

Two weeks later, Hurricane Maria made landfall in the Virgin Islands, wreaking destruction across parts of the territory already spared from Irma.

The devastation was complete and overwhelming. Our hospitals were destroyed. Schools were left in ruins. Our children shared schools for 2 years, and thousands of homes were uninhabitable. Our residents lived without electricity for 9 months.

In those darkest hours, I witnessed something extraordinary: the unbreakable spirit of Virgin Islanders. We came together to support one another, rebuild our community, and lay the foundation for a stronger and more resilient future.

While others simply saw the need to rebuild, I saw an opportunity for transformation. Many in my home in leadership said I was asking for too much and I was out of place.

By showing Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle how many times infrastructure had been rebuilt after storms and how expensive that was, Congress recognized that the prudent replacement required that the Virgin Islands should rebuild not how things were at the time of the storm but how they should have been.

As the Representative in Congress for my home at the time, I knew that recovery of this magnitude would require unprecedented Federal support and innovative approaches.

That is why we fought for and secured transformational changes in Federal law through the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018. This legislation allowed FEMA, for the duration of our recovery, to rebuild our critical infrastructure with resilient design features up to the latest industry building standards, regardless of what existed before the storms.

□ 1030

This was not just a policy change. It was a paradigm shift. Instead of simply replacing what we lost, we could build infrastructure designed to withstand future storms and serve our community for generations.

I personally brought drafters of the legislation to meet with local government and FEMA officials to ensure that they understood the intent of this body in changing that law.

The numbers speak for themselves of the historic investments in the territory: almost \$2 billion for rebuilding of our hospitals, several billion dollars for our schools, and more than \$4 billion for the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. There was a total of \$20 billion flowing to our population.

Recognizing that even this massive investment could be undermined by local matching requirements, I worked tirelessly with the last administration to secure an increase in the Federal cost share to 95 percent for public assistance categories and 98 percent for larger critical infrastructure. This will save our territory \$1 billion in matching funds that we simply do not have.

Unfortunately, the local government has, at times, exacerbated the slow pace of rebuilding. The first years after the storm were not used to sufficiently build capacity or develop integrated project management, and we have had fits and starts in rebuilding.

Our isolation and relatively small size creates difficulty in obtaining supplies and labor. This is further exacerbated by delays that occurred at HUD and FEMA. However, the story of the Virgin Islands recovery is, ultimately, a story about partnership between Federal and local government; between Congress and our territory; and, most importantly, among Virgin Islanders themselves.

We must be focused, transparent, adaptable, and driven to make our home the jewel of the Caribbean. It is a testament to what we can achieve when we refuse to accept that natural disasters must define our destiny.

As we move forward, we carry with us the lessons learned from Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria. We cannot and we will not squander this transformational opportunity. We will build smarter, stronger, more resilient, and we will continue to prove that Virgin Islanders, undeterred by any challenge, remain VI Strong.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF IRENE PEREZ PLOKE SGAMBELLURI

(Mr. MOYLAN of Guam was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MOYLAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today with profound respect to commemorate the life and legacy of Irene Perez Ploke Sgambelluri, a CHamoru daughter of Guam, a survivor of World War II, and a tireless advocate for justice.

At just 10 years old, Irene was eating breakfast with her family when the skies above Guam roared with warplanes. Her father, a U.S. Navy pharmacist, surrendered himself to protect his family, spending years in a Japanese POW camp.

Irene, her mother, and her siblings endured displacement, hunger, forced labor, and cruel treatment under occupation. She gave up her bed so that her grandparents could rest. She helped forage for food, and bore the weight of survival with quiet strength.

At age 13, she witnessed the return of American forces and trekked through mountains and devastation to seek safety, but her story didn't end there. Ms. Irene transformed her pain into purpose. She spoke at schools, ceremonies, and even laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, becoming the first civilian to do so, in honor of Guam's liberation.

Her advocacy helped to secure war reparations for CHamoru survivors, and her home phone became a lifeline for those who were seeking help.

Her grandchildren called her "the bi-ionic woman," a fitting tribute to a woman who defied cancer, embraced

technology, and danced through life with grace and grit.

