

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams hinted at the incompatibility of America's Republican virtues with the values of Muslim nations after meeting with the Islamic Ambassador about the Barbary States' inclination to make war upon nations that did them no wrong after they were informed it was a requirement of the Koran.

In Jefferson's papers in 1786, he wrote: "We took the liberty to make some inquiries concerning the ground of their pretensions to make war upon nations who had done them no injury, and observed that we considered all mankind as our friends who had done us no wrong, nor given us any provocation."

"The Ambassador answered us that it was founded on the laws of their prophet, that it was written in their Koran, that all nations who should not have acknowledged their authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found and, to make slaves of all they could take as prisoners, and that every Musselman"—Muslim—"who should be slain in battle was sure to go to paradise." That is Jefferson, 1786.

Our Founders knew that sharia law was not consistent with Western civilization and our values. Sharia law is a problem that is growing throughout the United States and certainly growing in Texas. My home State bore the brunt of a 4-year mass migration invasion under the previous administration, but there has been a quieter one of Islamists leveraging our immigration system and corporate interests to extend and use diversity visas, chain migration, and H-1B visas to flood our country with people who don't believe in it and have no intention of assimilating into it.

A new Muslim community in Texas, not even a few days old, with a 150,000-square-foot Muslim community center, was opened in Houston, called EPIC City. It is in Plano, outside of Dallas-Fort Worth and it has raised all sorts of questions about their intentions to create an effectively Muslim-only community where sharia law no doubt would and will be practiced. Now they have renamed it The Meadow rather than the East Plano Islamic Center. They continue to develop and grow it even as there are almost 300 mosques in Texas and more mosques being built in Texas every day than any other State in the Union.

Meanwhile, let's look at what is going on in the United States broadly. Our Nation's foreign-born population has reached 51.9 million people, comprising some 16 percent of our population. We are at the highest levels of percentage in our history. The last time we had a similar level of foreign-born population, in roughly 1920, we froze immigration. Largely for about 40 or 50 years we froze it, and then it has been exploding over the last 50 years.

I have introduced legislation called the PAUSE Act to pause immigration

and to pause it until we get our hands around all of the problems that are currently plaguing our immigration system: the abuse of birthright citizenship, to have profit-centered ways to create American citizens, by people coming here, coming across the Rio Grande, having children, making citizens that then can use American resources, our hospitals, our schools, our legal system, our welfare.

We continue to allow a broken visa system to have extended family members be brought into the United States expansively and purposefully. The H-1B program has been exploited and abused now for years and must be abolished or massively reformed.

We obviously still have a very badly broken border that is only currently being held in check by a President and by leadership in the administration who are devoted to doing it, that are empowered to do it. However, all of the ways in which Biden-Mayorkas and that entire administration allowed our border to be wide open and have 10 million people flood our country, all of those things still remain in place statutorily.

Congress could fix it. We haven't. The House passed legislation 2 years ago—what it was called in that Congress was H.R. 2—to meaningfully change the law so that it can't be exploited to endanger the people. We have not brought that back up again this year. We should. We should codify these changes. Our priorities matter. The results of this are stark.

Thanksgiving week we saw what happened with the West Virginia National Guard servicemembers, Specialist Sarah Beckstrom, who was 20 years old, and Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolfe, 24. They were savagely ambushed and shot blocks away from the White House. Specialist Beckstrom tragically lost her life. The attacker, Rahmanullah Lakanwal, an Afghan national who was imported through the Biden-Mayorkas illegal Operation Allies Welcome parole program, drove from Washington State to carry out this diabolical act in our Nation's Capital.

According to DHS, over 5,000 Afghans brought to the United States through Operation Allies Welcome had either national security or public safety concerns.

We are importing people who want to undermine and destroy our country, and both sides of the aisle have been guilty of this. This is not a debatable reality. It is literally occurring.

For us to survive, we have to act. We need to pass the PAUSE Act. We need to pause immigration. We need to pass legislation like the bill that I introduced to preserve a sharia-free America that would prohibit the entry of people that are known to be adherent to sharia law, which is deeply in conflict with our values and our laws.

