

you might just catch the sweet scent of sugarcane drifting through the air. Follow that aroma, and you will likely find Gayward Hendry at the kettle, turning cane into syrup and neighbors into friends.

Today, Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Gayward Hendry for receiving the 2025 Distinguished Service Award from the Florida Farm Bureau, the highest honor for a lifetime of leadership in Florida agriculture.

Gayward's service has been extraordinary as a proud marine, a county commissioner, and the longtime president of the Clay County Farm Bureau. In every role, he has led with integrity, grit, and a deep love for the land.

He has mentored young farmers through 4-H, supported students through the Katy Hendry Memorial Scholarship, and welcomed generations of future leaders to his family farm to experience firsthand the traditions of Florida agriculture.

Madam Speaker, whether he is grinding cane or guiding the next generation through the challenges ahead, Gayward shows what it means to serve with purpose and to keep a community growing together.

Madam Speaker, with Gayward Hendry around, life is truly sweeter.

ECONOMIC DIGNITY FOR ALL

(Ms. TLAIB of Michigan was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, we know that our families can't afford the basics right now. Their electricity and gas bills are out of control. Their water bills are out of control. Don't get me started about their auto and home insurance. It is all out of control. Grocery costs are up 28 percent, healthcare costs are up and out of control, and it is even worse for those family members who are sick.

Our families can't afford the basics. Everyone in this Chamber can agree to that. There is an affordability crisis in our country, and the corporations and billionaires driving up these costs don't care. They not only don't care, they were also rewarded with a big tax break in the betrayal bill.

This is why it is important to understand that this is a policy choice, that many of our families feel like they are intentionally being put in survivor mode instead of being able to thrive.

I know that right now nearly one in five children in Michigan live below the poverty line, Madam Speaker, and 60 percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck.

I am not going to wait for President Trump to keep his promise to address the cost of living in this country. I am going to help and push back and introduce the economic dignity for all agenda, a plan to tackle the high cost of living in our country.

We need to ensure that in every family in every single corner in our country, a child has resources that they

need to live and thrive in our country, not just hope to survive.

This plan includes the End Child Poverty Act, the Baby Bonus Act, and the BOOST Act. The End Child Poverty Act would provide a universal child benefit of \$458 per child per month. It would bring us closer to a nation where all children have the opportunity to flourish, not just grow. This plan will make it easy for our families to afford the basics. I hear it from them: Formula, diapers, and childcare are all out of control. It will provide, again, a long-overdue safety net for our families.

We know right now this bill, the End Child Poverty Act, is estimated to cut child poverty by 50 percent according to the People's Policy Project, and it will cut deep child poverty by 70 percent.

The second bill, a part of the plan, is the Baby Bonus Act, which would provide every family with \$2,000 upon the birth of their child, bringing economic stability to households through timely and flexible assistance at a pivotal moment for a child's development.

The birth of a new child is often a time of increased economic insecurity. Families face new expenses of childcare, diapers, baby clothes, and more, while many parents must take time off leading up to and following the birth of a newborn. Without universal childcare, parents are often forced to choose between healing, caring for their newborn, and keeping their job.

As a founder of the Congressional Mamas' Caucus, it is time we listened to mothers who are urging our government to focus on families.

Roughly 134,000 families are driven into poverty annually because of the cost of childcare alone. This is not surprising when countless families are one job loss, disability, and emergency away from crushing financial hardship.

Finally, part of the plan includes the BOOST Act. It is one of my district's favorites. It is the Building Our Opportunities to Survive and Thrive Act. It would provide \$250 per month to adults between the ages of 19 to 67 years old, promoting economic security for all.

Studies show that this is effective. What is not effective is continuing to give billionaires big tax breaks. Again, that doesn't impact our families in a positive way.

