

homes, President Trump is freezing the funding they rely on. That is unacceptable.

Whether it is for pushing out evacuation alerts or maintaining shelters, this funding is key to keeping our neighbors safe and prepared. That is why I can't stop, and I won't stop fighting to ensure our communities have the resources they need.

I ask my constituents to please continue to follow the direction of local authorities. Have an evacuation plan. Prepare a go bag.

ADDRESSING THE GROWING ABUSES OF VISION BENEFIT MANAGERS

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to rally support for addressing the growing abuses of vision benefit managers, or VBMs.

The industry is dominated by two vertically integrated giants whose actions are undermining healthcare access and threatening the existence of eye care practices in all of our districts.

It is concerning that some VBM patient and doctor mandates appear to be aimed solely at benefiting the optical products labs, patient data gathering, and mass retail operations built around them.

The growing VBM acquisition and control over independent eye care practices have created worrying conflict of interest issues. As I speak, VBMs are attempting to link physician reimbursements not to quality care standards but solely to their own product sales.

We must protect against VBM schemes that invade the safeguarded sanctity of a doctor's exam room. Confronting VBM abuses is the central focus of my bipartisan bill, the DOC Access Act, as well as multiple active investigations in Congress and by the GAO, FTC, and others.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me, along with patient and consumer advocates like Patients Rising, the National Consumers League, and the American Optometric Association, to ensure VBM accountability is a priority in Congress.

PROTECTING AND PRESERVING LONG ISLAND SOUND

(Mr. LATIMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LATIMER. Mr. Speaker, this week the House will vote on a bill to reduce clean water standards, setting our country back in our fight for clean water. I worked for three decades to improve the water quality in the Long Island Sound. Having seen the progress we have made, I know that we cannot stop our commitment now.

Just last week, I attended a roundtable with Long Island Sound Citizens Advisory Committee to discuss how we in Congress can work with them to preserve Long Island Sound. This roundtable built on an event in Rye in June where a new 10-year conservation and management plan was signed.

I have signed onto two bills. The first is the ESTUARIES Act that will preserve Long Island Sound and 27 other estuaries of national significance. The second is the Long Island Restoration and Stewardship Act that reauthorizes grants made possible by the Clean Water Act through fiscal year 2029.

We must keep clean water standards high in order to protect and preserve our bodies of water. We may not get another chance.

HONORING COLONEL RHETT BLACKMON

(Mr. WEBER of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the illustrious career of Colonel Rhett A. Blackmon, Commander and District Engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District, a true servant leader.

Colonel Blackmon assumed command of the Galveston District on July 15, 2022, and quickly became a vital partner in Texas' 14th Congressional District. Under his leadership, Mr. Speaker, the team oversaw more than \$7.4 billion, with a b, in infrastructure projects, ranging from flood control to coastal protection that directly strengthened our communities.

His military service spans decades with combat and command roles across Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Indo-Pacific, as well as academic service as an instructor at West Point.

Mr. Speaker, his leadership has always been defined by integrity, courage, and excellence. Our Nation is stronger and safer because of dedicated men like Colonel Blackmon. As he retires from Active Duty, we honor his legacy of military service, unmatched professionalism, and his deep love of country.

We thank Colonel Blackmon for his selfless sacrifice and faithful service. Brenda Gail and I wish him, Lindsay, and his family every blessing in retirement.

God bless him. God bless the United States of America.

HONORING JOE SZAFAROWICZ

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Joe Szafarowicz, a true pillar of our northwest Ohio community. He is an educator, mentor, and lifelong advocate for young people.

For more than five decades, he has shaped lives, not just by teaching in

the classroom but by investing in the boundless potential of every child he encountered.

From the halls of St. Agnes Elementary School to the classrooms of Toledo public schools, Mr. Szafarowicz inspired generations with his belief that every student, no matter their circumstance, deserved opportunity.

Even in retirement, he has never stopped lifting others up, using art as a tool to reach at-risk youth and guiding young minds toward hope and purpose.

His impact is evident in the voices of his former students, leaders, public servants, and community members who credit his encouragement as a turning point in their lives. At the end of March, those students gathered to celebrate Joe's 80th birthday.

We, too, celebrate his life of service, kindness, and unwavering dedication to the future of our region. May his legacy remind us all a great teacher never stops teaching, and a great heart never stops giving.

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AERIAL FIRE RETARDANT DROPS

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, we are heading into the peak of the fire season in the West. The last thing California and other Western States need is even more red tape stopping firefighters from doing their jobs. Our State and most of the West burns every year. We have seen entire towns wiped out time and again, people killed, with homes, power lines, forests, wildlife gone.

Now, right when we should be preparing to fight fires faster and smarter, environmental extremists are trying to ban the aerial fire retardant that the aircraft drops onto the fires by dragging them into a Clean Water Act debate.