We should take away the tax status of CAIR and other radical organizations with ties to terrorists and a vast

network of well-funded organizations, using American tax dollars, United Nations' funds, wealthy donors, George Soros funding, foreign funding, nation-states all pouring into organizations, NGOs driving this agenda, the Marxist-Islamist red-green alliance that wants to destroy America as we know it. I introduced legislation to take away CAIR's tax status.

Why are we giving them tax breaks to try to destroy America?

That brings me to the final point which I was alluding to before on H.R. 2, that is legislation designed to codify effectively what President Trump is doing: to stop the abuse of parole, to stop the abuse of asylum, to stop the abuse of catch and release, to stop all of the abusive ways in which an exploited border can undermine our security and endanger us.

□ 1240

We cannot rely on the administration to do it. Congress needs to act. Congress needs to codify it. Congress needs to change it. States and State leaders need to stand up and use the legislation that we did pass in January to enable suit against the Federal Government when they failed to secure the border that we included in the Laken Riley Act because States can no longer be beholden to a Federal Government that refuses to secure the border.

We have a reprieve under President Trump. That reprieve will no doubt one day come to an end, and States must be empowered and have leaders who are willing to stand up and fight.

States need to challenge things like *Plyler v. Doe*, the Supreme Court ruling that said that we must have taxpayer funding going to pay for the education of illegal alien children. If you want to choose to do it, that is for you to decide. We should not be forced to use taxpayer dollars to do that. We should challenge that Supreme Court ruling. We should stand up to defend our country.

The fact is you can't win a war that you are not willing to recognize exists. It is undeniably true after the election of the mayor in New York, Mamdani, with what is going on in Dearborn, with what is going on in Minneapolis, with what we are seeing happen in Texas, in Dallas and Houston, what we saw unfold in London and Paris, that there is an attack on the Western way of life. We must stand up and defend it if we are going to be able to pass down a country to our kids and grandkids.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### CALIFORNIA IS THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF A MODEL OF EFFICIENCY

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. KILEY of California was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make a statement

about efficiency in government because there was a statement from the Governor of my State that many of us found quite surprising where he recently said that long before there was DOGE, California was already streamlining government to be more efficient, responsive, and accountable. Apparently, California being a model of efficiency, in the Governor's view.

This came as a surprise to many of us because, in the course of just 5 years during Governor Newsom's tenure, the State budget increased by \$124 billion. That is over a 50 percent increase in spending without really any measurable improvement in government performance when you look at California ranking first in the Nation in homelessness, poverty, unemployment, having some of the worst roads, and some of the worst achievement gaps in our schools.

I will highlight just a few examples that I think are particularly revealing when it comes to the low quality of government service that citizens of California are receiving and also, to some extent, the lessons that we can draw from here at the Federal level where I think continuing to improve the quality of government service, giving taxpayers a higher return on their tax dollars remains a vital imperative.

Remember, the Governor said that California is a model of efficiency. His exact words: "California is already streamlining government to be more efficient, responsive, and accountable."

Apparently, this includes a \$128 billion bullet train that still shows no signs of coming into existence. Now, that is the estimated total cost. The amount that has already been spent is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$16 billion, \$17 billion, but we are now 18 years into this thing and not a single bit of track has been laid despite all of this massive spending. The New York Times has estimated that the project isn't even on track to be finished this century.

Another example is that the State auditor in California found that the State spent \$24 billion to combat homelessness and completely lost track of the money. They couldn't say where it went. They couldn't say what impact it had on outcomes. There were no metrics.

During the time that this spending occurred, homelessness in California absolutely skyrocketed to the extent that the State has about half of the total unsheltered homeless in the entire country.

The State also squandered \$32 billion at a minimum on unemployment fraud. What is going on in Minnesota is small potatoes compared to what we witnessed in California during the COVID years where the State failed to take basic fraud protection measures that other States had taken, and as a result, fraudsters were easily able to purloin the State Treasury and use those billions to fund further criminal activities.

