

We must pass the Protecting American Energy Production Act.

ELON MUSK TAKEOVER

(Ms. RIVAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. RIVAS. Mr. Speaker, this week, my office was flooded with calls from constituents who are angry and frustrated about Elon Musk and his takeover of our government.

I am just as outraged as they are. This billionaire was neither elected by the American people nor Senate confirmed. Yet, he is sitting in our Nation's highest office, openly seizing power, making consequential decisions about Americans' personal data, and gutting the services and programs that working families in the San Fernando Valley rely on.

Why does Elon Musk have access to your personal information without any oversight or accountability? House Democrats and I are taking action. We are legislating. We are supporting litigation, and we are mobilizing.

I also ask why our Republican colleagues are sitting in silence while Elon Musk takes control our government and harms Americans' lives. I urge my Republican colleagues to join us in the fight against Elon's takeover.

□ 1715

INCREASING DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS

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

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, in 1993, the VA established the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, or DIC, benefits which are paid to the survivors of servicemembers who died in the line of duty or to veterans who died from service-related injuries or conditions. Unfortunately, the DIC benefits have fallen drastically behind the cost of living, causing a financial hardship on veterans and military families.

That is why I have led the introduction of the bipartisan Caring for Survivors Act, which would increase the DIC benefits from 43 percent to 55 percent, amounting to an increase of approximately \$454 per month for surviving family members. The legislation also fast-tracks DIC benefits to family members who currently have to wait a decade before receiving benefits.

Honoring the sacrifices our servicemembers make on behalf of our Nation means caring for the loved ones they leave behind.

REDUCING THE COST OF LIVING TO AMERICANS

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

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Speaker, President Trump said he was going to lower food prices on day one, end the war in Ukraine on day one, bring down housing costs, make the government more efficient, and bring peace to the Middle East. All those things sound great, don't they?

Instead of reducing the price of eggs, his administration is kneecapping the CDC's efforts to report on the avian flu outbreak. Instead of making housing more affordable, he is pushing tariffs on Canada and Mexico that would make construction significantly more expensive. Instead of making government more efficient, he is paralyzing agencies like the IRS which under the Biden administration recovered over a billion dollars in taxes owed by wealthy Americans who weren't paying their fair share.

Frankly, my constituents are terrified this administration will ruin their lives. On Tuesday alone, my staff answered and spoke with more than 700 constituents specifically concerned about Elon Musk running roughshod over the payment systems. We have received thousands of emails.

Mr. Speaker, in Trump's view, making America great again comes at the expense of hardworking Americans who already make our country great. He also seems to think that Elon Musk is going to do it for him.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MYTRON LISBY

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

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of a great man who just so happened to be my high school principal, Mr. Mytron Lisby.

As a kid, I was a bit of a troublemaker. One day I played a prank at school that landed me in Mr. Lisby's office. Honestly, I should have been expelled that day, but he told me: Maxwell, I am not expelling you. I think you can be great, and I see something in you.

He believed in me, and he gave me a second chance. Honestly, I think that second chance is one of the reasons I am here today. He came to know Jesus Christ as his Savior at a young age and served him faithfully. He served as a teacher and an administrator for 43 years.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the tens of thousands of students across this Nation he has inspired, I thank Mr. Lisby. I have to think that at the gates of Heaven, God is going to greet him with that administrator school radio because maybe even Heaven sometimes needs help keeping things on track just like a great principal does.

May Mr. Lisby rest in peace.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KENNEDY of Utah). Under the Speaker's

announced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HARIDOPOLOS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, lives destroyed, trust violated, and hearts broken, this is the story of illegal immigration.

Young girls and boys have been sold into sexual slavery. Hundreds of thousands have been killed by fentanyl. Hundreds of known terrorists have entered our Nation. Schools, hospitals, and towns have been overrun by numbers of illegal aliens and the high cost of taxpayers. Criminals entered and preyed on our citizens. Sadly, many committed murder and rape.

Yet, we learned just over 2 weeks ago that this is a problem that could be quickly solved, and that is what is happening today with the election and actions of our new President. This crisis can be quickly solved with common sense and decisive action.

Today, I am joined by other freshmen Members of this Congress who are problem-solvers, people who have made it work at the local level at businesses across our country, and they understand how to get things done just like our President has been doing for the last 2½ weeks.