This is insane. These airdrops save lives using this retardant. It is a well-known product, a known product, that has had a long time in use. All of a sudden they want to sue over it. This product helped slow the fires down, giving the firefighters a chance to set up and stop them from spreading even more to tens of thousands more acres.

We are not talking a theory here. We are talking about something that has been used in practice, real tools that have been used safely for decades. The smoke alone from one major wildfire does more harm than a targeted retardant drop ever could.

The PERMIT Act, coming to the floor this week, cuts through this bureaucracy, allowing firefighters to have this material they need to effectively fight fire.

ACCESS TO ABORTION CARE

(Ms. PRESSLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to condemn the cruelty of the Hyde Amendment and reintroduce the EACH Act to end it once and for all.

It is 2025. In 1976, when I was a mere 2 years old, a Congressman from Chicago was livid at the thought that a woman could be in control of her own body, especially a Black or Brown woman. So he came to this floor and put forward an amendment with a simple, cruel aim to ban as many people as he could from getting abortion care.

With that robotic precision, this institution has rubber-stamped this amendment in budget after budget.

The Hyde Amendment denies abortion care to patients who receive their care through Medicaid, CHIP, and other government programs.

Once in my lifetime, we defeated this amendment in the House, a testament to activists, organizers, and my mentor, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE.

Mr. Speaker, in my lifetime, we will defeat it once and for all because everyone deserves access to fundamental healthcare, and that is exactly what abortion care is.

No man, no king, and no coward should come between us and our bodies.

UTILITY BILLS ARE GOING UP

(Mr. SUBRAMANYAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, across the country, Americans' utilities bills are going up, and this administration's actions are just making things worse, giving out favors to the fossil fuel industry.

Last week, employees of the Department of the Interior received a memo, and basically what the memo said was that Secretary Burgum has to personally approve every single wind and solar project.

This will add red tape to renewable energy developments while stifling new technology innovation. It is just ridiculous. We want to be a leader in clean energy, but instead we are having the Secretary personally having to approve every single project.

They are cutting off the future of American renewable energy and leaving a void for our adversaries to fill. Our Federal Government should be investing in new innovations that help lower utility costs and allow Americans to live better and healthier lives. Instead, this administration is doing favors for the fossil fuel industry and picking energy favorites.

I think this is bad for every single American, and I think we need to stand up against it.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FREEZE

(Mrs. McCLAIN DELANEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. McCLAIN DELANEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep concern for the future of education in our country.

The White House's last-minute decision to freeze \$7 billion in Congressionally approved Department of Education funds threatens essential programs families in my district rely on.

In Maryland alone, more than 150,000 children participate in after-school programs, and nearly 120,000 rely on summer programs. For every one student enrolled, three more are on the wait list.

These programs give parents assurances that even outside of school hours, children are learning, receiving healthy meals, and building meaningful relationships.

Don't just take my word. Let the kids in my district speak. This, next to me, was sent by those from Girls Inc. of Washington County, an amazing program that my family has long supported.

Parents should not be left scrambling to choose between looking after their kids and working to put food on the table. In rural districts like mine, publicly funded programs and programs like Girls Inc. are invaluable.

I stand firmly with the Maryland Attorney General in fighting for those funds the families are counting on.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle for speaking up, and I urge my colleagues in the House to do the same.

COMATOSE PRESS CORPS

(Mr. GROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, when Congress is in session, there are always interesting articles in the paper that I think demand a little bit more attention.

Over the weekend, or late last week, there was an article that said that the United Kingdom, in a few years, is going to begin having 16-year-olds vote. Since frequently problems in America happen in Great Britain first, I think it is something we should pay a great deal of attention to.

About 6 years ago, in this body, an amendment was offered allowing 16-year-olds to vote in Federal elections. Well over half the Democrats voted in favor of 16-year-olds. Why would one want to do that?

Mr. Speaker, 16-year-olds have nowhere near the wisdom and experience to make decisions as to who to vote for in elections. The only way you would want to do it is if you want to manipulate these young minds in the schools across the country.

I, like I think many other people, would have voted entirely differently when I was 16 than when I was 26.

We have to be on the alert, and our comatose press corps should be asking the Democrats now where they stand on the 16-year-old voting age.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SIGNIFICANT TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 119-71)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to significant transnational criminal organizations declared in Executive Order 13581 of July 24, 2011, under which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13863 of March 15, 2019, is to continue in effect beyond July 24, 2025.

The activities of significant transnational criminal organizations have reached such scope and gravity that they threaten the stability of international political and economic systems. Such organizations are becoming increasingly sophisticated and dangerous to the United States; they are increasingly entrenched in the operations of foreign governments and the international financial system, thereby weakening democratic institutions, degrading the rule of law, and undermining economic markets. These organizations facilitate and aggravate violent civil conflicts and increasingly facilitate the activities of other dangerous persons.

Significant transnational criminal organizations continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to significant transnational criminal organizations declared in Executive Order 13581.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, July 21, 2025.

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CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO MALI—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 119-72)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together