While costs for necessities like housing, groceries, healthcare, and education increase annually, wages fail to keep up. We all know this in this Chamber. It puts many of our families in economic insecurity. An unexpected expense like medical bills should not be a threat to a family's financial livelihood. It is important that we start looking at new ways. Regular cash assistance would make a tremendous difference to families literally on the edge of poverty and struggling to pay their bills.

Everyone in our country deserves human dignity.

We know that corporate greed is driving costs up and creating this af-

fordability crisis, so we need to push back. If my colleagues in Congress are serious and wanting to improve the lives of the American people, they should stop corporate giveaways and support and pass the economic dignity for all plan.

HONORING MARLENA PARKER

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a profoundly extraordinary American, Colonel Marlena Parker, a daughter of Bucks County, a trailblazing Air Force officer, and one of the finest examples of courage and character our Nation could ever hope to produce.

Just days ago, over Veterans Day weekend, I stood beside Colonel Parker in Plumstead Township, Pennsylvania, as our community gathered to honor her service. She was surrounded by the people she loved most and by the veterans she served alongside.

She was, as always, glowing, gracious, resolute, still lifting others up, and still inspiring everyone around her. Madam Speaker, sadly, it was our final tribute together. On November 17, Colonel Parker passed away after a brave and courageous fight against ALS.

She did not face a single day of that battle without the same strength, discipline, and warrior spirit she brought to every mission she ever flew. She never stopped living the values she instilled in others: faith, service, perseverance, and a quiet, unwavering resolve.

Colonel Marlena Parker was born in Doylestown on December 31, 1968. She was a proud first-generation Italian American and the daughter of Tony and Lena Ventresca. Faith and family were her foundation. Discipline and drive were her compass. At Gwynedd Mercy Academy, she was valedictorian. At the United States Air Force Academy, she was an NCAA All-American gymnast. From the very beginning, she was destined to soar.

After commissioning, she completed pilot training at Reese Air Force Base and went on to fly the KC-10 Extender, one of the Nation's most critical refueling and transport aircrafts that we have.

She deployed in support of Operations Southern Watch, Allied Force, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom, carrying American power, American hope, and American strength across continents.

Madam Speaker, her resume reads like a history of American resolve, but her service was not only defined by what she achieved. It was also defined by the way she carried herself: with humility, with precision, and with an unshakeable sense of duty.

When the world changed on September 11, 2001, Marlena was airborne, and in the chaos of that morning when

fear, confusion, and uncertainty swept our Nation, she chose service, once again, joining the Air Force Reserve and recommitting herself to the defense of our Nation. She flew for another decade while raising two daughters, earning a master's degree, and mentoring countless young women.

In 2013, she made Air Force history as the first female commander of the 73rd Airlift Squadron, directing VIP airlift operations and leading her airmen with precision, professionalism, and resolve that marked every single stage of her service.

By the time she retired in 2020, Colonel Parker had logged over 4,800 flight hours, including nearly 700 hours in combat and combat support missions and earned the Legion of Merit, among numerous other commendations.

She continued flying as a Boeing 777 first officer for United Airlines until 2024, an aviator until the end.

Marlena's service extended far beyond the cockpit. For more than 15 years, she shaped the next generation of Air Force leaders as an academy liaison officer. She strengthened our community through the Plumstead Township Veterans' Affairs Committee and VFW Post 175, and she guided veterans in Bucks County's veterans' court program with the same steadiness and compassion she brought to every single mission she flew.

She served because service was woven into who she was as a human being: a leader who lifted others up every step of the way.

Colonel Marlena Parker was not only a trailblazer. She was a wife, a mother, a daughter, and a friend. She and her husband, Boyd, shared 34 years together and raised two remarkable daughters, Isabel and Olivia, who now carry forward their mother's legacy of courage, service, and enduring strength.

Madam Speaker, in Colonel Marlena Parker, America saw the very best of who we are: devotion to family, duty to country, and a faith in something greater than ourselves. She was a true hometown hero and a true patriot. May her courage inspire us, may her service guide us, and may we honor her life by the way we choose to live our own.