Her legacy is etched not only in the history books but in the hearts of her family and the people of Guam. She reminded us that history lives among us and that the enduring CHamoru spirit would never be forgotten.

Madam Speaker, we thank her. We honor her, and we carry her life forward.

REMEMBERING 9/11

(Mr. LATIMER of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LATIMER. Madam Speaker, death comes for all of us at a time and a place unknown. It may come quietly, after a long illness, or swiftly and violently without warning. None of us are exempt. The youngest and the oldest among us each will face that moment. We know it. We fear it. Still, we carry on, putting it out of our minds so that we can live, work, and love.

In that certainty, we are united. Death does not discriminate by race or religion, gender or sexual orientation, or economic status. We are all equal in our mortality.

On September 11, 24 years ago, death came suddenly and violently. It struck without mercy or logic. It took office workers, firefighters, police officers, maintenance workers, financial executives, flight attendants, secretaries. It took Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and those with no faith tradition. They were targeted simply because they showed up to work.

Others died trying to save them. Those first responders—the brave men and women of the FDNY, the New York Police Department, EMS, and Port Authority—ran into danger knowing full well the costs. Some lives were saved because of them, and many of those heroes never came home.

The attacks were an attack of hate, of an ideology turned into violence. In highjacking airplanes, those terrorists tried to hijack our values, to cause casualties in pursuit of their beliefs, and to use death as a weapon to divide us.

Yet, even as we still grieve, as we continue to lose 9/11 survivors to illnesses from that day, we remember something greater: that humanity goes on, even as individual lives are lost. Children who lost parents have grown up. Parents who lost children have passed on. Young Americans have graduated high school who were not yet born on that clear, bright, September morning. We are reminded that life continues, but it is up to us to give it meaning.

In a deeper sense, we are all on the 107th floor of that day. We are all aboard flight 93. We all carry the weight of that day, not just in mourning but in mission.

The universality of loss can and should be the foundation for our unity, and so I ask: Why, then, are we so divided? Have we learned nothing from

this tragedy? If death unites us, shouldn't life compel us to care for one another and to protect each other while we can?

Evil still exists. It takes on many forms. It still tries to convince us that terrorism or hatred can be justified and that violence can serve a cause. We must always reject that lie.

The deaths on that day 24 years ago give us a chance to remember. We remember the lost, and we honor the brave. We reaffirm our shared responsibility to stand against hate and those who use death and terror to divide us, and we hold fast to our common humanity.

Let us say a prayer for the fallen. Let us say a prayer for the living, and let us walk forward together in the shadow of that somber day.

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF KREIDER FARMS

(Mr. SMUCKER of Pennsylvania was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. SMUCKER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kreider Farms of Lancaster County on 90 years in business.

Kreider Farms began in 1935 when Noah Kreider and his wife, Mary Hershey, bought the Hershey farm from Mary's father. Starting with 50 chickens and a dozen cows, the following decades saw the Penn Township farm expand on their dairy and egg production.

In 1972, Kreider Farms built their own processing plant and retail store for their milk and ice cream.

Madam Speaker, 90 years later, Kreider Farms is the last full-scale egg and dairy farm in the United States. The fourth-generation business employs 475 people and encompasses 3,000 acres.

□ 1040

They are the largest egg producer in Pennsylvania and help make Pennsylvania's 11th Congressional District the second-ranked egg-producing district in the Nation.

Kreider Farms' business practices are also noteworthy. Their focus on environmental responsibility and sustainability has won them numerous awards, and they are the first farm in the Northeast to be American Humane Certified.

Kreider Farms has brought joy and nutrition to countless families across Pennsylvania's 11th Congressional District and the Nation for an astounding 90 years.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Chairman Ron Kreider and Kreider Farms for their hard work and continuation of Pennsylvania's rich agricultural legacy. I wish them many more years of continued success.

CONGRATULATING SHADY MAPLE SMORGASBORD
ON 40 YEARS

Mr. SMUCKER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Shady

Maple Smorgasbord on 40 years in business.