The first of our speakers today comes from the experienced Missouri Legislature, serving in both the house and senate. He has great accomplishments as both an attorney and a doctor. He represents a central part of Missouri just west of St. Louis, and he is a person who back in 2008 knew this problem was coming to a head. He sponsored and passed legislation to make sure we did not have sanctuary cities.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ONDER), the Congressman from the Third District.

Mr. ONDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Florida for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue important to all Americans, not just Americans living on our border. Illegal immigration directly impacts our society, our safety, our security, and the future of our Nation. Dangers posed by illegal immigration are many. The consequences of policies from the Biden administration are many and severe.

Deaths from murder, poisonings from fentanyl, and victimization of the innocent by human traffickers could all have been solved if only the Biden-Harris administration and the Democrat Congress were willing to secure our borders.

I want to begin by sharing a case that sadly demonstrates the dire consequences of our porous border and weak immigration enforcement. In my district, in St. Charles County, Missouri, two innocent women were sexually assaulted by an illegal alien of Middle Eastern descent who overstayed his tourist visa. Instead of returning home like he was supposed to and as our law required, he flouted the law and stayed illegally.

Ultimately, he victimized two innocent American women. The trauma inflicted upon these women and upon many others like them is immeasurable. If we are to prevent this from happening again, we must remember that the pain is a direct result of the open border policies that have failed to prioritize the safety of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, this is not an isolated incident. This is a pattern and an epidemic of lawlessness that has swept across our country. Criminals, foreign nationals, and even terrorists have attempted to exploit our immigration policy failures.

Over the past 4 years, we have rightfully turned our attention to the southern border. We also have illegal immigrants taking advantage of lax enforcement and overstaying visas without consequence. The story of this individual in St. Charles County is part of a pattern with these overstays being a large source of our illegal alien population.

For that reason, I will soon be introducing the Timely Departure Act. This important legislation would require certain visa recipients to post a cash bond which they would forfeit should they overstay their visas. Under this law, overstayers who overstay would be unable to obtain lawful immigration status for at least 4 years, and they would be unable to submit an asylum claim or withholding of removal claim after their scheduled departure date. Visitor, business, and pleasure visas are important to our economy, but they are being abused.

Before the Biden administration's change to the asylum policy, visa overstays were a leading contributor to illegal immigration. As of 2023, visa overstays accounted for 42 percent of the illegal population. This legislation is necessary to enforce visa exit dates, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Timely Departure Act.

Mr. Speaker, our immigration system, which was once designed to be a source of legal immigration and lawful entry, has become nothing more than a wide-open door and a red carpet. This must end. This is why President Trump and House Republicans have to act forcefully to protect Americans.

Another border security issue is the abuse of our asylum process. Over the past couple of years, especially as Texas has taken action to secure its border, fewer illegal aliens have been entering our country by sneaking by border crossings like Eagle Pass or Brownsville.

More and more illegal aliens are presenting themselves to immigration authorities and claiming asylum. Most of these asylum cases are bogus. The Biden administration has not detained these aliens but, rather, released them into the country with some far-off asylum hearing date to which they never show. We found time and time again that these so-called refugees are violent criminals.

Under our America First border policies, this abuse of the asylum process is going to end. President Trump's actions at the border, his executive orders, and his diplomacy with Colombia, Mexico, and Canada show that he means what he says. He means business.

In Congress, we will assist with legislation like the Laken Riley Act, and we will provide funding for the border wall, border guards, and the legal resources to clean out the many bogus asylum claims.

A message to all the countries who are part of the problem is the era of the U.S. playing the fool ends now. They should not empty their prisons or coddle drug and human trafficking cartels at our expense or they will face consequences.

Another equally important issue is that the open border policies of the Biden-Harris administration have led to an epidemic of fentanyl poisonings across our country. Fentanyl, which is smuggled across our southern border, is responsible for 100,000 American deaths in the last year alone.

We have become a global dumping ground for the world's deadliest drugs with Mexican cartels making and smuggling fentanyl and methamphetamine into the United States, drugs made from Chinese precursor chemicals. We will secure our border. We will build the wall. Yes, we will target drug cartels as international terrorists.

Occasionally, we hear apologists for the open border policies of the Biden administration argue that somehow mass illegal immigration is good for our economy or that some illegal aliens pay taxes. It is nice that illegal aliens sometimes pay taxes, but these individuals fail to account for the full cost of illegal immigration.

