

Mr. Speaker, as we reflect on this historic occasion, let us give thanks to the men and women, past and present, who built Pinal County into such a wonderful place to live, work, explore, and visit.

Representing the incredible people of Pinal County in Congress has truly been the honor of a lifetime, and I am so honored to continue serving all of them.

Whether it is working with mayors to revitalize historic streets in Eloy, improving operations at the Oracle Fire District, advocating for the expansion of I-10, working to help students and educators in Casa Grande achieve their American Dream, or spending time in the great communities in Saddlebrooke, I will never stop fighting to make Pinal County the best place it can be.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my constituents in Pinal County for being part of an incredible journey. The best is yet to come. Here is to another 150 years.

□ 1015

CAUTIONING FEDERAL WORKERS AGAINST TAKING BUYOUTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to urge Federal workers in Pennsylvania and across the Nation to exercise extreme caution as they consider the bogus buyout plan that the White House is pressuring them to accept.

In a memo to Federal workers last week, Trump's Office of Personnel Management notified Federal workers across the country that they had just over a week, until tomorrow, February 6, to voluntarily quit their jobs in exchange for keeping pay and benefits for 8 months. The memo threatened that if they refused the offer, their jobs might no longer exist.

Tens of thousands of Federal workers in the Philadelphia region received that email and were rightly concerned. The workers impacted by the memo include those who care for our veterans, protect our ports and airports, fight corruption and drug traffickers, and make sure that our food is safe to eat, that our air is clean, and that our water is safe to drink.

The OPM memo is one in a series of directives by the Trump White House aimed at gutting the Federal Government and the critical services it provides to Americans in order to justify massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations. We have already seen illegal firings of hundreds of career civil servants and unconstitutional attempts to shutter entire agencies.

Union leaders immediately began raising the alarm that the buyout offer could be a scam. Congress has not au-

thorized or funded these radical cuts to the government workforce and services, and employees could be left without the pay, benefits, and protections to which they are entitled by law.

The proposed workforce reductions would make it impossible for the Federal Government to deliver the services that Congress has authorized and Americans deserve. They would, however, make it easier for large corporations to take advantage of consumers and employees and to pollute the environment.

The unions have filed suit to protect their employees, and yesterday, 12 State attorneys general, including those in New Jersey and Delaware, issued a warning to Federal employees across the country that the buyout offer was misleading and should be viewed with caution.

Amidst the concern about the legality and impact of this unauthorized buyout, our colleagues from across the aisle, at both the State and Federal levels, have gone missing in action. Republicans control both the House and Senate in Washington, and we would welcome their help to stand up for the Constitution, for our constituents, and for Federal workers.

We will continue to raise the alarm and do everything possible to protect Americans and our Constitution from the worst abuses of this administration and its billionaire buddies because construction workers and contractors in our area know that the Trump corporation never kept its promises with respect to pay and meeting its obligations.

Mr. Speaker, the whole world knows that Twitter became a dumpster fire after Elon Musk tried to impact the exact types of reductions that we are seeing here, so I am issuing this warning to our constituents across the Delaware Valley.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF NUCLEAR POWER

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak a little bit about the amazing asset we have available to us in this country of nuclear power and nuclear generation. We are not taking advantage of that technology as well as we should for how efficient it is and the multiplier effect it has.

Right now, in this country, we do have 93 commercial nuclear reactors, and they generate approximately 20 percent of the Nation's electricity. We are indeed a very large producer of nuclear power in the world scheme of things, but we have some very good partners around the world, such as France, Japan, and some of the other Western countries that are really good at it, as well.

Within the U.S., we have reactors in 28 different States. Illinois leads with

11 reactors. Pennsylvania has nine. California has one. It used to have two. We are lucky we have the one, as they just had a recent 5-year extension on the life of what is called Diablo Canyon. Its usable life is 20, 30, or maybe 40 more years or beyond that with retrofitting.

I hope we can hang on to that because that alone represents in my home State, California, 9 percent of the grid with just one plant. Can we imagine knocking that out and removing 9 percent off the grid? It provides power 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. We don't have to wait for the wind to blow. We don't have to wait for the Sun to come up or the clouds to part. It is reliable electricity. Indeed, it has a capacity factor of about 92 percent, which indicates how reliable it is and how efficient it is.

It is also used extensively in our Navy, providing amazing performance for our aircraft carriers and especially our submarines. The old style of submarines used to have to surface to recharge batteries and run diesel at that point. Our nuclear submarines can stay underwater for as long as they strategically need to.

That is a great asset for carriers, as well, because those are very large craft, and the amount of fuel they would need otherwise, except for this really small ball of energy that is within that nuclear reactor, propels those for years and years at a time. It is amazing how much power comes from that concentrated area.

When we talk about nuclear power plants and this conversation about carbon dioxide, the plants we have in this country avoid the production of about 476 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. I am not going to be the guy that stands here and complains about carbon dioxide. I think it is an essential building block. For those who are, why aren't we doing more nuclear if carbon is a big concern? Why aren't we doing more in that department to make carbon-free power, which is nuclear as well as hydroelectric power?

We have a fair amount of that in northern California, in my district, and other Western States, as well, except for the fact they tore down four hydroelectric dams just during this past year because of, ostensibly, a fish issue. We have lost that source of CO₂-free power.

Moving toward the use of uranium, that amazing metal that can generate so much power, we need to do all we can here in Congress to help fund and incentivize more nuclear power for this country because it is going to be a very important part of our grid.

We are right on the cusp of the ability to expand that technology. Some of my colleagues are doing some very good work on that. The United States should move forward on that and take advantage of that, as well as develop the uranium supplies that we need for nuclear generation as well as the amazing uses that there are in medical technology.

