

sound like a lot, but if my friends knew that our forests are growing ten times the amount of board feet versus what is being taken out each year, they would know we are going to fall farther and farther behind unless we get more aggressive on forest management policy.

Therefore, we will get many more million-acre wildfires and smoke plumes coming all the way to the East Coast, as came for my district in what was known as the Dixie fire just a few years ago.

We will get more and more dead trees coming out of the forest. We will get more logs heading to our local mills. Why is the U.S. the number one importer of wood products when we are burning it in our own Western States? There will be less fields sitting there, waiting to burn if we take this stuff out of the forest.

It is very important in northern California, and in the Western States it is very important. We have lived through these devastating wildfires time and time again, and we are getting really tired of it.

Better forest management isn't an option. It is a necessity. This is the people's lands and the people's asset. If the Federal Government isn't going to take care of it, we need to find more partners to do it otherwise.

This requires long-term contracts, giving the industry more continuity. They will know that if they invest tens of millions of dollars building a mill, they will be able to pay for that mill over the years by having a continuous flow of timber to them.

It is important for our small towns and for the jobs that used to be in them and for the businesses that are now boarded up because of the issues of crime and domestic abuse when people don't have work. They need that work. They need those jobs. We need that for our economy. Make it in the USA.

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF CAMP MYSTIC

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. ROY of Texas was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.)

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, earlier today here on the House floor, I rose to lead the Texas delegation, my friends, and this entire body in a moment of silence for all of those who have been affected by the floods in Texas, particularly those that were affected in the district in which I am proud to represent in central Texas.

It has always been an honor, as I often say out on the campaign trail, to represent the best part of the best State in the best country in the history of the world. That particular part of the State is, as one of my staffers describe it, Heaven on Earth. At least that is how many of us have viewed it historically.

For now a century, it is the reason why there have been multiple camps for children along this beautiful part of

the Texas Hill Country, the centerpiece of which is the Guadalupe River.

Those people who live along it cherish it. Those people who go there for camp cherish it. We have been experiencing the tragedy and the loss of life that now so many across the country have associated with it.

I will turn time over to my colleagues because I have certainly been able to express a lot of my views about this. I want to say just a couple of things in kicking this off.

I view things through the lens of the stories of heroism, the stories of courage, the lives that were saved, the people that were airlifted, the Coast Guard that responded, the sheriffs and the local law enforcement that showed up, the first responders that helped, the State that was on the scene, the camp counselors who showed up, the camp directors who gave their lives, all of the people who showed up and the spirit and the strong faith of a community bonded together by faith that now endures.

That, to me, is the enduring legacy. I tend to look through that lens. From those of us who understand Texas best, I don't think we should miss this moment for the people of this Nation to understand how horrific this truly was.

When I went on the scene—and several of us were there quickly for a variety of reasons, which we will all hear about in a minute. When I went on the scene on the night of July 4 and then again on the 5th and the 6th, and then driving out to go look at the damage and meet with my constituents and meet with people affected, it looked like an F5 tornado had just rolled down the river.

Mr. Speaker, 100-year-old trees were leveled and flattened. Houses were totally destroyed and lifted off the foundation. There was debris. Pickup trucks were fully buried with a little part of them sticking out of the ground.

Of course, as we have been talking about, there is the extraordinary loss of life. We are now at well over 100 individuals who are now deceased that are officially known in Kerr County, but many more are expected. There are well over 100 individuals who are missing.

Of course, now somewhat of note for the entire country are these wonderful little girls associated with Camp Mystic. My children are 15 and 14. They are a rising sophomore and freshman. Many of their schoolmates and many of their friends go to Camp Mystic or go to Camp La Junta or one of the other wonderful camps up and down this area and this part of Texas.

It is hard to put into words how much this is a part of the fabric of our community in central Texas but really particularly the entire State of Texas and even nationwide.

Many of our colleagues were impacted by this. We have colleagues from Georgia and other colleagues across the entire Nation. I had col-

leagues from Alabama reach out because they had constituents who were lost. It is a wonderful vacation spot that was obviously turned on its head.

The extraordinary impact is going to be felt for a long time, and we are going to have to rebuild. We will have to take the time and the energy necessary to do it. It is, as I believe, the spirit of the entire community that will endure.

As I said earlier—and I will talk about more of this later—it is for me the enduring image of those little girls leaving the camp, singing hymns, while they surveyed the damage.

It is the people who showed up with crosses and the people who showed up in prayer groups. It is the people who showed up from churches.

They are the Samaritans and first volunteers who showed up within days to clean out mud and the people who have rallied around this community.

They are the people across this country who have done so through faith and belief and the power of what these little girls represent and the charm bracelets that they wear. These bracelets were made by the local jewelry store, James Avery, which is a part of the rich history and tradition.

I could go on, but my colleague from West Texas has personal experience with this because his family has been associated with these camps for generations. I am going to let my friend, Mr. PFLUGER, fill in a little bit of the personal nature of this. I look forward to hearing from the remainder of my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER).

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that he has done a great job of representing in a very tough time. It is easy to lead when times are good. When times are tough, we see character. Mr. ROY has done a very nice job, an extraordinary job, in leading in a very challenging situation.