The strain on our economy has been profound. Taxpayer dollars have been spent to fund social services, healthcare, and education for illegal aliens. That is money that could be better spent on securing the future, money that we do not have with our debt of \$36 trillion, not to mention the economic and social costs of the victims of crime caused by illegal aliens or the lives cut short by fentanyl poisoning or the immeasurable and lifelong trauma of the victims of human trafficking.

Police officers, teachers, and healthcare providers are working harder than ever to accommodate an influx of people who have no legal right to be here. Democrats have told us to accept this as the new normal. House Repub-

licans and President Trump are here to tell our communities this ends now.

Mr. Speaker, this crisis is not just a border issue. It is a national security issue. It is a public safety issue. It is a public health issue. It is an economic issue. We must take swift action to protect our country, our communities, and our people.

Mr. Speaker, the Biden administration's open border policies have failed, and it is time for a change. In collaboration with Donald Trump, it is time to make America safe again.

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, next we have Congressman TONY WIED from the great State of Wisconsin. He represents the northeastern portion of Wisconsin, the Eighth Congressional District.

He comes with the real-world experience of being a businessowner, as he and his wife have developed an amazing business in their neck of the woods. He serves on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Committee on Agriculture, as well as the Committee on Small Business.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. WIED).

□ 1730

Mr. WIED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues to address an issue that has plagued our Nation over the last 4 years and to let the American people know that the House GOP is working alongside President Trump to secure our border and make the safety of American citizens our number one priority.

When President Trump left office 4 years ago, our border was secure, and significant progress was being made on the border wall. On the first day of the Biden administration, Joe Biden unilaterally reversed nearly all of the successful policies of the Trump administration and invited an invasion at our southern border.

Every State became a border State, including my home state of Wisconsin. Every county became a border county. Every town became a border town. We saw unprecedented numbers of illegal aliens crossing our border and invading our country. Many of these individuals have committed violent felonies and other serious crimes since entering this country.

As I traveled through all 11 counties in Wisconsin's Eighth Congressional District, I heard from citizens who wanted the lawlessness to end. I also heard from sheriffs who had gang members taking up spaces in their jails with no plans to deport them.

Make no mistake, this crisis was a policy choice of Joe Biden and the Democrats. They purposely shredded President Trump's successful border security playbook and allowed unmitigated illegal immigration to continue uninterrupted and unimpeded for 4 straight years.

In just over 2 weeks since President Trump has taken office, he has done more to secure our border and protect

Americans than President Biden did in 4 years.

As you can see, over the past 2 years, there was an average of more than 1,500 illegal migrants encountered at our border every single day.

In President Trump's first days in office, that number had fallen to fewer than 50 encounters. Since then, we have continued to see a 63 percent drop in illegal encounters at the border on average.

This is what happens when you have a President who prioritizes the safety of American citizens.

President Trump has reinstated the remain in Mexico policy, and I am proud to cosponsor a bill by Representative BRANDON GILL to make this policy permanent so that future, radical administrations cannot undo our progress.

We also passed the Laken Riley Act and the Violence Against Women by Illegal Aliens Act. These bills ensure that anyone in this country illegally who commits a crime, whether it be a theft or sexual assault, will have an ICE detainer placed on them immediately.

The House of Representatives just passed the HALT Fentanyl Act, permanently criminalizing fentanyl.

In 2023, 70 percent of the 107,000 overdose deaths in the U.S. involved a synthetic opioid such as fentanyl.

Every single life lost is more than a statistic. Families should not have to feel this heartbreak, and this legislation will prevent future lives from being lost to this deadly drug.

This is just the beginning. We will not rest until our border is secure again and Americans feel safe in their communities again.

My pledge to the people of Wisconsin's Eighth Congressional District and to citizens all across the United States is that House Republicans will never relent in our mission to make America safe again.

I thank President Trump and my Republican colleagues for their leadership on this issue. A nation without borders is no nation at all.

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, my next speaker, Representative BRAD KNOTT, is a Federal prosecutor, and he has seen firsthand the challenges that come with illegal immigration. It was one of the ways that I truly learned about what was going on at the border. Congressman KNOTT and I had long discussions about the challenges we faced at the Department of Justice and the everyday trials and tribulations that people face because of this illegal activity.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. KNOTT), who represents central North Carolina in District 13.

Mr. KNOTT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise as the newly elected Representative of North Carolina's 13th Congressional District. This being my first speech on the House

floor, I want to take an opportunity to introduce myself to the House, to talk a little bit about our incredible district, and then highlight one of the single most important issues to me personally and one of the main motivating factors that led me to run for office: illegal immigration and the deep harm it inflicts on our country each and every day.

