

She loved the outdoors and adventure. She hiked Yosemite in her nineties, took her family camping in national parks, and even went sledding with her grandchildren in her eighties. She traveled widely, but she returned to the joy of family.

Because we were in the military, we didn't get to be with Aunt Lettie very much, but we remember her energy, her spirit, her love, her compassion, her adventurousness, and her love for her youngest brother, Freddy, my dad.

Madam Speaker, though I am sorry I won't be there with Aunt Lettie and her family tomorrow, we remember Aunt Lettie in our thoughts and our prayers.

Madam Speaker, I also wish my sister-in-law, Susan Branthoover, a very happy birthday. Happy birthday, Susan.

#### HONORING DAVID BROOKS

(Ms. STANSBURY of New Mexico was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. STANSBURY. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and a bit of sadness that I rise today to say goodbye for now and thank you to my dear friend, and one of Congress' greatest champions for our public lands, Mr. David Brooks, who officially retires this week.

Over the last 38 years, David has served as an exceptional leader in the United States Senate and House, serving over the last 36½ years as counsel to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. He is the longest tenured ENR counsel in history, working for eight different Senate chairs and ranking members and one House Member.

During this time, David has worked on bills protecting nearly 25 million acres of public lands, 25 million acres of wilderness, national parks, monuments, wild and scenic rivers, heritage areas, national recreation areas, and trails.

He helped to write, negotiate, and pass one of the largest conservation bills in modern history with the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act. He helped to create permanent and mandatory funding for The Land and Water Conservation Fund, which has protected public lands across the country.

□ 1220

During his service, he helped craft 10 of the largest and most significant public land and water packages in decades, including helping to pass hundreds of individual bills and creating nearly 50 new national park units and 17 million acres of new national wilderness.

As counsel to two New Mexico Senators, he also helped to protect the Valles Caldera, Organ Mountains, and Columbine-Hondo Wilderness and many other efforts to protect the lands and waters of our State.

As you can see, Madam Speaker, the impact of David's work speaks for

itself. To any American who has stood in wonderment and awe of our Nation's public lands and most special places, behind the ever-contested efforts to protect these lands, year in and year out, has stood the humble and steadfast work of David Brooks.

For those of us who know David as I do, Madam Speaker, as a mentor, as a friend, and as a teacher, you know more than anything he would hate this speech. In fact, I am amazed that he is even here today in this Chamber to be recognized for his service. That is because the David we know and love has spent his entire career at his desk writing and negotiating bills, meeting constituents, working with Members, mentoring staff, and, yes, spinning the occasional tale or two.

For anyone who has visited that hub, or tornado, of activity, you know what I am talking about. David's office has always been a meeting place for debate, big ideas, tough conversations, and getting things done.

For those of us who have had the pleasure of working directly with David, we know him as a kind and wise teacher, mentor, and guide. This too will be his legacy of his time here in Congress, and for that we are forever grateful.

He will also be known as a true Tucsonan, who never lost his connection and roots to his hometown of Tucson, Arizona.

A hometown hero in his own right, David began his political career in high school volunteering for another Tucson icon, the great Congressman Raul Grijalva, cutting his teeth as a high school volunteer for one of Mr. Grijalva's school board campaigns in which Congressman Grijalva became the city's first Chicano school board members in history.

After graduating from the University of Arizona, David came to Washington in 1987 to work for the great Congressman Morris K. Udall where he worked in the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, now known as the House Natural Resources Committee.

Like Mo Udall and Raul Grijalva, whom he worked for, two of our greatest public lands champions, David leaves the Hill with exceptional service and an unmatched record in protecting our Nation's public lands.

If it is not already clear, Tucson has a lot to be proud of, which is why we are so grateful that some of Mr. Grijalva's former staff, staff from the House Natural Resources and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and conservation organizations working across the country, have joined us here today. We certainly know that John and Carol, his parents back home, and his wife, Celeste, and son, Ben, who are here with us today, are deeply proud as well.

Above all else, we are going to miss David Brooks and his constant presence on the Hill. For so many of us David has been a rock, a friend, and a person whose loyalty, kindness, and de-

cency stands out in a place where it is hard to come by.

David Brooks is a one of a kind, an American classic, and a Tucson hero. We congratulate him on his new retirement.

#### 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.

#### PROTECTING REPRESENTATIVE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

(Mr. KILEY of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. KILEY of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today because democracy is under assault in my home State. California politicians, led by the Governor, are throwing a grenade at our Constitution in order to strip power from voters and seize it for themselves. This fraud on our electorate compels action by Congress to protect the representative form of government that citizens of every State are due.

That is why today I am calling for a prompt vote on H. Res. 4889.

On three separate occasions, California voters have deliberately chosen to remove politicians from the process of drawing the lines for legislative districts. Voters have empowered an independent citizens redistricting commission to set the boundaries of representation so that free and fair elections, not political manipulation, are the motive force in our democracy.

This principle is so important and so vital to safeguarding democracy that the citizens commission is enshrined in our State constitution along with a number of principles to guide redistricting:

Redistricting occurs once per decade after the Census.

The legislature is barred from participating.

The members of the citizens commission may not run for public office.

Districts are to be drawn in an open process based on extensive public input.

Boundaries are to be set based on neutral criteria like keeping communities together.

District lines cannot be influenced by partisan considerations or drawn to favor or disfavor any incumbent or candidate.

In one fell swoop, Gavin Newsom is blowing up all of these constitutional principles. His unprecedented mid-decade gerrymander tears up the map created by our citizens commission, replacing it with one drawn behind closed doors and adopted by politicians. It is one designed with explicitly partisan

goals and zero public input. It is one that tears communities apart while doing special favors to Sacramento insiders.