It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor all of the lives that were lost during this devastating and tragic series of floods that swept through central and west Texas last week and to recognize the bravery and the selflessness of the heroes who stepped up when they were needed most. I will start by honoring the memory of the 11 lives that were lost from my district.

They were: Officer Bailey Martin, Bobby Martin, Amanda Martin; and Jayda Floyd from Odessa. Lost from Midland were Michelle and Cody Crossland; and Joel, Kyndall, and Tasha Ramos; Tanya Burwick from Blackwell, who worked in San Angelo for many years; and Steve Edwards from San Angelo.

□ 1740

These lives were lost far too soon, selfless individuals, leaders, officers in the police force, and people whom we

will miss dearly. We will continue to pray for the many more whose lives have been lost and for those families that are still searching for them, hoping and praying for a miracle.

I sent my young girls to Camp Mystic for a couple of reasons. Number one is because, for young women, this was a place where they didn't have access to the digital world. They had access to relationships. They were taught about faith. They were placed in cabins with other young girls where they learned how to develop friendships. They learned things like horseback riding, archery, swimming, and camp craft.

My girls are fourth-generation campers at Camp Mystic. I learned about this when I was a kid and went to many closing ceremonies as a young child, watching my sister and her friends. Now, I have had the opportunity to watch my own girls for the last 10 years attend this camp.

I want to say that my wife, Camille, and I are eternally grateful that we are reunited with my two daughters who were present at the camp during this tragedy. While we rejoice their safety, and I will be forever grateful to God for sparing their lives, we are mourning and deeply grieving the many families who are having to say good-bye to their loved ones and to their daughters up and down the river, campers who were there for the Fourth of July to celebrate our Nation's independence and to celebrate being with families.

It is just unimaginable the grief. It is unimaginable the heartbreak, especially those young kids and those young girls specifically at Camp Mystic.

I want to honor Dick Eastland, who was the owner of Camp Mystic. He was a man whom I have known my entire life, a man who gave his life trying to save campers at Camp Mystic.

The Eastland family for years has poured their lives into young women, building these young women and these young ladies to be women of faith, to be women of character, to be citizens of this great Nation, and to raise families in a way that we would see the character and the strength of their faith.

Dick Eastland and the entire Eastland family are like many other families throughout this country who run camps. Whether they are Boy Scout camps, Girl Scout camps, YMCA camps, summer camps, or church camps, it doesn't matter. These camps are important to our Nation. In ways that sometimes parents can't always do, these camps represent a place where these kids can come to learn how to be better citizens, better friends, and better community members. They are important.

Camp Mystic was important. The image that I will never forget in my mind as I walked the camp just 2 days after this tragedy is where my young daughter stood getting away from the flood that was rising very rapidly, and where she had her head bowed, praying for safety. They were singing songs,

knowing that there was a really tragic event unfolding in front of them. They were praying for their friends and for their safety.

My middle daughter said that this was a family. Everybody knew everybody, and this family is deeply grieving right now.

I hope that this serves as a wake-up call for our Nation and that it serves as a wake-up call for us to congratulate and celebrate the countless heroes, some of whom gave their lives. We will never know their stories.

We celebrate the fact that we live in a country where we can freely worship and where we can stand firm on our faith. Camp Mystic was a place like other places throughout this country that taught that to these young, innocent souls. It taught them to lean on their faith and taught them to lean on their friends, their relationships, and their families. It taught them the core values of what this great country affords.

I hope that this serves as a wake-up call for all of us to get back to that foundation, that we can take a lesson from this tragedy and build on it in a way that we do good and honor the memory of almost 130 people now, and rising, those that tragically lost their lives.

We won't ever forget. This green ribbon serves as a reminder here today.

Again, I thank my friend here, CHIP ROY, for representing during this hard time and for calling this hour to recognize that memory.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from west Texas. I appreciate his sharing with the country and with all of us and our colleagues the testimony of his little girls and his family and their connection to Camp Mystic. He has been an extraordinary representative of Camp Mystic and those camps and has shown great leadership himself as we are all looking forward to finding ways to make sure that these camps rebuild.

Mr. Speaker, before I recognize the next speaker from Texas, Coach ROGER WILLIAMS, I want to note that our colleague, BUDDY CARTER, is in Dallas as we speak at the funeral of a little girl in his family. BUDDY CARTER represents Georgia down there in Savannah. His grandniece is being buried in Dallas-Fort Worth, and he is there with his family now. To show how far-reaching this was and how many people it touched, BUDDY's granddaughter was also at Camp Mystic but survived. This is touching almost everybody in this Chamber in one way or another.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS), who is my esteemed coach and friend.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank CHIP for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Texas flooding victims.

On July Fourth, what should have been a day of celebration turned into a day of tragedy as catastrophic flooding struck central Texas, devastating our

communities and claiming far too many innocent lives.

My prayers remain with the victims, their families, and those affected by this heartbreaking disaster. As emergency crews continue recovery operations, I remain committed to supporting our fellow Texans in any way I can.

In the face of immense devastation, we have also witnessed our neighbors stepping up to help one another, showing the Nation the true spirit of Texas and what it means to be a part of a great community.