First, the 13th Congressional District of North Carolina stretches all the way from Lee County to the State's northern border, and it includes: Wake, Johnston, Harnett, Franklin, Caswell, Person, and Granville Counties along the way.

We tout a wide array of professions from dedicated farmers and retailers to manufacturers and medical professionals, providing the Nation and the world with food, fuel, clothing, and care.

On January 3 when I was sworn in to Congress, I was blessed and humbled to have my grandfather in the House Chamber with me. Also a lifelong North Carolinian, he fought and was wounded in World War II fighting the Nazis before coming home to start a business, raise a family, and serve his community in many ways for decades.

He and my father both inspired me to work hard and pursue a lifelong goal of serving as a Federal prosecutor in the Eastern District of North Carolina, which I did for the better part of the last decade.

I proudly worked alongside law enforcement at every level, local, State, and Federal, to prosecute organized crimes in cases that touched every corner of the country.

This, of course, included drug cartels, human traffickers, those who were here to commit financial crimes, national gangs, and many, many more.

I saw how harmful policies weakened law enforcement and gravely wounded communities and households all over the country. The most glaring policy flaws involved the southern border.

As soon as the Biden administration took power, their decisions made one thing very clear: The policy flaws involving the southern border and the illegal immigration crisis, they were no blunders of the Biden-Harris administration. This was a conscious and deliberate policy to flood the Nation with illegal immigrants, not just from our neighbors to the south, but from all over the world.

Behind me is a chart. Many of the viewers may recognize it as the chart that President Trump was viewing when he turned his head, a divine miracle that saved his life. The chart itself shows directly that all President Biden and Kamala Harris had to do was nothing.

We can see that the border was secure and illegal immigration was descending. As soon as they took power, it was like a vertical rocket ship. There was no gradual increase. It was an immediate increase.

Me personally, I saw how the Biden-Merrick Garland DOJ put the brakes

on enforcing immigration laws, purposely slowing immigration prosecutions down to a trickle.

Open borders and redirected efforts allowed the international criminal organizations not only to take hold in this country, but they took hold in such a way that it is far more pervasive than many Americans realize.

Yes, we see the effects, but most do not fully understand the wide-reaching influence of these bad actors. As a point in thesis, we must address illegal immigration now.

Now, I will say I was very glad to read the report yesterday of our new Attorney General, Ms. Bondi. On her very first day in office, she directed the DOJ to pause all Federal funding for sanctuary cities. I applaud the Attorney General for taking this important step and I will state it is high time that public officials in Democratically controlled cities and States around the country follow her lead and adhere to the rule of law.

It is because of the reckless open-border policies, again, designed and embraced by the Democratic Party, that every State has suffered.

If I can turn to the next chart.

Again, this next chart will show just how drastic the open border crisis was during the last 4 years, it is a little clearer. Again, these are the individuals on the terrorist watch list apprehended illegally crossing the open border.

Again, we are talking about the ill effects of these policies. In fiscal year 2017, '18, '19, '20, again, no involvement, and then in '21, '22, '23, and '24, it skyrocketed.

Again, all Americans have been put at risk. It is because of these open-border policies, that we continue to mourn the entirely preventable crimes that so many Americans have faced. This, of course, includes the young lady named Laken Riley from Georgia and Rachel Morin from Maryland and many others who died at the hands of illegal immigrants.

As one other statistic, West Virginia, a rural State, loses more than a thousand people every year from fentanyl smuggled across our southern border. Opioid overdoses are the leading cause of death among Americans in every State from 18 to 45.

In Nevada, just those that we know about, human traffickers that are here illegally prey on up to 500 minors shuffling them into sex trafficking.

The statistics are endless. The examples are too numerous. And make no mistake about this, this wide, far-reaching crisis is in my community, it is in your community, and it is in every community around the country.

With an open border and weak law enforcement policies, every incentive imaginable exists for individuals to come to the United States and prey on our people. I saw it firsthand as a prosecutor when I talked to these criminals, when I investigated their crimes. We must face the reality that every incentive exists for criminals around the

world to come here to the United States, for organizations to come here to the United States to set up a permanent and entrenched presence. They prey on our people, and they enrich themselves while doing it.

Again, when I was prosecuting these cases, I saw firsthand how criminal illegal immigrants completely disregard our border and disregard our laws. They come here with one intent, to inflict harm on Americans while enriching themselves.