Now, I say that there are lessons for the Federal Government because during the last administration, the labor secretary in California most responsible for that entire fiasco was actually nominated to be the Secretary of Labor here in Washington, D.C., although never confirmed by the Senate, so to some extent the lesson was learned.

We have recent reports just in the last couple weeks that this \$650 million 911 system that the State has been charging Californians on their phone bill for, for several years now, is being scraped entirely because the technology doesn't work. They spent \$650 million building this so-called next generation 911 system—and our system does very much need to be updated—but because the State couldn't manage to get the technology right, it is all going to waste. Those funds will never be recovered and our 911 system remains antiquated as a result. Bear in mind, Sacramento is a stone's throw from Silicon Valley where the technology that is required here is fairly rudimentary in terms of what is needed.

I would just mention one final example which is the California State Capitol itself. Our Governor has had a lot to say about certain renovations going on at the White House, yet the California State legislature approved several years ago a \$1.2 billion renovation of the State capitol itself.

I voted against that measure, by the way, but now the cost of that seems to have ballooned and we don't know even by how much because the State is refusing to say. Despite the persistent efforts of local journalists to get an answer and other legislators as to how much this project is costing our taxpayers, they won't even say how much. However, we have gotten some hints of some of the measures that the project leaders have taken such as shipping stones to Italy in order to be treated and refined. It does not seem that this particular project is exactly a model of efficiency either.

Mr. Speaker, I bring these examples up to highlight the need for reform in my home State, to reorient the way our government works toward a paradigm of citizen service, because we see corruption and incompetence and special interests and a whole host of other agendas that stand in the way of the use of tax dollars to actually serve our citizens. Indeed, California is the exact opposite of a model of efficiency as we sacrifice the most and get the least in return.

I will continue to do everything I can to change that paradigm in California as well as to find ways to learn from it and to reorient our Federal Government toward a model of citizen service and efficiency, as well.

□ 1250

#### LEGISLATION TO STOP INSIDER TRADING

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, this week, I signed a discharge petition to stop insider trading, to ban

stock trading by Members of Congress. I have been a cosponsor of this measure offered by my colleague from Florida, ANNA PAULINA LUNA. We have gotten a number of bipartisan cosponsors for it, yet the bill has not moved. It has not been brought to the floor by House leadership.

I have signed this discharge petition, which is a legislative mechanism by which the Members of the House can bring a bill directly to the floor without the blessing of leadership. I have not been particularly inclined to sign these petitions in my first couple of years here in the House, but I have come to the view that they have become more necessary given the House's somewhat diminished role in recent months in terms of actually driving policy forward.

I have also signed a couple of other petitions related to the healthcare reforms that we are seeking to advance. I was particularly concerned when I heard the Speaker himself suggest that he might try to stop discharge petitions from happening altogether, which would be a terrible idea. It would mean that the House is no longer truly a majoritarian institution.

Affirming the value of discharge petitions and bringing to the floor a bill to ban trading by Members of Congress are both important steps toward restoring trust in this institution. Let's face it, Congress is not held in particularly high esteem by the American public right now. I have seen recent polls showing that Congress' approval rating is around 15 percent. In many ways, that reputation is well deserved.

This is a simple measure that we can take that would at least restore a little bit of trust and be a step in the direction of good government. I am hoping that it will continue to get the requisite signatures, short of leadership agreeing to bring it to the floor, and then we can get it passed and signed into law.

#### ADVOCATING TO END REDISTRICTING WAR

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to advocate for an end to the redistricting war that has been cascading across the country.

I have introduced legislation that would say we should not have mid-decade redistricting. It should not be done in any State. I opposed what happened in Texas to re-gerrymander that State in the middle of the decade, and I opposed what happened in California. I opposed the efforts that are afoot as well in other States, and I applaud the decision by the Indiana State Senate to not move forward with a mid-decade gerrymander in a fairly overwhelming vote yesterday.

The fact is that gerrymandering is an affront to representative government and democracy. What we are seeing right now runs against the desires of Members of this body on both sides of the aisle and certainly runs contrary to what is in the interest of the country.