I extend my deepest gratitude to President Trump, the brave first responders, State and local officials, and the countless volunteers who are working tirelessly to bring relief and hope as we navigate this unimaginable loss, and I again say thank you to Chip for his leadership.

While there is a long road ahead, I know Texans will continue to be on the lookout for one another and recover together.

On a personal note, my 4-year-old granddaughter called today and wanted to know if it was okay if she prayed for the little girls and could she make bracelets for the victims' parents. All she had was a rope with a string to do it with.

Texas is a big State, but Texas is a small State.

In God We Trust.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CRENSHAW), my friend from Houston and my congressional classmate.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, what happened in Kerr County was not a typical flood. We know floods in Houston. We know worst-case scenarios, and this is one of them.

More than 6 inches of rain fell in just a few hours. In some areas, the Guadalupe River surged over 30 feet in just 45 minutes, and we lost dozens of lives, including 27 at Camp Mystic. Children and counselors were caught while they were sleeping.

Entire communities were hit before sunrise with not enough time to react, but in the face of devastation, Texans rose up. Local responders acted immediately, some without any sleep and without any backup.

In one case, Petty Officer Scott Ruskan saved 165 people.

□ 1750

Dick Eastland, owner of Camp Mystic, gave his life saving his campers. He was found shielding them. Emma Foltz bravely led her bunkmates to safety. Julian Ryan sacrificed himself for his fiancée and children.

There are so many more stories of heroism. These are just a few, but it is good to know that there are still heroes in America. You never know if you are going to be one until the time comes. These are unmistakably Texan stories of courage and sacrifice.

I am proud of the Trump administration declaring a disaster within 48 hours, making sure that FEMA and the Coast Guard mobilized quickly and help was on the ground fast.

This is a rare and devastating event, but it will stay with us. We will mourn, but we will never forget.

We pray that we can prove worthy of those we have lost and prove worthy in our own lives of those heroes and those survivors.

I can't help but think of what I saw just a few days ago. Thousands of people lined the streets in my district in Kingwood as they brought back the Wilson family. Shiloh Wilson, a 12-year-old boy, was out there for a rodeo competition. He and his parents were all lost. Now they can rest together because of the volunteers and the first responders that got them back home. What an amazing sight to see, thousands of people back home lining the streets awaiting their arrival.

These people will never be forgotten. I am proud to stand here with my colleagues today to make sure that doesn't happen.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Houston and appreciate his sober remarks in recognition of so many heroic actions.

Mr. ROY. I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF).

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ROY and Mr. PFLUGER for those personal memories. I thank MORGAN LUTTRELL, our Texas colleague, who has been in the river recovering bodies.

When I look at the Texas flag, I see more than a symbol. I see a legacy: a legacy of grit, resilience, and people who never fail to rally when faced with adversity.

The devastating floods that swept through Mr. ROY's district brought unimaginable loss. Homes were destroyed. Families were torn apart. Entire communities were forever changed.

In the midst of destruction, Texans are still standing tall. We remain strong, as we always have, even in the face of overwhelming hardship.

My wife, Tracy, my team, and I continue to pray for the victims and the families affected by this tragedy.

As Christians, we are called to be there for one another. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 reminds us: "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up."

In the wake of this disaster, our Texas communities embodied those verses. Neighbors helped neighbors, strangers became friends, legislators became volunteers, local businesses donated millions to support recovery, and ordinary Texans became extraordinary heroes.

More than 12,000 volunteers have flocked to Kerr County to help with search and recovery efforts. Together, we lift one another up.

Texans have always exhibited an undeniable gift and a deep-rooted spirit of resilience. In the face of tragedy, we do not break. We build. We rally. We rise.

As we begin the painful process of moving forward, let us never forget the lives that were lost, their families, their stories, and their names.

I pray that when their sorrows begin to ebb, that cherished memories will begin to offer comfort, that all of us will remain mindful of the fragility of life and the strength found in the unity forged by the bonds of grief.

May the peace that passes all understanding be felt by those whose hearts are broken, and may all Texans find hope in the unwavering spirit that binds us together.

Finally, let us remember that the Lone Star State is not only defined by its wide open spaces and rugged land but by its people and by the guiding spirit and will of our creator.

We will rebuild, we will recover, and we will remain Texas tough.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and appreciate his kind remarks.

I am going to ask Judge CARTER from my neighboring district just north of Austin to come deliver a few remarks. His district has also been directly impacted by flooding, and I am sure he will have something to say about that.

Right before he begins, I do want to reiterate something that I believe Mr. SELF referred to and maybe Mr. CRENSHAW. That is our colleagues who have stepped up, guys like our friend MORGAN LUTTRELL, who has not been in front of cameras. He has not been doing anything other than his training to do diving and looking for bodies in the river. MORGAN is doing the hard work and joining in and stepping up. I believe his brother is with him and other great patriots who have joined that effort. There have been people from all over the country who have joined that effort.

Our friend, Mr. CLAY HIGGINS from Louisiana, came over. He engaged as a former sheriff who has training that was on point. We have had a lot of folks from our community step up to try to help, and I am deeply grateful.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I agree with everything my friend said. Mr. LUTTRELL is an amazing guy.

I rise today with a heavy heart on behalf of the people of Texas, the 31st District, and the Hill Country of Texas, the most beautiful part of our State.