Again, it was no secret what was happening across the Department of Justice. Statistics were overwhelming as it relates to drug overdose deaths, addiction, and the presence of cartels in our communities. Human traffickers and drug cartels clearly saw that the Biden administration was intent on undoing every enforcement mechanism that they had at the border.

President Trump had figured it out. Joe Biden undid it.

Our criminal justice system immediately, State and Federal, became weighed down by the surging crime that accompanied our invasion from illegal immigrants. This crisis burdens not just our communities with public safety issues, as my colleague from Missouri just mentioned, this crisis burdens our healthcare system, and it burdens our public school system. By some estimates, illegal immigrant children account for up to 10 to 15 percent of the public school students in various portions of our country.

By some estimates, it is estimated that we spend up to \$150 billion per year at local, State, and Federal levels that are direct payments for illegal immigrants.

Again, there is one study that the Homeland Security Committee did in the 118th Congress that reported that nearly 10 percent of the births covered by Medicaid were children of illegal immigrants.

Now, proponents of illegal immigration and weak borders have for years gaslit Americans into believing that it is inhumane to enforce our borders. Of course, this empty argument is ridiculous and easily rebutted on multiple levels.

For those who have experienced the crime brought to our country from illegal immigration, we have a different perspective. I would submit allowing a criminal illegal alien who was arrested on multiple occasions to be free in our midst and to murder an innocent girl like Laken Riley, that is inhumane.

Surrendering apartment complexes that are filled with hardworking American taxpayers to vicious gangs, that is inhumane.

Allowing hundreds of thousands of Americans to die from one drug that enters into our country through one mechanism, an open southern border, through meticulous schemes of multinational criminal organizations day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, and to do nothing about it, that is inhumane.

Allowing millions more to fall into treacherous addiction with wide availability of dangerous drugs flowing across the open border, and again, to do nothing about it, that is inhumane.

□ 1745

We see once mighty centers of American exceptionalism from New York City, Manhattan; Philadelphia, specifically the Kensington neighborhood; or even San Francisco. From East to West and North to South, a tsunami of illegal drugs have hollowed out countless individuals and countless homes, ruining lives, ruining neighborhoods, ruining cities, and ruining States.

What have our leaders done over the last 4 years? Nothing. Instead and insultingly, they have continued to incentivize without check illegal immigration, and they force the taxpayers to foot the bill.

Weak border proponents, including some of my colleagues on the other side of this aisle, expect law enforcement to turn a blind eye to the trafficking of people across our border and around the country. They have played right into the hand of cartels, making their policies and their efforts complicit in the abuse and the atrocities that we all see.

This cycle is not only inhumane, it is as shameful as it is dangerous, and it will destroy our country if we do not fix it and fix it with urgency.

I personally saw firsthand how criminal illegal aliens and the organizations that send them here capitalized on our open-border policies and how flatly wrong many, if not all, of the left's talking points are as they relate to the broader immigrant issue.

The following observations of mine are supported by facts within our national law enforcement communities and, again, through firsthand observations.

First, the left throws out any distinction between legal immigrants and legal immigrant descendants and illegal immigrants and their descendants. There is a very stark contrast between those two camps.

Second, the left claims that immigrants, broadly speaking, only want to come here to the United States for a better life and that they only engage in legal and honest work. Again, that is simply not the case uniformly by any stretch. There are hundreds of thousands, if not millions, who come here repeatedly illegally, again, looking to enrich themselves through illegal activity at the American people's expense.

I investigated and prosecuted dozens of individuals who worked in various sectors, like banking, the auto repair business, the public school system, the agricultural business, shipping enterprises, law enforcement, and countless other outlets. Yes, even law enforcement. Those same people, while they had an honest job, they also engaged in violent crime, Medicaid fraud, and organized retail theft. They engaged in

drug trafficking, human trafficking, and/or other types of crime in addition to their "honest" work. At times they even used their jobs to better facilitate criminal endeavors.

This type of sophisticated criminal infrastructure is a cancer, and it must be eradicated. Again, we must redirect the terrible policies that enabled this ill in our country.

Lastly, I will say this: The claim that immigrants commit far fewer crimes than native-born Americans, again, this statement is far too broad, and it is easily refuted.