I have called upon the leadership in the House for months to bring this bill

to the floor or to otherwise reach an armistice in this redistricting war. I believe it was a failure of leadership, frankly, on both sides, to allow this to happen.

As I warned months ago, the whole thing is basically turning out to be a wash. If you look at the various election forecasters, they say, yes, you are probably not going to see either side really gain much.

All of this effort, all of this money, all of this political capital spent redrawing maps, upending the districts of dozens of our Members on both sides of the aisle, and to what end? Nothing good is coming from it.

Maybe if the Speaker—and I cannot let the minority leader off the hook either because he has been actively involved in these efforts—had been more focused on, let's say, healthcare policy than trying to redraw district maps, we wouldn't be in a position where we are now 3 weeks away from Americans seeing a massive increase in healthcare costs.

I am again calling for my bill to ban mid-decade redistricting to be brought to the floor for a vote. I am also working on legislation to end gerrymandering in this country, once and for all, by ensuring each State has an independent commission, much like the one that we had in California until recently. I think if we can take that step to end gerrymandering, to have fair maps across the country, then it will restore power where it belongs, and that is to the voters themselves.

#### NEED FOR HIGHER-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, as chair of the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, which covers K-12 education, I like to have the opportunity to go and visit high-performing schools, to see the lessons that we could learn.

This morning, I had the chance to visit a KIPP school, the Knowledge is Power Program here in Washington, D.C. There are 20 KIPP schools in D.C. There are many, many more all across the country, including many in California.

This is a truly high-performing charter school network that tends to enroll students who are below the poverty level, that operates in underserved communities, and that has outstanding results by any measure—by student test scores, by graduation rates, by the number of students who go to college.

They really have just been knocking it out of the park for years, much like Success Academy, which operates in New York City. I had the chance to visit one of their campuses a couple of months ago. If they were considered their own school district, they would literally be the highest performing district in the State of New York.

These examples of success are, unfortunately, not the norm when it comes to public education in America today and, in particular, in my State of California. The latest Nation's Report Card

showed that student achievement is at an all-time low in this country. We have not bounced back to even where we were prior to the COVID years. We continue to fall behind our peer nations in terms of the level of achievement for our students.

In California, in particular, we have seen, over the course of the last several years, almost \$40 billion more that is now spent on an annual basis on education. What do we have to show for it? UC San Diego, which is a pretty high-ranking school, recently came out and said that their incoming students are not prepared to do basic math, even the most basic math. They have now had to put one out of every eight students into remedial math courses. They have had to expand the remedial courses they offer to make them even more remedial.

That is the result of a State like California that has done everything possible to quash high-performing charter schools, like the ones I just mentioned, Success Academy and KIPP, and instead support and prop up a failing education model: the idea that you are assigned to one school in your ZIP Code, whether it is good or bad, whether it teaches students to read and do math or not.

In the subcommittee that I have the honor to chair, we have been focusing on both the problems and potential solutions for public education in America. I think there is a great deal to learn from schools like KIPP and Success Academy, which set high expectations for students, teach literacy and numeracy the way that it is supposed to be taught, have high levels and expectations for their teachers and help prepare them as they need to be prepared when it comes to professional development, and focus like a laser on student achievement, engaging parents, and everything that comes with giving students access to a quality education.

Schools like these show that every child in this country can indeed succeed, and we need to make it a matter of great urgency to make sure that every child in America has that opportunity.

□ 1300

#### ASSURING TIMELY REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I will be introducing in the House the Right to Representation Act, a measure that has become necessary in order to assure that districts in this country are not denied representation here in the House.

We recently had a period of time in which a newly elected Member of the House from Arizona was not seated as a Member for week after week for what I believe was a record period of time. This was despite the fact that she had won her election, the election had been certified, and the district was going without representation until she was seated.

The House of Representatives was not here during that time, which was itself a big problem. The House canceled its sessions for 6 weeks on end while the government was shut down. Nevertheless, this Member, Mrs. GRIJALVA from Arizona, could have been sworn in during what is called a pro forma session.