Over the last 12 days, Texans have witnessed horrific tragedies, incredible acts of bravery, and the unwavering spirit of our State.

In my district, we lost eight souls and one remains unaccounted for. These people were friends, neighbors, mothers, and fathers. My deepest condolences go out to the families mourning these unimaginable losses.

This tragedy has made its mark on every corner of our State, but especially Kerr County. More than 130 people were lost—I understand it is lower than that now—but still more than 100 lost their lives and over 160 people remain unaccounted for. My heart goes

out to every family that will never be the same.

It is hard to imagine dropping your kid off at camp, feeling comfortable about going home, and getting the news of something like this disaster. I have four children and seven grandchildren, and it is just unimaginable to me.

In the face of this disaster, Texans have shown the world exactly who we are: strong, faithful, and steadfast in our belief that we can take care of each other.

We have seen first responders bravely rescue hundreds of Texans, and we have seen them bear the weight of recovery efforts. We have seen volunteers band together to support those who lost everything.

The road ahead will be long, but I want Texans to hear that you are not alone. We mourn together, we will rebuild together, and we will carry each other forward because that is what we do as the people of Texas.

May God bless each and every one of you and comfort you in your loss.

For those heroes among us and for this great State of Texas, blessings and grateful thanks.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Judge CARTER for his leadership and for representing his district so well and looking out for those impacted by the storms and the floods in his own area. I deeply appreciate his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, next is a colleague of mine who is deeply familiar with storms and flooding because he represents the southeast part of the State of Texas, although that is a different kind of flooding typically.

I want to personally offer my thanks and gratitude to my friend, BRIAN BABIN. All of my colleagues have stepped up and called and offered support and help. In particular, I would say my friend, Mr. BABIN, and his team have been there picking up phone calls from our office, helping out, doing whatever is needed, and offering guidance. They have experienced this kind of thing a little more often than we have, but we are deeply grateful.

□ 1800

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN).

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it is an anguishing thing to have to come up here and talk about some of our friends and colleagues who have gone through this. CHIP has done a wonderful job here with this Fourth of July.

My family and I dropped off four grandsons and a granddaughter back in May at Camp Mystic and at Camp Stewart for Boys. My history with this area goes way back, 60 years or better.

I served as a counselor at Camp Stewart under Uncle Bill James, who sold that camp later on to the Ragsdale family. Kathy Ragsdale and I have been talking on the phone recently, and what a loss she sustained. She lost her daughter, Jane.

Mr. Speaker, spending a couple of days out there in that beautiful country, probably the most beautiful in the entire State of Texas, with the crystal-clear, green Guadalupe River canopied by 100-plus-foot Cyprus trees, some of them 10 feet in diameter, it is just unbelievable beauty, tranquility, and peacefulness. To think that, within a span of less than 1 hour, that thing came up 30-plus feet and became a raging, raging torrent—a demon, if you will—wiping out wonderful, wonderful families, children, and turning that place into a devastating desert.

I thank the first responders, our President, our Governor, CHIP ROY, and a number of my colleagues for their help. I am the chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. NASA itself offered aircraft and imaging technology to come out and help in the search and rescue efforts.

Quite frankly, it touched lives. My district is literally probably 250 miles away from this one, but I have to mention names. My district lost Aiden Heartfield, Joyce Badon, Ella Cahill, the whole family of John and Julia Burgess and their two little boys, Mary Grace Baker from Beaumont, and Reese Manchaca. So many others were touched by this in a way that we will never ever forget.

Yet, Texas is tough. As CHIP said, we are no strangers in my district to disasters. I have been in office now going on my fifth term. I think we have probably had seven disaster declarations in my district because of tornadoes, floods, and hurricanes, as well.

We have a Texas spirit. It is unbreakable. Quite frankly, we are going to rise above this. We want to let these families that are out there know that they are in our prayers. We are going to do what it takes to make this place whole again, keep these camps going, and keep this wonderful tradition that we have. The cultural, patriotic—you name it—the Christian environment of these camps are going to have to be sustained, and they will.

Mr. Speaker, I just say before I close how much we appreciate all of the people who absolutely sacrificed. My own son was out there the last 2 or 3 days with his chain saw. He brought his 10-year-old son out there. People were coming and stepping forward. We heard about the Luttrells; our colleague, MORGAN LUTTRELL. They are out there finding some of these victims.

This thing is turning out to be much bigger than we had thought. At first, we thought maybe there would be a couple of dozen people lost here, but we are looking at close to 300. By the time it is all done, I am just not sure how disastrous this thing is going to be.

Yet, Lord, we want to thank You for Your blessings, Your love, Your mercy, and we are going to rise above this because we are Texans. We pull together, and we keep our faith in our Heavenly Father.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his steadfast leadership and friendship.

Thank you, brother. I appreciate you.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to invite another friend of mine, no stranger to floods, from the southeast part of the State, my friend, RANDY WEBER.

As the gentleman is coming up to the microphone, I point out the extent to which this delegation, I know, is grateful for the leadership of our Governor, Governor Abbott; the head of the Texas Department of Emergency Management, Nim Kidd; the countless individuals and public servants affiliated with the Department of Public Safety and its head, Freeman Martin; the folks who are associated with the Sheriff's Department in Kerr County and throughout the region, the other areas affected by floods. I can't name everybody.