First, as the President's team has stated correctly, every person who enters our country illegally has committed a crime. That is 100 percent across the board. However, secondly, and even more importantly and going directly to the heart of what that claim indicates, one must ask oneself: If we do not know who you are and why you are here, is it likely that you will be successfully investigated and prosecuted?

Of course not. There are hundreds of thousands of people who cross over the border undetected. One must ask themselves hypothetically: Regarding a native-born, local thief, a pickpocket, is it easier to investigate and prosecute him or someone that even our border enforcement authorities, our Federal law enforcement authorities, or local law enforcement have no idea who they are? Of course, the former is easier to convict.

With all that our country has endured, we simply must know who is entering our country and why they are coming here. Thankfully, we have all turned the page. The disastrous policies of Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and Mr. Mayorkas are being undone with rapid speed.

For a decade, President Trump alone has identified the threat of illegal immigration and how the American taxpayers are being damaged by those who come here to harm us collectively.

We say America First because there is simply no plan B. Flatly speaking, nobody can save us if we do not save ourselves. As my colleagues have stated, so far Republicans have made great progress this cycle. We passed the Laken Riley Act. We passed the Preventing Violence Against Women By Illegal Immigrants Act. President Trump's executive orders have made an immediate difference, but our work is far from over.

We must reverse the incentive structures. We must classify illegal immigrant criminals for what they are, and we must punish them severely. It is a no-brainer, Mr. Speaker. We must protect our borders and, by extension, all American citizens. If we don't, then we run a grave risk of losing our country.

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the good words of the Congressman from the 13th District of North Carolina giving real-world examples of how this unfair policy has impacted so many of us not just with dollars but with lives.

As I mentioned earlier, this is a crime which we must end. The good news is we are moving in that direction. What I have mentioned before is so telling, and that is the idea of lives destroyed, trust violated, and hearts broken.

America is the land of opportunity and equal justice. What was so frustrating in watching this issue grow over the last 4 years is that as people are paying more and more for rent, gasoline, and the basics of life, here was the Federal Government actually subsidizing illegal activity by giving phone cards, giving cash cards, free housing, and other benefits while the Americans were suffering each and every day.

To further complicate that issue, they were hiding not only illegal individuals but people who had committed crimes in sanctuary cities. Everyone in that neighborhood knew exactly who these people were. We saw on day one when Donald Trump took the Office of the Presidency once again, those people were quickly identified, arrested, and deported or put into jail if they committed a completely violent act.

It was a no-brainer. As our colleagues before me talked about, all he had to do was nothing. It is the ultimate goal of life, just show up and do nothing, and you would actually continue to solve a problem. However, the former President actually took action. New executive orders repealed the successful policies of President Trump, and the problem grew and grew and grew.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I reached out to the place that I used to serve in the Florida legislature talking to what is called AHCA. AHCA is the group that oversees our healthcare system in Florida. The numbers are there in concrete form. Over half a billion dollars was put on the backs of taxpayers because illegal aliens accessed the medical system for free through Medicaid or other devices, and those cost shifts would take place. That means that half a billion dollars was taken out of taxpayers' pockets that could have been spent on schools, hospitals, roads, the environment, or even tax reduction. Instead, it was spent on folks who shouldn't be here, period.

Mr. Speaker, as you can imagine, my last name is a unique one. My dad was actually born in Athens, Greece, but he came here to make a better life. He wanted to play by the rules. That is the second thing I want to get into tonight.

There are millions of people who want to come here legally. Yet, they are being cut in line by people who are undercutting the rule of law. Those folks want to contribute. They have skills that we need: Science, technology, engineering, math, and other skills that we desperately need in this potential growing economy, especially if the Trump tax cuts are reinforced.

However, instead, we continue to spend, spend, spend with no hope in sight for folks who just don't want to

contribute to the American Dream. It is a great frustration because, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the graphs before, the President called it correctly, his policies actually worked. It is so enlightening for all of us and such a joy that when the President simply went back to the old policy, the number of illegals diminished to almost zero. That means we can now go after those people who have been preying on the system, whether it be for financial or more, let's just say, devious reasons.

I am proud to represent the great State of Florida. They have been aggressive about illegal immigration. In one of my first days in the Florida Legislature, one of the bills that was introduced was to give the illegal aliens a driver's license, a ticket to ride, so to speak. Fortunately, we were able to kill such legislation.

Congressman Unger back in 2008 passed legislation to get tough on sanctuary cities. Those policies simply work. I think what all of us want, whether on the left side of the aisle or our side, we want problem solvers in America again. We want people who just want to come here and get things done.