I think that this is simply wrong. I think it is wrong she had to wait over a month, I believe, after she should have been sworn in to actually have the opportunity to begin representing her constituents.

I don't want to see anything like this happen again, regardless of which party controls the House and regardless of which party the Member who is waiting to be sworn in represents.

My bill is very simple. It would simply say that after an individual has prevailed in a special election, then they have the right to be sworn in on the next legislative day, whether that is a pro forma session or a regular session.

I think this is a commonsense measure and will ensure that what we just saw with the Representative from Arizona doesn't happen in this Chamber again.

#### CONGRATULATING CHIEF BRIAN ESTES

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Chief Brian Estes of the CAL FIRE Nevada Yuba Placer Unit and the Placer County Fire Department. He is retiring at the end of this year after an exceptional career of over 35 years in the fire service.

In 1991, Chief Estes graduated at the top of his class from the Butte Fire Academy, launching him into a long and successful career. He began working as a firefighter at a station in San Diego County.

Mr. Speaker, 4 years later, he joined the CAL FIRE helicopter crew in Tuolumne County, where he stayed for another 4 years. During this timeframe, he held various leadership positions, such as CWN manager and military helicopter manager. He coordinated with the California National Guard as a military liaison officer.

In 1988, Brian Estes was promoted to fire apparatus engineer and was assigned to the Amador/El Dorado Unit. Brian climbed the ladder and was promoted through the ranks, becoming captain in 2000 and being promoted to battalion chief in 2005.

In the coming years, Chief Estes responded to some of California's most challenging fires, joining deployments and leading 14 Type I incidents across California as Type I incident commander.

Brian Estes continued to be promoted, and he served as assistant chief of operations, deputy chief of operations, and then, finally, as unit chief for the Nevada Yuba Placer Unit and fire chief of the Placer County Fire Department.

He had the honor of leading over 450 personnel and overseeing a budget of

over \$100 million across 1.7 million acres of State Responsibility Area.

As Placer County Fire Chief, Chief Estes oversaw municipal services across 1,000 square miles and served over 70,000 residents, protecting \$80 billion in assets.

In these capacities, he has been an outstanding force in protecting the quality of life in our region by leading the front line of defense against the all-too-common California wildfires.

Chief Estes is widely respected for his exceptional leadership skills and unwavering commitment to collaboration. Under his guidance, his units operate with greater strength, efficiency, and purpose, reflecting his ability to maximize their potential and bring out the best in those he leads.

A lifelong public servant, Chief Estes is truly a pillar of our community. He is defined by his consistent and active engagement and his deep dedication to those he serves, going above and beyond the regular call of duty.

It has really been a privilege to work alongside Chief Estes throughout my time in office. It is an honor to represent someone held in such high esteem by his friends, family, colleagues, and community.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives and California's Third Congressional District, I wish Chief Estes a happy retirement and thank him for his many years of service.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### ISSUES OF THE DAY

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. GROTHMAN of Wisconsin was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, as we adjourn for the weekend, I would like to address three issues which affect Americans, these are issues I don't think have been discussed quite as much as we ought to.

The first issue concerns this transgender situation. We spend a lot of time talking about guys in girls' sports. This is a problem that ought to be dealt with. I think it polls very well.

Of even more significant concern is that of our out of control psychiatric profession treating this as a genetic problem in which people should have to have surgeries to deal with this.

They have surgeries on young people, people as young as 16 or 15 or 14 years old. These are surgeries that will affect them for the rest of their lives. Just as bad, they give puberty blockers to these young people, not knowing what the long-term effects will be.

Recently, new information that should have come as a surprise to no one—but perhaps will come as a surprise to the mainstream media—a new study came out showing that the number of young adults identifying as transgender plunged by nearly ½ half in 2 years. It exposed what a lot of us

knew all along. It was largely a social contagion. It was not a genetic disease that required surgeries or permanently changing people's lives.