The city manager in Kerrville has done a fantastic job. We have just had so much fantastic leadership of people in the State of Texas stepping up and, as BRIAN said, so many volunteers from across the State. We continue to. We want to be very clear. All of this is current and present. The search continues. It continues today. They are engaged right now, and we are deeply appreciative for it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER), my good friend.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, our hearts are breaking across the Lone Star State, especially for our dear friend and colleague, Congressman CHIP ROY, and his beautiful district as they recover from unimaginable devastation caused by those Fourth of July floods.

In the dead of night, the Guadalupe River surged more than 20 feet in just 45 minutes. Think about that—20 feet. Families were forced to fight for their lives. Homes were overtaken. Children at summer camps ran for safety. It was the worst-case scenario and one that was unfolding in total darkness.

Mr. Speaker, down on the Gulf Coast, we are no strangers to disasters, as CHIP mentioned. We know hurricanes. We have weathered our fair share of storms, but this—this was something else. It was sudden, swift, and heart-breaking. This was the very center of Texas, the very part of the heart of the center of Texas, and Texans across the Nation felt it.

Many knew someone who was impacted. We have all seen the images, Mr. Speaker. We have heard the stories. The pain is real. The loss is deep. Yet, through it all, our God is still great. Even in the midst of destruction, the light of faith and courage shone through and still shines through.

Children gathered were heard singing hymns. Neighbors rescued neighbors, Mr. Speaker. Total strangers became heroes.

Our first responders and our great Coast Guard saved countless lives. Everyday Texans are stepping up, Mr. Speaker, helping with cleanup and recovery, giving comfort where it was needed the most.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, we also mourn the lives lost. From my district, five precious souls along with the countless, as was said, maybe up to 300. District 14 lost five precious souls: Mary Grace Baker, attending Camp Mystic, whose young life was so tragically cut short; Ella Cahill; Joyce Catherine Badon; and Aiden Heartfield, all from Beaumont, my district, celebrating Independence Day together; and Brad Perry, a volunteer firefighter from League City who, together with his wife, was swept away in his RV by the floodwaters.

His wife, Tina, was miraculously rescued after clinging to a tree for 5 hours.

These were the mothers, the fathers, the daughters, the sons, and friends. Their loss is felt deeply not just in our hometowns and their hometowns but across Texas and beyond.

We do thank Governor Abbott and President Trump for coming and supporting and making a way and making sure that we had every resource that we needed.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said here that Texans are tough. We rally, we rebuild, and more than anything, we pray. We pray for Congressman CHIP ROY's district. We pray for every grieving family. We pray for healing, for strength, and for the peace that only God Almighty can bring.

May we, Mr. Speaker, as leaders never forget our duty to stand beside them not just in words but in actions. I will end, Mr. Speaker, by saying God bless Texas, and may God bless the families walking through this storm.

□ 1810

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend RANDY WEBER for his leadership and his kind words.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to NATHANIEL MORAN, who represents a good number of my family in east Texas and is just one of the great lights in our delegation, a good man and friend with whom I am very proud to serve.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor and to remember those whose lives were lost and who were impacted by the catastrophic floods that struck central Texas in the early morning hours of July Fourth, when children and families were abruptly awakened by the terrifying sounds of water rushing into their campsites and homes, overtaking them in a matter of minutes. It was an unthinkable tragedy. One that has scarred, no doubt, the sorrowful soul of so many in Texas and beyond.

As we have come to understand, many of those who were lost were simply children enjoying their time at summer camp, children not unlike my two children, who went to summer camp this year. It is a place meant for joy and laughter and for friendship and lasting memories, but instead brought destruction.

Mr. Speaker, 132 precious lives have been lost to date, and with so many more individuals still unaccounted for. The physical and emotional destruction has been overwhelming. Lives have been lost, homes and businesses have been washed away, lifelong belongings destroyed, and an entire community, State, and Nation are left in anguish and in shock.

Mr. Speaker, we are heartbroken for the families who lost precious family members. No words can fill the void that these loved ones left in their homes and in their communities. We pray for peace, for comfort, for healing, and for understanding during the long and hard road of grief ahead. We acknowledge, though, that in our humanness we may never fully understand why such tragedies happen, but in that same moment, we acknowledge fully that we serve a great God above who does.

I will also take time to extend my deepest gratitude to the courageous first responders as well as our local and State officials who acted swiftly and selflessly in the face of this devastation to save so many other lives. Their dedication and bravery saved countless lives in the face of this devastation. Equally inspiring were the countless Good Samaritans, ordinary citizens who became heroes, risking their own lives to help both friends and strangers in need.

Texans are remarkable. As has been said today, in the midst of tragedy, we will see and we do see and we have seen the immense character of the people of Texas, particularly the people of central Texas.

In the days and weeks ahead, we pledge to stand in prayer and in sorrow and solidarity with the families who have lost their loved ones and the people of central Texas, particularly those in Kerr County that have been so intently affected by this devastating flood.

Mr. Speaker, our prayer today is for hope and for peace for all of those in the difficult days ahead. I am privileged to be able to stand here alongside so many great men and women of character that serve our delegation in the State of Texas.