Candidly, I think that is why so many people love President Trump. He is a problem solver. He looks at a problem in a common sense way. He doesn't automatically put a Republican or a Democratic spin on it. He said: How do we solve the problem? He talked to the experts. He put those items in place, and the border crisis went away in his first term. He implemented those policies once again 2 weeks into office, and we are back in a successful border. Without a successful border, we simply don't have a nation.

Again, I am encouraged by these actions. I am just amazed that the prior President and his team would turn their backs on the American people who gave them this opportunity to lead. It is going to be a challenging time to get this thing right. The good news is that with President Trump in place, we have seen the changes in a clear and let's just say discernible way.

As we look at the testimony earlier by Congressman KNOTT, it is one of the reasons I wanted to have this conversation today. A few weeks ago before we were actually sworn into office, Congressman KNOTT and I sat down in Boston. I said: What is really happening at the Department of Justice? Why are they not prosecuting these crimes?

As he mentioned in his very eloquent speech, he walks us through the crisis. He tells us how simple it is to solve this crisis, and the other team just chooses to turn a blind eye.

The statistics are pretty overwhelming with the number of people who were in challenging situations. Just to give you an idea, Mr. Speaker, of how frustrating it is to so many people on this issue. As the Biden administration was winding down, they were actually looking to sell off the very border wall that the American public

had already paid for. You talk about insulting; it is to the highest degree. They are literally letting this metal rot and rust in the desert instead of just simply putting it up.

I am glad to see, I must admit, one of the real highlights of my early career here in Congress was actually seeing the bipartisanship that was shown on the Laken Riley bill. It was a pleasant surprise given the rhetoric of the prior 4 years. I hope it is a sign of things to come.

I happen to serve on the Financial Services Committee, I serve on the Science Committee, and I chair the Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee. Those should be bipartisan solutions in which we come across the aisle and solve problems as opposed to pointing fingers.

I really appreciate the kind words of the President this morning during his address at the National Day of Prayer. He talked about reaching across the aisle and solving problems in a concrete way. This issue should be one where we all solve that problem. Again, I don't care about who gets the support because the American people support the idea of finally closing the gates to these people who come across illegally and opening the door once again to smart, commonsense legal immigration as opposed to illegal immigration.

As I get ready to close, I am thankful, first of all, for these types of opportunities. America is such a unique place. I noticed as the other side of the aisle is going to have their Special Order hour today, that we need to have these constructive dialogues. It seemed so hyperbolic during the campaign, the pointing of fingers, but it is so nice to see a quick and decisive result in talking about illegal immigration and how quickly we can solve this issue and truly secure our border and remove those people who should not be here.

I am so glad the President is going after those violent offenders first, the ones who have been protected by sanctuary cities. My former Attorney General, Pam Bondi, has now taken the reins at the Attorney General's Office. She is a tough-on-crime prosecutor. She is not a politico. She is a person who has been a problem solver throughout her career and who cared about her State and now her Nation. She is saying: We will go after those offenders. If the law is not going to be enforced and it is a sanctuary city, then move over. We are taking away the funding. We are extracting these people who have preyed on the system for too long and who have been protected, sadly, by the political class in their community. The political class who has been turning their backs on the very people who put them into power and into office.

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I hope that we can have this constructive dialogue, and I am optimistic that the Senate will take up our tough border ideas so that we can, again, create a logical immigration system that

created so many opportunities for each of us.

We each have a story about how our parents, our grandparents, and our great-grandparents, for that matter, came to this country. That is that dream of America, that they want to come to America, assimilate, and live the American Dream.

Sadly, the actions of the previous administration undercut that very ideal because people take a sour view of immigration.

As I get ready to close today, I am sorry that the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CRANK) could not make it back from his other obligations, but I appreciate the good words of Congressman KNOTT, Congressman ONDER, and Congressman WIED. They have done a remarkable job of putting a human face on illegal immigration.

Let us never forget that the biggest victims of this, besides the crisis with fentanyl, are those young boys and girls who have been sold into sexual slavery.

I don't like the term "human trafficking" because it is such a bland term. The term is "sexual slavery," and I can't imagine the horrors that these individuals have gone through as they came across the border thinking that they would be given an opportunity in America. Instead, they were sentenced to a life of evil.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight on this important issue, and I yield back the balance of my time.

SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RULLI). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring attention to an issue that should concern all Americans.

