

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

genius of Franklin Delano Roosevelt was that he saw that, and the genius of successive Congresses was that they enhanced the program. However, the last time it was enhanced, Richard Nixon was President of the United States in 1971.

This also is, for Americans, a lifeline because of what it does. Speaker SMITH was just in the chair before, and I was explaining that in his district, he has over 150,000 recipients, Mr. Speaker. Those recipients are broken down in several different ways: Retirees, over 100,000; spouses, over 8,000; widows, 8,000; 14,000 disabled people in Speaker SMITH's district, but they haven't received an increase from the United States Congress since 1971.

If you disagree with it—if you disagree that people don't deserve this, to have their Social Security updated, brought into the modern times that we live in, then vote against it, but for God's sake, for the more than 70 million Americans who rely on this and need this, it is long overdue for a vote. Don't you think so?

#### SENDING A CLEAR MESSAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOST). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a vital piece of legislation, the Laken Riley Act.

On February 22, 2024, Laken Riley, a 22-year-old Augusta University nursing student was murdered by an illegal Venezuelan migrant while she was jogging in Athens, Georgia.

Prior to the attack on Laken, her killer illegally entered the United States and was apprehended and released at the border. The perpetrator was also previously arrested by both Federal and State officials in multiple jurisdictions, and each time released due to certain States' soft-on-crime policies and the failures of the Biden-Harris administration to protect our southern border.

The Laken Riley Act is straightforward in its purpose, safeguarding the safety and security of our neighborhoods from the threat posed by criminal, illegal aliens who disregard our laws and endanger our citizens. It sends a clear message that we will no longer tolerate leniency when it comes to those who commit theft, burglary, larceny, shoplifting, or other serious crimes.

This bill also empowers States to hold future administrations accountable. For too long, radical far-left policies weakened immigration enforcement and prioritized open borders over the safety of American families.

By providing States with legal standing to challenge Federal officials who fail to enforce immigration laws, we ensure that no administration, present or future, can turn a blind eye to the dangers posed by criminal, illegal aliens.

Recently, January 10 would have been Laken Riley's 23rd birthday. This legislation isn't just another bill. It is a promise to address the real challenges and commitment to creating a safer, more equitable future for all. This is our chance to honor Laken Riley's legacy by building something lasting and meaningful.

It is a chance to prove that we can rise above partisanship and come together to solve real problems for real people. This will protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of every American, restore trust in our immigration system, uphold the rule of law, and ensure that every community in this country is safe and secure. It is time to put the safety and security of the American people first.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for this vital legislation and to return it to the Senate.

#### WILDFIRE WORKERS

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor those fighting the deadly wildfires that are destroying our homes, businesses, and taking lives across southern California. In the face of this natural disaster, I thank our brave first responders who are on the front lines fighting one of the worst fires in California history.

I am also proud of our local Orange County firefighters that are helping our neighbors in Los Angeles. I am happy to say that we are not alone. I am grateful for firefighters from across the country, neighboring States, as well as our neighboring countries, Canada and Mexico, who have also come to help us fight these fires.

Moments like this remind us that strength is through unity and helping each other out. Of course, that includes almost 750 incarcerated individuals who are stepping up and acting as firefighters on the front lines.

□ 1230

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the immigrant community in the area who are offering free food to the first responders and collecting donations for the families in need.

From firefighters to food vendors, friends, and local neighbors, all coming together in this time of tragedy, that is what community is all about. That is what this Nation is all about.

#### RECOGNIZING LESTONNAC FREE CLINIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EDWARD GERBER

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of my very good friend, Ed Gerber, the executive director of the Lestonnac Free Clinic in Orange.

Ed graduated from the University of Texas after 4 years in the military. Since then, he has dedicated his time as an executive director at the Lestonnac Free Clinic. His priority is free medical and dental services to the

uninsured and low-income families across southern California.

Under his leadership, Lestonnac Free Clinic has expanded to 13 satellite clinics and 2 mobile medical vehicles. He pioneered the specialty care program to help low-income families access specialty medical care.

We love Ed. We want him to stay healthy. We need him, and we thank him for his very, very good work in our community.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BICE) at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

On these days after the long-sought ceasefire in Israel and Gaza, we pray in thanks to You, Lord Almighty, that as You promised, You have given freedom to the captives. You have broken the shackles of their confinement, that the Israeli and Palestinian men, women, and children, soldiers and civilians, sick and infirmed, may be returned to their homelands and to the embrace of their loved ones.

Bind up the brokenhearted, those whose arms remain empty, grieving the death of the ones who did not live to see this day. Bind up the wounds of the hostages released as they suffer injury of mind and body that has penetrated their very souls.

In these next weeks, Sovereign God, intercede and effect the end of the region's warfare. Abolish the bow and the sword, put an end to the gunfire and bombardment, silence the battle that rages, and remove from the land all desire for vengeance.

Clear the way for safe troop withdrawal and swift delivery of humanitarian aid. May all, under Your watchful eye, soon lie down in safety. In You, may we find everlasting peace, and in Your name, may we lift up our prayers. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.