May God bless Marlena. We will dearly miss her. All Bucks County will miss her. Well done, good and faithful servant.

SALUTING THE LIFE OF JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY

(Mr. LARSON of Connecticut was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, this Saturday, November 22, will mark 62 years since we lost a President of the United States, a person who gave so much to his Nation, an individual who was taken from us in the summer of his years.

His daughter, Caroline, back in 2017 gave us these buttons, pins, that I

proudly wear. It is an image of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

President Kennedy epitomized placing service above self. He was a national hero and a leader who had the grace, the dignity, the wit, the intelligence, and the love of his Nation and mankind.

That past year we also lost someone by the name of Connie Francis who sang a song at the time called "In the Summer of His Years."

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In that song, she wrote:

A young man rode with his head held high
Under the Texas sun
And no one guessed that a man so blessed
Would perish by the gun
Lord, would perish by the gun
A shot rang out like a sudden shout
And Heaven held its breath
For the dreams of a multitude of men
Rode with him to his death
Lord, rode with him to his death
Yes, the heart of the world weighs heavy
With the helplessness of tears
For the man cut down in a Texas town
In the summer of his years
The summer of his years.

It is we who carry on from this very person who served in this Chamber and the United States Senate and went on to become the President of the United States and, as important, a leader not only for this Nation but the world.

I note, especially in these times, Madam Speaker, that it is service above self that matters. It is service to your Nation, service to your family, service to your community, and service to your State that matters most.

I rise to salute the life of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

MARKING A NATIONAL MILESTONE

(Mr. JAMES of Michigan was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. JAMES. Madam Speaker, this week, on November 29, our Nation marks a milestone, the 50th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

In 1975, President Gerald Ford, Michigan's only and greatest President, signed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act into law, making a simple but powerful promise that every child, no matter their disability, deserves a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive setting possible.

That promise changed America.

Before 1975, more than a million children with disabilities were shut out of public schools. Too many were pushed into charity-run facilities or psychiatric institutions. Far too many were left without any education at all.

We turned that injustice around. IDEA opened doors that had been closed for generations. Since its inception, it has empowered families, equipped teachers, and given children the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.

Today, IDEA protects nearly 8 million students, roughly 15 percent of all

public school children in this country. It requires our schools to identify and support students who need services, including children experiencing homelessness and those attending private schools.

For 50 years, IDEA has been the backbone of special education, ensuring access, accountability, and equality for millions.

As we honor IDEA's 50th anniversary, I am proud to introduce the IDEAL Act, a bill that fully funds and strengthens the original IDEA program. This legislation keeps faith with families, teachers, and students by giving them the resources and support they were promised over half a century ago.

It modernizes services, reinforces accountability, and ensures that every child, regardless of circumstance, can reach their God-given potential.

Madam Speaker, 50 years ago, only one in five children with disabilities had access to public education. Today, millions succeed because of IDEA.

With the IDEAL Act, we reaffirm our commitment. We finish the job. We keep moving forward, not backward.

I urge my colleagues to support the IDEAL Act.

HONORING MARISOL VELEZ

(Mrs. RAMIREZ of Illinois was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Marisol Velez, known as Pinquy Ring. She is a rooted, revolutionary Puerto Rican emcee from Chicago, decolonizing minds as a rapper, educator, mentor, and speaker.

As a cultural worker and disruptor, Pinquy's music ignites our imaginations and sustains our struggle against displacement and erasure.

As an educator and mentor, she shapes the next generation of creative changemakers through culturally rooted programming and radical care.

Pinquy is a GRAMMY U mentor. She sits on the National Advisory Board for Music Will and serves as a U.S. Hip Hop Cultural Ambassador to facilitate cultural diplomacy programming and conflict transformation through music. In her roles, she is shaping the first-ever K-12 hip-hop guidelines with the Hip-Hop Education Center.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I commend her.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 50 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.