As I pointed out before, this does not only affect the people themselves who may have puberty blockers and surgeries but it affects the parents. It affects the parents who will never have grandchildren because their children were roped into this by the liberal news media, by the liberal psychiatric and psychological associations, and by hospitals who made money off of this deal.

I am really afraid this is something, since it is a nationwide problem, that should be dealt with in Congress—and I think it will be dealt with soon—in which we begin to refuse this sort of treatment and, even more, refuse these surgeries to people under the age of 21.

Can we honestly say that we would advise someone who is 20 or 19 years old to have surgery, permanently altering their body for the rest of their life? Think how our ideas on life have changed. Think how our opinions on life have changed between when we were 18 or 19 or 20 years old and when we are 45 or 50 years old.

The know-it-alls in the psychiatric and psychological profession are encouraging people to have surgeries. They are giving people puberty blockers. I am afraid the U.S. Congress will have to step forward and say “no.”

I hope our leadership team in the near future puts something forward that says—and it really should be greater than that. A person can't be a Congressman until age 25—it should at least go to age 21. We need to put an end to this and stand up to the psychiatric and psychological associations. That is one issue I think we ought to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, I will now deal with another issue, and this kind of deals with Social Security. Right now, there are older people who make the mistake of retiring and getting Social Security. All of a sudden, they would like to go back to work and make more money, but they are unable to.

Earlier this session we played around with the Social Security trust fund in which—or at the end of the last session in which way too many people voted for giving more Social Security dollars to some governmental employees; it was about \$24 billion a year.

Rather than encouraging more people to retire, if our leadership team wants to encourage more people to work, which we should, we should increase the amount of money that a senior can make before their Social Security is taken away.

Right now, if a person makes more than \$19,500 a year in Social Security, when they get to that point, the government begins to take away a person's Social Security check. Right now, we are in the business of trying to discourage people from working if they are 68 or 69 or 70.

□ 1310

Let's pass the Senior Independence Act which increases that amount from

\$19,500 to \$30,000 so that the older people who need a little bit more money can earn it. Even more, it is good for people to work. If these older people want to get out of the house and get a little more social stimulation by working, then they are not penalized for doing so.

I strongly encourage our leadership team. I realize that they will say that it will encourage more people to retire early and might cost the government a little bit of money, but we had plenty of money to give people who were retired to encourage people to retire last January.

Let's encourage and free up older people and let them work a little bit more.

Of course, we have a labor shortage problem. It will also be good for our economy as we see a few more people going to work, maybe working 30 hours a week instead of working 20 hours a week. As I said, we want to boost our economy a little. There are so many businesses who so desperately looking for some more labor, particularly the retail outlets out there and there are some factories, as well. We are particularly finding now that we are kicking people out of this country who are here illegally and were working, it would be great to have more 60 to 69-year-olds working. I hope our leadership will find a way to pass the Senior Independence Act and allow seniors to make \$30,000 a year.

Now, the third issue I want to deal with comes under 14(c), which is the provision which allows people who are having some physical problems, spina bifida, Down syndrome, and other problems, sometimes paraplegics, to work.

Given the current situation, in order to make it financially viable to have them work, they have to work for under minimum wage. Nobody ever forces people to do this, but they do it to earn a little additional money. Most of these people are on SSI. They don't need the money to pay the mortgage or pay the rent, but they would like to have a little bit more money to buy some of their own clothes, perhaps buy gifts for parents, what have you.

There are really misguided people out there who are trying to get rid of 14(c) certificates, and, in essence, make it against the law to pay somebody \$4 or \$5 or \$6 to work because of problems that are out there. I have right now formed a caucus called the Congressional Disability Employment Caucus, which is dedicated to the preservation of the 14(c) program. It will provide a little bit of structure to the effort to continue to allow people with differing abilities to have the freedom to work for a little bit smaller amount.

I think it is just horrible that some people want to take away this freedom. I believe in counties in which this freedom has been taken away. What happens is people who, right now, are working for \$4 or \$5 an hour wind up in what they call day services, and they sit around and watch television or