID WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BARRAGÁN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart for the thousands of California families who have been devastated by the recent wildfires in and around the Los Angeles area.

Homes have been burned to the ground. Lives have been lost. Family pets are gone. Precious family photos and sentimental belongings have been charred, damaged, and, in many cases, totally destroyed.

The fires didn't just destroy personal possessions. The fires took away the safe place we gather with family and call home, and it took out entire communities.

What I saw, what I witnessed on my tours of the fire-damaged areas, was heartbreaking, devastating, just unreal. It was like being in a war zone. There was a smell of burnt trees and homes, with smoke still in the air, as firefighters continue to put out smoldering fires. The ash irritates your eyes.

What was equally heartbreaking was the evidence of a desperate panic to evacuate, shown by the abandoned cars left in the middle of the streets, many charred, as I imagine people started to run to safety.

Yet, I also saw our brave firefighters. I say thank you to them and our first

responders for being on the front lines and for all that they are doing.

There will be a long road to recovery. We must stand with our neighbors, with our friends, with humankind. It is the right thing to do. It is the compassionate thing to do. It is what we have done repeatedly when communities face natural disasters.

It does not matter if you are in Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, or California. When our communities suffer, we must pull together as one to help communities with the aid they need to rebuild.

When hurricanes hit Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina over the years, we didn't say, "Don't send aid because of politics." When the Speaker's home State of Louisiana suffered losses and devastation, we didn't say, "Let's attach strings to the aid."

We don't do that because, above all, we help our fellow Americans. We don't turn tragic situations caused by natural disasters into political fights. Let's not start now.

I implore my colleagues to put politics aside, to love thy neighbor as yourself, to support a bipartisan recovery effort with no strings attached that builds a safer, more resilient future for our communities harmed by the wildfires.

RECLAIMING OUR FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, on his first day in office, President Trump wasted no time in addressing California's water crisis by signing the memorandum titled "Putting People Over Fish: Stopping Radical Environmentalism to Provide Water to Southern California." We are very pleased with the President's strong actions on that and many fronts yesterday. We look forward to working with his administration on that.

Now, it did say "southern California." As a Representative of northern California, I was like, what are you doing, Doug? We want people to understand that, due to stories like this—this is Lake Shasta up in Shasta County, just north of Redding. It holds 4½ million acre-feet of water when full. It is part of the Federal project known as the CVP, the Central Valley Project, built in the 1930s.

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We have an opportunity to raise it 18 feet, add 600,000 more—that is a different story for a different day right now—as well as the other projects we have around the State that hold a lot of water; Lake Oroville, right near my home, 3½ million acre-feet.

The President wanting to have water that is already available, useful for other Californians, instead of being lost or not stored to begin with, I appreciate that directive. You know

what, we have plenty of water in California that falls on the Sierras in rain and snowpack, if we would capture it.

Instead, we have this situation year after year. This poster is a bit dated, but it is the same thing year after year. It shows how much water is being lost out through the Bay Delta. We have this massive flow, in this particular timeline, 7 million acre-feet came in. We are losing 6½ million acre-feet because we are just letting it go out.

It is not helping the delta smelt you have heard about. The delta smelt, they can't find it anymore. They do trolls, and they can't find it. It is gone. Even with all the extra water that has been pushed out since 1992, it never did help the smelt. Maybe too much water actually drowns the fish or something. I don't know.

We don't need to flush that much water through the delta even to keep saltwater intrusion from coming back up and affecting some of the Delta. We need to be trapping that water. We need to be saving that water for the San Luis Reservoir and for crops which would be helpful in the San Joaquin Valley.

Also, when we talked about southern California—my colleague just talked about the horrendous fires down there. This is a reservoir right near the Pacific Palisades, which burned to the ground. This reservoir had that been full, would have had enough water to last several days instead of just a few hours that their hydrant system had.

That is what it looks like full, more or less. That is what it looks like empty. It was empty. It had been empty for nearly a year. What kind of management or planning is that where they don't need to tell the fire department it wasn't full at the time?

They are supposed to be doing some kind of repair on it. It probably could have been done in a couple of weeks. Instead, they are putting it out for bid and this or that. Probably, their local staff could have done it, they say. We lost that opportunity to trap water. Get this: It holds about 40 acre-feet. I just showed you how many hundreds of thousands of acre-feet go out through the delta. You could fill that up in minutes if you could somehow channel the delta into that. Yet, this is what you get.