I thank Mr. ROY for his leadership during this time of devastation and tragedy in his district and to say we stand with those families. We ask for God's blessings and peace on each one of them. May God bless them.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from east Texas for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, while I wait for my friend Mr. GILL to come up to the microphone, I do want to note—because there has been so much unnecessary politicization of all this and finger pointing. I will have more to say about that in a minute, but I just will be very clear that on Friday, July Fourth, I called the President to tell him what was happening in the district that I represent, that I am proud to represent, the flooding and it was terrible,

because we were going to have a bill signing that day. The President could not have been more gracious. He could not have offered more in terms of his willingness to act quickly. I called that same day over to the Secretary's office, Secretary Noem, and she got back to me within 15 minutes offering us anything we needed. She had folks on the ground. She moved quickly to get the Army Corps of Engineers activated, moved quickly to get fixed-wing aircraft mobilized—this is all prior to a disaster declaration—and then had the boots on the ground ready to go when the disaster declaration was ready.

There is a lot of stuff flying around, so let's be very clear. In a nonpolitical statement, but just the reality of what has happened, this administration was on the ground in the district that I represent helping people. I think that should be noted. I think that the record should be clear. The people that I represent are deeply grateful for it and are deeply proud to acknowledge it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to BRANDON GILL, who represents the district in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex area and just a little North of that. I deeply appreciate his service as a freshman member of the delegation and his strong words of encouragement throughout this.

Mr. GILL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Texas Hill Country is well-known as one of the most beautiful regions in the State and it just witnessed one of the most horrific disasters in our State's history.

I saw it last week myself when we went down to Kerrville, and you could see homes gone and roads shattered and families broken. I met first responders who pulled neighbors from waters that just destroyed lives.

I heard the stories like that of Jeff Ramsey and his wife, Tanya, two constituents from Texas-26. They were Texans, and they were parents trapped in their camper at Hill Country Campground as the flood swallowed everything around them.

In those final moments, Jeff picked up his phone and he said good-bye to his kids. "Hey, buddy, I love you so much. I think this is it for us. Tell Rache-y I love her."

Mr. Speaker, what do you say to that? What do you say to a son who lost his father or to a daughter who only has her father's final words? What we are going to say is that we will never forget them. That we will honor every life lost, including Jeff, Tanya, and every other life taken by those unforgiving waters. We will honor and remember the young girls and staff at Camp Mystic and the vacationing families enjoying their Independence Day weekend.

This flood stole lives and stories and futures and Texans. Today, we mourn them and we honor them and we will remember them. We will carry their names and their stories, but we also thank the first responders who jumped

into this mess in dangerous conditions and who are still working to clean up the flood.

I think, in particular, of our colleague Congressman MORGAN LUTTRELL, who is out working right now, as well as Mr. ROY who has been working around the clock for his district over the past 2 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, God bless Kerrville, God bless Texas, and God bless the U.S.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I deeply appreciate and thank BRANDON for his kind words and remarks, his presence and that of the entire delegation.

There were a number of other of my colleagues who wanted to be here this evening, but they couldn't make it because they had other obligations. We don't always get to control the timing of the House floor. I thank those individuals for their support during this whole time.

□ 1820

I want to conclude with a few thoughts. I gave way earlier to make sure that all of my colleagues had a chance to speak.

I want to give some flavor to what we have experienced, particularly in Kerrville and in the Hill Country and that part of our great State, over the last 10 days or so.

Remember that, on July Fourth in Kerrville, there is an area in the center of town, a park where thousands of people go every year to listen to music, to Texas country music, typically. Robert Earl Keen is a local artist from Kerrville who plays every year, typically.

My children, my family, my wife and I, we have been going there every year for the better part of a decade. You will sit down there on the river and canoe and tube up and down the river while you are waiting for the concert. Then, the concert is at night with fireworks down there at the park.

It is often attended by the people who are coming down to camp on the Guadalupe, just a little west of Kerrville, in the area that has now become more known, for people across the country, in Hunt, Texas, where these kids' camps are located.

There are about 18 or 20 camps right there on the water and 40 camps or so in that general area for kids in the summer. Many of these camps have been there for decades, some as long as a century.

Camp Mystic is one of those that would celebrate its 100th anniversary next year. That is an all-girls camp, as my colleagues have noted. My colleague AUGUST PFLUGER's daughters were there last week. It is an all-girls Christian camp.

Camp La Junta, right down the river, is also a Christ-centered camp. That is an all-boys camp. It had massive damage, massive flooding. Fortunately, they had no loss of life.

There are multiple camps. I can go through it. I am going to leave some out if I keep going up and down the river.

People ask why. People ask these questions of me and say: Why are these camps, all of these houses, all of these campgrounds so close to the river? Well, because the river is awesome. I mean, why are there houses on the beach? Because people like to be on the beach.

This is not something that should be that surprising, and it shouldn't be something that we shift away from. It is a great blessing that the Lord has given us this part of the country that you can go to and experience and live with these clear waters and the limestone that is cut through there after thousands of years. This whole area was an area where the Comanches were known to collect, in that part of the country, and also take part and enjoy those particularly beautiful waters and springs.