Why aren't we producing more of it in this country where we have reserves and can find more reserves? We have that ability to be self-sufficient on energy, and nuclear power can play a big role in that in the coming years if we in Congress will help expedite that process.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission can look for ways to expedite getting more permits, getting more online, as well as approving new technologies, which are out there, that are even more efficient.

With the concern about the nuclear waste, there are ways that are out there that are being developed that could be so much better for how we would store waste or even reuse it. Why are we not recycling those fuel rods in this country? Why do we have arbitrary laws against the ability to recycle the rods where we are able to reduce the amount of that material by an additional 90 percent and put it back to work for us?

Mr. Speaker, it is because of hangups with the idea of what side effects it might have. It is not a problem. It would be very good.

SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES

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

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bipartisan bill, the Support Military Families Act, that upholds our commitment to both our Federal workforce and the families of those who serve our country in uniform.

As a 25-year Army veteran, I know the professional sacrifice our military spouses make for the Nation. My wife, Cindy, has had a wonderful career alongside mine, but it was a challenge to make it work with what the Army required of me.

Last week, my office heard from a constituent who works remotely for the headquarters of a Federal agency in Washington, D.C. Her husband is an Active-Duty servicemember stationed in Virginia, and they cannot relocate. She has only three options to comply with President Trump's return-to-work executive order: Her husband can leave the military, she can drive 200 miles round trip to D.C. every day, or she can leave her job of more than 18 years.

That is a choice that no military family should have to make. That is why I am introducing this bipartisan bill, my first bill as a Member of Congress, to exempt military spouses from the in-person work mandate. I do so with my good friend, Representative ROBERT WITTMAN, who is a tremendous champion for our military and their families.

This commonsense and simple solution guarantees that those serving our country in uniform can continue their mission, that our Federal agencies retain experienced staff, and that military families remain together.

Supporting military families is not a partisan issue. It is an American issue. This isn't just one family's story. It is a reality for countless military spouses across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join in standing up for the military families who sacrifice so much for our country.

CONDITIONS FOR DISASTER AID

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

Mr. FIGURES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay honor and respect to all those who paved the way and had a hand and responsibility for me standing here today as a Member of Congress, a place where I could not stand in this capacity when this building was constructed, both those historical figures as well as those who more presently were actively involved in supporting and praying for and campaigning for us to be here. That includes my wife, Dr. Kalisha Dessources Figures. I certainly would not be here without her support.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to say happy birthday to my mother, who I call Mama. She celebrated a birthday while we were not in session, and I both literally and figuratively would not be here without her. I thank her and love her, and I wish her a happy birthday.

Mr. Speaker, it could not be more fitting for me to be here and to discuss my mother because one of the lessons she repetitively ingrained in us as children was the concept of treating others the way we would want to be treated, treating others how we would like to be treated in the same or similar circumstance.

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a predicament as it relates to wildfire aid to California, where too many colleagues and our President are not abiding by that baseline principle.

I am just a freshman here. There is the question of what I know about how things work here. I am still learning where the bathrooms are, as they say. I don't have the relationships. I don't understand the dynamics. I don't know how things move here yet.

Here is what I do know. I know about decency. I know about compassion. I know that when someone comes from a community like mine on the Gulf of Mexico, names like Camille, Frederic, Ivan, Danny, and Katrina mean a little something different to us. I know that I come from a community where the average individual median income is just south of \$32,000.

People cannot afford to just rebuild their lives without disaster aid. I know when people come from where I come from, it is not a question of if we will be hit by disaster. It is a matter of when. It is not a matter of if our community will need Federal disaster aid. It is how much we will need and how fast we can get it there.

I stand here today in support of California because I know that by standing

for California, I am standing for Alabama. By standing for Los Angeles, I am standing for cities like Mobile, Leroy, Jackson, Evergreen, Monroeville, Montgomery, Tuskegee, Eufaula, Phenix City, and Union Springs. I know enough, even as a freshman, to know that, one day, the shoe will be on the other foot.

□ 1030

I know that we will not always find ourselves in the dynamic as we are now where Republicans are in control of the House.

One day, Democrats will be in control, a Republican community will be in need of disaster aid, and not a single Republican now that is supporting applying restrictions and conditions onto the aid will then stand up and say that we should apply conditions to that aid.

It is not right, it is unnecessary, and quite frankly, it is un-American. It is not who we are. We pride ourselves on those cornerstones of the religion that most of us claim to abide by in this House. Those cornerstones are grace, mercy, and compassion.

We pride ourselves on being able to say that we live in a country where we have the backs of the people that call themselves Americans as well.

This is not like us. It simply is not.

California pays the most in Federal taxes of any State in this Union. They subsidize most of the States, or many of the States, rather, including the State of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and Alabama.

We need to be there for them. I know that today the L.A. that needs help stands for Los Angeles, but tomorrow that LA could be Louisiana or it could be lower Alabama, as some people call back home. It could be FLA as in Florida. We have to stand up for California now. We have to do better.

As a freshman, I don't know much, but I know what my mama taught me. I know this ain't it, and I know this is not what the mothers of my colleagues taught them.

We have to put aside the partisan nonsense and do right by the American people because one day your community will be in need as well.

HONORING SAMUEL LILLEY

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and the service of Samuel Lilley, a dedicated pilot and proud resident of Richmond Hill, Georgia, in the First Congressional District. His tragic passing in a midair collision near Washington, D.C., is a heartbreaking loss for his family, his community, and for our Nation.

Sam was a graduate of Richmond Hill High School where he was known for his strong work ethic, his leadership, and his kindness. He was driven. He was hardworking and always willing to