This evening, in this Special Order, we will be talking about scientific integrity. To be a problem solver today, I believe it is important for leaders to embrace scientific integrity, and we will talk about that throughout the course of the next hour.

Every day, our Nation's scientists are making vital contributions to our public health, economy, and national security.

Modern society as we know it is only possible due to Federal investments in everything from medical research and food safety to severe weather forecasting and pollution reduction. These contributions extend far beyond our own borders, lifting up people all over the world through life-changing scientific breakthroughs and innovations.

Under normal circumstances, federally funded scientists could often avoid the noise and clamor of public political debates. As the world has seen over the last 2½ weeks, the Trump administration is anything but normal.

The President and his billionaire cronies took no time at all to begin attacking our world-renowned institutions that support publicly funded science.

They are shamelessly attempting to destroy the visionary ideals of great leaders like President Franklin Roosevelt, who created the Federal Office of Scientific Research and Development during the Second World War. The creation of this office led to untold advancements in radar technology and nuclear energy, becoming a roadmap for our government to advance independent, fundamental, and necessary scientific knowledge for the benefit of all.

After the war, our government treated science as a necessary answer to clear and present threats. Today that is not the case. Federal research and development are primary targets of political attacks from this administration.

Science is no longer the answer but a direct threat to the cruel, backward, and barbaric Trump-Musk agenda. We can only look at the President's first term in office to know how his administration will treat the scientific community.

What exactly is on the table here? What is at stake? It is scientific integrity.

"Scientific integrity," as defined by the National Science and Technology Council, "is the adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior, and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of, and communicating about science and scientific activities."

Inclusivity, transparency, and protection from inappropriate influence are hallmarks of scientific integrity. Integrity in research is essential—essential—for maintaining scientific excellence and keeping the public's trust.

It is true that administrations from both parties may have violated scientific integrity at some point during their time in office, but the first Trump term exceeded them all with well over 150 reported attacks on science. They suppressed studies, altered reports, interfered in scientific processes, ignored concerns, refused to adopt scientifically backed guidelines, and politicized health assessments.

The level of damage from these attacks was, indeed, staggering and affected every single agency that employs science in its decisionmaking process.

That is why, as an engineer myself, I have consistently made it one of my top priorities in Congress to right the ship of America's science policy because science lives at the very core of a healthy democracy.

As part of that broad effort, I am proud to lead the bipartisan Scientific Integrity Act, which was reintroduced today alongside my dear friends and colleagues, Representative LOFGREN, Representative BEYER, Representative

BONAMICI, and Representative STEVENS, and over 100 original cosponsors.

This legislation establishes consistent scientific integrity policies across all agencies so that scientists, Members of Congress, and the American people can put their faith in Federal research findings.

Thanks to the efforts of the Biden administration, more than 28 Federal agencies have some form of scientific integrity policy today, but standards remain inconsistent.

America's most important science is conducted, reviewed, communicated to the public, and incorporated into policymaking in ways that must be transparent and free from inappropriate political, ideological, financial, and other undue influences.

My colleagues and I are fighting to ensure that sound, evidence-based policy is always readily available for policymakers and that scientists and advisers should never feel threatened to speak the truth.

This is a critical moment.

America is facing unprecedented challenges in the form of a rapidly changing climate, environmental contamination, and countless other concerns that threaten our public health, national security, and general welfare. We cannot afford to let the integrity of our scientific enterprise be demolished.

The Trump administration and Elon Musk are direct threats to U.S. scientific leadership on the global stage. My colleagues and I will highlight many of the most recent and egregious violations of scientific integrity by this new administration.

From removing data and censoring research at the CDC to the politicization of career scientists across government, this administration has once again made it clear that they do not care about scientific integrity.

They do not care about our national security or competing with China.

They do not care about saving American lives threatened by the climate crisis.

They do not care about public health or ensuring the safety and well-being of families from the threat of the deadly viruses that we have seen, like COVID-19.

The scientific knowledge we carry forward is critical for our continued survival, even as its validity is being questioned at a scale unprecedented in modern history.

America has both the skill and the structure to develop the knowledge that we need. Thankfully, many are rising to the defense of scientific integrity, and the reality is that this should not be a partisan issue.

Over the many years that I have led this bill, my colleagues across the aisle have been more than willing to join the effort. It passed out of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee back in the 116th Congress with overwhelming support from both parties.

I like to think that we all recognize how important sound science is to