It draws people from all over the country, and that is why these camps are there.

I noted earlier on the floor, when we had the moment of silence, the extent to which faith is the central part of everything we are experiencing. It is the reason these camps, for the most part, exist. It is the reason for the spirit that we have seen coming out of Kerrville, as so many people mourn and so many people across the country are taken by the stories of these little girls.

Fredericksburg is also an awesome town, just down the river from Luckenbach, from the famous country song.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, when you come into Kerrville and are coming in on Highway 16, coming down from Fredericksburg, you come in on 16 into Kerrville. Up on the hill as you enter, Mr. Speaker, there is a giant cross, and there is a garden there. It is filled with a bunch of the important symbols of our Christian faith, not just the cross, but other things. It was all done by an artist named Max Greiner, and he has done a fantastic job laying it out. It gets hundreds of thousands of visitors every year.

This cross sits up on the hill over Kerrville. I noticed, and I said this in an interview this weekend, that there were numerous crosses just showing up throughout the town. There was an interview one of the reporters was doing on the river, and there were three crosses sitting on the bank of the river.

I was driving down the highway, Highway 39, which goes from Kerrville out west through Ingram and then Hunt and out by where these camps are. I went out to Camp La Junta after the President came in. It was my, I think, third or fourth journey over the last 10 days.

I noticed the changes from the days I first went over there, when the floods had just occurred, all the damage, debris, and cars, and just absolute devastation that destroyed houses, the roofs. The flood lines were 30 feet up in these

tall cypress trees. You couldn't even believe it.

There were trees stuck in the tops of trees. There was metal roofing that was up in the tops of these trees. There was a dumpster wrapped around a tree.

When I was down in Kerrville, the stage from the Fourth of July setup was wrapped around trees probably 500 yards down from where the stage had been set. This is a massive, heavy stage on a truck bed. That was where the President got his briefing. Mr. Speaker, if you saw the pictures, that is where the President was located. That was a stage, that rubble that was there.

There was a massive dumpster wrapped around trees, a heavy metal dumpster, just shredded like aluminum foil. That was the force of this water.

Somebody told me that it was 1.6 million gallons of water per second rushing through this corridor. That is what we were dealing with.

Going back to the cross, Samaritan's Purse showed up on the ground immediately. It is a great organization headed by Franklin Graham out of North Carolina. They show up to deal with disasters all across the country and all around the world. Here they are in my own backyard, not something I had necessarily anticipated.

This organization is there cleaning out mud from the Lowe family's house. They are a fantastic family, and I had known them. We went and visited. I can't say that I participated in the clean-out. I intend to do that when we get out of this session in August.

We were going around and looking at the damage. They were explaining and walking through it for the average viewer out there asking how this could happen. They looked down and saw the flooding waters, but they were way down. They woke up at 1 in the morning to some alerts. They kept listening and watching the water come up. Then, they realized they had to move.

By the time they realized they were going to move, it moved from 15 feet below the level up to the level of their house in a matter of minutes. It just came rushing in. They were able to get out just before and get up to high ground.

Another family friend of mine whose kids were there—there were about 30 of them. There were several families, parents, and kids from my kids' school. They were all on a piece of property with three houses. Same thing—they woke up at 3-something in the morning. The river was way down a good 15 or 20 feet below the house. They were watching the water rush and go: Well, maybe we ought to think about moving.

They started moving people out of the three houses on the piece of property, these rental properties. They were sitting there and cleaned out the first house, got the kids ready. By the time they did that over 15 or 20 minutes, thinking they had hours, the water was already up to the house.

They moved to the second house, and the water was up to their knees. The

third house, the water was up to their waist. They had to get up and ride the storm out for 3 hours on top of another house, 30 people, including kids.

They were fortunate to survive, and they are okay. All seven of their cars are down the river. The remaining of their houses are down the river.

When I went to the Lowe's house, they were explaining it to me. They are great people of faith. Next to their house was a foundation, all that was left of a home. There were several of those in a row.

There was one man sitting out in a chair by that foundation. That man, I was told, was the father of a 20-year-old boy who he had lost. He was trying to find him, trying to find his body.

They had found three girls who had been there in their vacation home. The dad wasn't there. He was back home in Houston.

I walked over. I saw the man and offered him my condolences and listened to his story. This was maybe 4 days after it happened. He walked me through how, at 4 in the morning, the son had called him and explained that it was a bad spot. The water had already engulfed the house. It had come up so quickly. He was walking through it and trying to figure out how to get out. The son was trying to get the three girls out of the house.

He is talking to his dad and then hands the phone off to one of the girls. The son is trying to get the other girls out of the house and get through the water. About that time, a very large cypress tree—huge; I saw the remnants of it still there—came through, hit them and the house, and took it out.

The one girl who was left on the phone saw it and basically said to the young man's dad: "Tell my parents I love them." That was the last thing she said and the last thing he heard.

There are dozens of these stories. People act like something should have been done differently. Maybe it should have. Maybe there can be better systems. We will go through all that, and we will figure it out. That is what we do as people. We don't point fingers.