In July 1985, Marv and Miriam Weaver added on to their Shady Maple Farm Market and cafeteria with a new business venture, the Shady Maple Smorgasbord.

Since then, Shady Maple has become the largest and one of the most highly rated buffets in the country. The restaurant covers 161,000 square feet, seats nearly 1,200 customers, and employs hundreds of people. Specializing in authentic Pennsylvania Dutch food, the buffet features hundreds of food options as well as a from-scratch bakery and in-house smoked meats.

Shady Maple Smorgasbord is just one part of the larger Shady Maple enterprise, which includes the farm market, a gift shop, and RV sales. The company has remained in family hands under Marv and Miriam's sons, CEO Lin Weaver and President Phil Weaver. The farm market and smorgasbord complex employ 750 people and attracts over a million customers a year.

Madam Speaker, as Shady Maple celebrates 40 years in business, I commend the Weavers for their hard work on transforming a small cafeteria into a culinary destination that draws people from around the globe. May their success continue for the next 40 years and beyond.

RECOGNIZING STAR ROCK FARMS IN YORK COUNTY

Mr. SMUCKER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board for conserving the 50,000th acre of farmland in York County, which occurred at Star Rock Farms.

Since its founding in 1990, the board has worked tirelessly to safeguard York County's rich agricultural heritage. Over the years, York County's farmland preservation program has become a model for protecting farmland from development and ensuring its availability for future generations.

On August 20, 2025, the board celebrated this historic milestone with the preservation of Star Rock Farms in Brogue, Pennsylvania, a family-owned, third-generation operation led by cousins Rob Barley, Abe Barley, Jr., and Tom Barley.

Star Rock Farms was founded in 1932 by Abram M. Barley with the purchase of 12 acres in Manor Township in Lancaster County.

Star Rock Farms has been a model operation and now raises dairy, beef, and swine in addition to growing crops in a sustainable manner.

To date, 354 farms have been permanently preserved across York County, ensuring that our region's farming tradition continues to thrive.

York County has shown how strong partnerships between government and landowners are necessary to protecting our Nation's farms. York County ranks third in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and ninth in the Nation in preserved farmland acreage. Together with Lancaster County, both located in

Pennsylvania's 11th Congressional District, our region proudly stands as a national leader in farmland preservation.

Madam Speaker, I commend the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board not only for protecting farmland but for preserving a way of life that sustains families, communities, and our Nation. I also thank Star Rock Farms for continuing to lead the way for agriculture in Pennsylvania's 11th District and for their efforts to support farmland preservation.

MILLIONAIRES' TAX BREAKS IN BIG, UGLY BILL

(Ms. BARRAGÁN of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Madam Speaker, I rise because Donald Trump and House Republicans lied to Americans when they promised to lower costs.

Now, they are even trying to rebrand their so-called big, beautiful bill with a new name about working families. No matter what label they slap on it, the facts don't change. Trump and Republicans' big, ugly law makes the cost of healthcare go up and takes away healthcare from working families.

Republicans hand out an average of \$80,000 in tax breaks to every millionaire. Where do they get this money from? Each millionaire tax cut is paid for by taking away insurance from four people. Republicans are stealing from the American people to fund these tax cuts.

What does it mean when four people lose their coverage? It means a mom with diabetes may have to skip her insulin or a dad ignores chest pains because he can't afford the ER visit. It means your child missing their asthma treatments and struggling to breathe in class. These are real lives on the line.

Overall, the big, ugly bill will take away healthcare coverage from 16 million people. When people lose coverage, they get sicker, there are longer wait times, hospital visits rise, and costs skyrocket for families and the entire system.

House Democrats are fighting for a different vision. We are fighting to make sure that if you work hard, you and your family should have healthcare and should be able to afford to see a doctor, fill a prescription, and get the care you need without going bankrupt.

While Republicans protect tax breaks for billionaires, Democrats are working to protect affordable coverage, lower prescription drug costs, and expand access to healthcare for working families because in our America, healthcare is not a privilege for the wealthy few. It is a right for every American.

SCOTUS' IMMIGRATION RAIDS ACTION

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to dissent.