Do the voters want this? Do Californians want to overturn everything they had previously voted for? Emphatically they do not.

Polling shows that two-thirds of voters, an overwhelming majority of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, favor keeping the commission. This would seem to be a problem for Governor Newsom, as his plan to push the commission aside requires voter approval.

To overcome this problem, to produce an artifact of voter approval for a proposition our voters strongly oppose, the Governor has resorted to two strategies: disenfranchising voters and defrauding them.

First, the Governor has called a sudden, impromptu, off-year, low-turnout special election, asking a partial electorate to overturn the will of our full electorate. To further suppress voter participation, he has thrown election rules out the window in a hyper-accelerated timeline unlike anything our State has ever seen, meaning fewer polling places, fewer notifications to voters, and at least at first a digital-only voter guide.

Second, the Governor is committing outright fraud on the ballot itself, describing the proposition in terms designed to fool voters into thinking “yes” is “no” and “no” is “yes.”

To justify all of this, to clothe the naked political self-interest in some kind of principle, the Governor and his enablers have treated us to one absurd paradox after another. We are told that another State is doing something so bad and so sinister that we should do it too. We are told that banishing an independent redistricting commission somehow supports independent redistricting. We are told that we should fight fire with fire, even if that means the whole world burns.

This perversion of Federal elections simply cannot be tolerated by the United States Congress. We have a duty to protect the rights of voters in selecting their Representatives in this body, and we have the authority to do so under the Elections Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Pursuant to that authority, I have introduced H. Res. 4889 to protect the congressional map drawn by California’s citizens commission and to preserve the map of every State until the next Census.

This measure has bipartisan support. It will prevent a chaotic redistricting war from breaking out across America. It will allow us to focus on the real issues facing our country.

Today, I am calling on Speaker MIKE JOHNSON to bring this measure to a vote on the House floor.

Gerrymandering is a plague on our democracy wherever it occurs. That is why I have also called for a bipartisan commission to end the practice once and for all.

While almost everyone agrees political division has become a serious problem in this country, it is especially harmful when we can’t agree on the basic rules of the road. We need to find common ground when it comes to the basic parameters for our politics. We can then disagree vigorously within those parameters on matters of policy and our vision for the country. That is what democracy is about.

#### NORTHEAST OHIOANS ARE GETTING SQUEEZED

(Ms. BROWN of Ohio was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I have just come back from our district work period in northeast Ohio, and let me tell you, Madam Speaker, there is nothing better than being home being in our churches, in our union halls, and our community centers listening to the people I serve.

Let me tell you what I heard, Madam Speaker. It was crystal clear. People are getting squeezed.

Groceries—a very old fashioned word—are too expensive. Gas is too expensive. Housing is way too expensive, and Trump’s chaos and corruption are making it all worse.

I heard how tariffs are jacking up prices, crushing small businesses, and threatening workers. I heard how the one big, ugly bill is about to make utility bills, student loans, and grocery costs skyrocket, all to give the richest Americans more tax breaks.

□ 1230

I heard how the President’s cancellation of community safety funding will make our neighborhoods less safe, and I heard how his attacks on unions at the VA and FEMA will ripple right into the private sector, hurting working men and women everywhere.

Donald Trump’s latest stunt, firing Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook, is illegal, reckless, and a straight-up power grab designed to give him control of the Fed and raise costs for families.

An independent Federal Reserve is the bedrock of American prosperity. If you undermine it, retirement savings vanish, mortgage rates climb, and life gets more expensive for everyone.

Madam Speaker, this is bigger than economics. This is about freedom. Take a look around our country. We have military patrols in American cities, political investigations of the President’s critics, mass detentions without due process, Federal agents hidden behind masks, museums ordered to rewrite history, the government bullying private companies and universities, and banners of the President’s face that would even make Kim Jong-un blush.

This is a toxic agenda, and the President knows it. That is why he is changing the rules in the middle of the game. Need I remind you, 4 years ago, he demanded Georgia find him votes? Now,

he is demanding red States find him more seats in Congress.

All this for what? So Donald Trump can enrich himself and his billionaire allies while everyday, hardworking Americans pay the bill.

I just have to ask, Madam Speaker: Where are the so-called constitutional conservatives? Will even one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle find the courage to stand up? Have they not learned that cowering before this man only works until he decides you are expendable?

It may be easy to look away when people are without welfare status, when they suffer, or when people you don’t like are targeted, fired, or erased. It may be easy when the victims live in places like Cleveland, Chicago, or Washington, but be clear: It never ends there.

As a Black woman, I know who the cruel and oppressive executive orders and policies punish first, but I also know this: Once it starts, everyone is punished.

This is the moment to defend our economy, to defend our Constitution, and to defend our freedoms and elections.

Madam Speaker, let me close with this. Last week, President Trump said: I have the right to do anything I want to do. I am the President of the United States.

He said it and laid it on the table in plain sight for all of us to see. He wants no checks, no balances, not from the courts, not from Congress, and not from the voters.

It is time to wake up, America, before it is too late.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President of the United States.

#### MARKING 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF V-J DAY

(Mr. HILL of Arkansas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Madam Speaker, today marks 80 years since the Empire of Japan unconditionally surrendered to General Douglas MacArthur and Allied forces aboard the USS Missouri.

On this anniversary of V-J Day, it is fitting that we pause to remember not only the end of history’s deadliest conflict but also the peace secured by the courage and sacrifice of the Greatest Generation, a legacy that still shapes our world today.

More than 16 million Americans served, including 195,000 from the State of Arkansas.

We remain forever grateful to the Allied war effort leadership, to the men and women who served down range in the Pacific, Europe, North Africa, and beyond, and to those on the home front who taught our kids and fueled the arsenal of democracy.

Our generation salutes the Greatest Generation for the defeat of fascism