I will close with this, going back to the cross, going back to the spirit of the people of Kerrville and of the Hill Country who showed up, the first responders who have shown up, the people of the State, the Governor, the Texas Department of Emergency Management, all the prayer warriors, all the churches, and the now \$30 million to \$40 million of contributions that have poured in and millions more, all the people showing up, bringing food—every single food vendor called my phone. Thousands of people said: What can I do to help? MORGAN LUTTRELL used his training, along with his brother and others, to go into the water to try to find people.

Important are the stories of these camp directors and camp counselors who did everything they could to save lives. Dick Eastland lost his life trying to save those little girls.

I spent time with his daughter, Mary Liz, over the last week. I met Mary Liz in a church, Trinity Baptist Church, in Kerrville on Saturday night, the day after July Fourth, on July 5. I didn't know Mary Liz. Mary Liz asked me for my number. I gave it to her. We started talking, and I realized that she was Dick's daughter-in-law.

□ 1830

Mary Liz was there in the church with all of the families who still hadn't found their little girls. Mary Liz wasn't running away from it, as the director of the camp, or one of the remaining directors of the camp after Dick had passed away. Mary Liz was there.

Mary Liz has been constantly on the phone with all of these families, trying to find everything they can. We have now found every one of those little girls except for one, and they are not going to rest until they find her. They are not going to rest until they find the other 100 who are still missing.

This is the message that comes out of this: The power of community, the power of faith, the power of the cross that brings people together, the enduring legacy of the little girls singing the hymns as they left Camp Mystic looking at the damage.

The people who will now know the power of Christ because of these little girls' stories, the stories of the charm bracelets, the stories of the James Avery jewelry store, the stories of a century-long tradition where children come together to learn the power of the gospel, to spread the gospel, and to learn that there is more to life than these things. There is more to life than the temporary things of life as opposed to friendship and as opposed to being one with what God gave us. That is what these camps are about.

My staff, I learned, worked at Camp Mystic. The young man who is sitting down here next to me right now worked as a cook in the back of Camp Mystic 4 years ago. He told me that Dick Eastland was like a grandfather figure to him, that Dick Eastland helped teach him how to fish, fly fish, and the basics of life.

That is what every person affiliated with these camps has told me, that is what Dick Eastland and all these other camp directors, like Jane Ragsdale, did. I said earlier that Jane gave her life to save several little girls before she lost hers. I ran into her pastor just randomly on the side of the river. He walked me through her story. It is extraordinary. You heard some of my colleagues talking about it.

The fact of the matter is that is what is touching everybody about this because this spirit is unique, and it transcends, and it will be the enduring story of all of this.

These camps are going to be rebuilt. They are going to reopen. I said on the radio I would send my kids there next summer because that is what we should do. These camps, these things, these people, this community are more im-

portant than fear. Because those of us who have faith in the Lord Almighty and have faith in the Lord's son Jesus Christ, we don't fear earthly loss because the thing that transcends that is our faith in our Lord and Savior and the need to spread that message, and for people to know that.

I am so deeply and profoundly grateful for all of the outpouring of support from this Chamber, from my Texas colleagues joining me here on the floor. I am deeply appreciative for all the people who have been risking their lives to help others, to save others, to find these bodies, to find closure for the families.

We are going to continue to do that. We are going to continue to heal. It is just the beginning.

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

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Kevin F. McCumber, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly an enrolled bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 517. An ACT to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rules for postponing certain deadlines by reason of disaster.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, July 16, 2025, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-1379. A letter from the Acting President and Chair, Board of Directors, Export-Import Bank of the United States, transmitting a statement with respect to a transaction involving exports to Angola, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 635(b)(3); July 31, 1945, ch. 341, Sec. 2 (as added by Public Law 102-266, Sec. 102); (106 Stat. 95); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-1380. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Lebanon that was declared in Executive Order 13441 of August 1, 2007, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-1381. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Mali that was declared in Executive Order 13882 of July 26, 2019, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-1382. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to hostage-taking and the wrongful detention of United States nationals abroad that was declared in Executive Order 14078 of July 19, 2022, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-1383. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to significant transnational criminal organizations that was declared in Executive Order 13581 of July 24, 2011, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-1384. A letter from the Senior Bureau Official, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report titled, "Resolution of the Cyprus Dispute"; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-1385. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 26-93, "Uniform College Athlete Name, Image, or Likeness Temporary Amendment Act of 2025", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 813); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC-1386. A letter from the Senior Congressional Liaison, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting the Bureau's 2024 No FEAR Act Report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, Sec. 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3241); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC-1387. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, Department of Agriculture, transmitting four notifications of a nomination, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, Sec. 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC-1388. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting two notifications of a nomination, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, Sec. 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC-1389. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting the FY 2024 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, Sec. 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3241); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC-1390. A letter from the Deputy Assistant General Counsel, General Law and Regulation, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, a nomination, a designation of acting officer, and an action on nomination, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, Sec. 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC-1391. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's FY 2025 Payments in Lieu of Taxes program report; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-1392. A letter from the Acting Ombudsman for Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program, Department of Labor, transmitting the 2024 Annual Report of the Ombudsman for the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 7385s-15(e)(1); Public Law 106-398, Sec. 1 (as amended by Public Law 108-375, Sec. 3161); (118 Stat. 2185); to the Committee on the Judiciary.