

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

lend a hand to those in need. He had a bright future ahead of him filled with dreams and aspirations that he was determined to achieve.

Beyond his many accomplishments, Sam was a charismatic and intelligent young man who loved his fiancée, Lydia Coles; flying; his family; and the Lord. His passing leaves an unimaginable void in the lives of those who have loved him, but his memory will forever remain in their hearts.

The Richmond Hill community has come together to mourn and honor his life, a testament to the impact he had on so many.

We extend our deepest condolences to his family, to his fiancée, and to his loved ones. May they find comfort in the lasting memories of his life and his legacy.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 33 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DESJARLAIS) at noon.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Show us Your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us Your deliverance. For we find ourselves in times of turmoil and tension, disagreements and dissension. But if we can open our hearts to receive Your life-changing mercy and experience Your soul-penetrating grace, we will be redeemed from our own discord, restored to common purpose and mutual respect.

Let us listen that we will hear what You speak. When You pronounce health in our afflictions, may we receive it. When You promise peace to Your people, may we live it. When we walk to the right or to the left, may our ears hear Your word behind us, saying, "This is the way. Walk in it."

The Word of the Lord is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. The voice of the Lord is over the waters. The glory of God is heard in the thunder over many waters. Lord, pierce our soul and spirit, our joints and marrow, and discern our thoughts and the intentions of our hearts. Then may we in this place hear and heed Your Word.

It is on the foundation of this word we stand, and in the strength of Your name we pray.

Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. WHITESIDES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WHITESIDES led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF REPRESENTATIVE MARTIN GRABER

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today with a heavy heart to honor the life and legacy of a dear friend, a true servant of our State, and an extraordinary public servant, Representative Martin Graber. His unexpected passing leaves a void that cannot be filled.

For all who knew him, Martin was more than a colleague. He was a friend, mentor, and dedicated leader. A proud veteran with 32 years of service in the Iowa National Guard and a distinguished representative of Iowa House District 100, Martin was a man of integrity, always putting the people of southeast Iowa first. His commitment to faith, community, and service will never be forgotten.

To his beloved wife, Coni, their daughters and granddaughters, his entire family, and the rodeo family, we extend our deepest condolences. Martin's genuine care and unwavering dedication to those he served left an indelible mark on all of us.

Mr. Speaker, may God bless his memory, and may we continue to honor his spirit of service as we move forward.

#### IMPROVING ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD IN NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, Growing Places, an imaginative nonprofit based in Leominster, Massachusetts, is

leading a new effort in our region to improve access to local fruits and vegetables. They have established a local food processing center that takes raw produce, items like old butternut squash, potatoes, apples, carrots, and cauliflower, and peels, chops, and packages it into an easy-to-consume form.

When I visited, we peeled and cubed local squash for schools and hospitals that could be roasted or easily turned into soup. This processing center helps farmers more easily take the nutritious food that they grow to market. It helps institutions purchase more local food because they often don't have the equipment or resources to prepare the raw produce onsite. It improves access to local produce for families at school, work, and home through their produce delivery program.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the incredible Ayn Yeagle and the entire Growing Places team for their work to improve our local food system, make us all healthier, and end hunger now.

#### RECOGNIZING NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize National School Counseling Week.

Since its establishment by the American School Counselor Association, National School Counseling Week has highlighted these professionals' essential role in shaping the future. From helping students navigate academic challenges to providing critical support for their mental well-being, school counselors are instrumental in ensuring that every child has the tools they need to thrive.

We all know that a student's success isn't just measured in grades or test scores. It is also reflected in their confidence, resilience, and ability to handle life's challenges. Additionally, school counselors provide critical information to students on all options available to them for their careers, including successful pathways through career and technical education.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the school counselors who dedicate their lives to this mission. They are a steady source of guidance for students who need it most. Because of their dedication, we are building stronger schools, healthier communities, and a brighter future for the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, let's continue to invest in our students' well-being and ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

#### PROTECTING AGAINST EXTREME GOVERNMENT OVERREACH

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