Instead, we would have the opportunity to have those reservoirs full, and have southern California have what it needs. Also, let's not forget the San Joaquin Valley, which President Trump knows a lot about. They grow these amazing crops. So many of them come from down there, as well as my part of northern California, to feed the United States and even the world.

These products—when we show you these percentages here—these are percentages of crops that come from California that Americans use; not just Californians. If we don't grow them in California with all this abundant water we have, then where is this stuff going

to come from? Where is this food going to come from? We are going to have to import it or do without it. We think, well maybe we don't have mandarins anymore, maybe we don't have avocados anymore. We will just eat something else. Why?

We need to have these choices, and we have the ability to grow them because we have plenty of water when we trap it. Even in drought years, there is still enough water that comes down.

With that, the management of water supply is also tied back to fire management. Unfortunately, what my colleague was talking about, the horrific fires in southern California, this is some of the brush that grows on the hills above those areas. It is a pretty arid climate down there. We know that.

If we are smart about it, we can actually be removing this brush, and make it so that if fire does happen, it is just burning weeds at a slow pace instead of being driven by the Santa Ana winds at a high rate of speed, 80 miles an hour. You can't beat that. Firefighters can't beat that.

They do their best efforts. They have got to try and at least make a line of defense at the city, but when it is flowing over the top of them like fire does and like happens in my district all the time, it is humanly not possible.

This is how we stay ahead of it; removing this brush in the timber areas, like in my district where fire burned 1 million acres one time. We can be removing brush. We can be removing dead trees and small trees. We are still leaving the forest, but it is a thin forest. It is a managed forest.

Instead of empty promises being made—empty-handed like Gavin Newsom time and time again saying: Oh, we are going to do something about the water. We are going to do something about the fuel in the forests. No, he isn't. He is dragging his feet on seeing the water supply built in California.

He needs to be directing his people on the water commission, directing people on the water control board to make things happen to build these projects as expeditiously as possible instead of just trying to slow down the lawsuits. We need to do this to scale. We need to do this with speed. We are tired of the empty talk from the Governor.

President Trump is leading the way on his first day, showing the path forward on helping our water supply, on helping our forests, helping the people in our State at home and our country to have what they need.

No more empty promises. No more nonsense. Gavin Newsom needs to get out of the way. Let President Trump—instead of putting aside \$50 million in the legislature, which is what they are talking about to fight Trump, and they want to tie that to State aid for southern California for fires.

Talk about conditions—we hear about conditions a lot around here. Oh, no, conditions. You are making condi-

tions on the State legislature to tie \$50 million to fight Trump with lawsuits for State aid.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

ENHANCING AMERICA'S LIFELINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a critical issue for all of America, Social Security.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, there are more than 70 million Social Security recipients in the United States of America. What most Americans don't realize is that it has been more than 50 years since Congress last enhanced Social Security. Richard Nixon was President of the United States the last time Congress voted to enhance benefits.

Now, some will say: Well, wait a minute, didn't we just recently vote on Social Security in terms of making sure that teachers and firefighters and municipal employees and police officers would be able to get Social Security insurance? The answer is, yes, we did, except it wasn't paid for, which means that when we say it hasn't been enhanced, in fact, what that did is cut the Social Security trust fund.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say that it is long overdue that we have a vote on Social Security. That doesn't seem to ask too much of the new Congress, and after all, the incoming President says that he cares about Social Security and has proposed also that there be tax cuts for people on Social Security. That is a good idea, except they have to be paid for. His legislation doesn't call for that, but ours does.

We have put before the American people, and will be bringing to the floor, Social Security legislation that enhances the program for the first time in 50-plus years. Imagine that, 70 million recipients. There are 5 million of our fellow Americans who get below-poverty-level checks from Social Security after having paid into the system all their lives because Congress hasn't acted. Congress hasn't voted.

There are some 35 million Americans whom the only benefit that they have is Social Security. The average Social Security payment is \$18,000 for a male, \$14,000 for a female. No one is getting wealthy on Social Security, but it is, as I like to say, the lifeline of capitalism, the full support for capitalism.

It allows people to take risks. It allows us to be entrepreneurial because in the event the business doesn't succeed or fail, there is that system. The