

very distinguished career in public service. Sam has served as the chairman of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, a representative on the Chambersburg Council, and the mayor of Chambersburg.

Sam's commitment to his country, his family, and his community truly makes him an exceptional example of America's Greatest Generation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Sam for all he has done for America.

REMEMBERING LETTY BELIN

(Ms. STANSBURY of New Mexico was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, it is undeniable that Letty Belin is somebody who will be remembered for her laugh, her kindness, and her compassion.

Even when dealing with the most serious of subjects concerning the fate of our Nation's waters, Tribal water rights, the protection of lands and ecosystems, and their legal and policy arguments, it was her laughter, her love, and her kindness that shined through.

The last time that I saw Letty was over a meandering cup of coffee, as they often were, on Stanford campus, where she was a twice-alum and where she contemplated the future of Western water as she often did.

Letty Belin was most certainly one of the greatest legal and policy minds of our generation, working to protect the waters of the West, but Letty was also a dear friend and mentor to me and so many others who worked on Western water issues.

She served as the lead counselor to two Deputy Cabinet Secretaries at the Department of the Interior; led the Environment Division at the New Mexico Attorney General's Office; spent decades practicing water, environmental, and Tribal law; and served on numerous boards.

Above all else, she was a devoted parent to three children, loving grandmother, and friend who shared her deep love of wildlands, open spaces, and traveling the world.

Mr. Speaker, it is with the greatest sadness that I rise this morning to honor the life of Letty Belin and her passing just a few weeks ago.

I became close friends with Letty during her time at the Department of the Interior, where she served as counsel to Deputy Secretaries David Hayes and Mike Connor and as the chair of the Indian Water Rights Working Group.

At the Department of the Interior, she championed the negotiation of water settlements to protect the water rights of 15 Tribal nations, which most certainly must be a historical record for what are often difficult, decades-long cases.

In fact, so exemplary was her work that President Obama himself honored her with a special award for her negotiations involving the water rights of the Navajo and Hopi Nations.

Letty certainly was no stranger to resolving difficult issues and, in fact, led on the legal and policy work that transformed water law in New Mexico during my lifetime to ensure that stream flows for our rivers and streams would remain.

In fact, for any New Mexican who sat along a river grateful to see its waters flow, especially during a time of drought, it was Letty who created the legal framework to sustain those waters.

This is perhaps one of her most enduring legacies, which she led after Attorney General Tom Udall, later Senator Udall, hired her to lead a brand-new Environment Division at the AG's Office in the 1990s. As Senator Udall shared with me just yesterday, Letty was uniquely superb at finding those commonsense solutions that people could support while still pushing for what needed to happen.

It was through this lens that she also helped to protect the Middle Rio Grande River through a legal challenge under the Endangered Species Act. Where some saw only a small, endangered minnow, Letty saw the opportunity to save a vital habitat that supports two-thirds of New Mexico's species.

In the process, her work helped save these species from extinction and brought a renewed urgency to protecting our beloved Rio Grande. It is that same commitment that she brought to her work in the Bay Delta in California.

In fact, decades later, after her years of work as an environmental attorney, as a State and Federal civil servant, she would bring that same creativity and can-do spirit to her work on behalf of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Mr. Speaker, it is with the greatest sadness that I honor Letty's legacy. The impact that she has had on this country is immeasurable. From her roots in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to her career defending the water resources and lands of the West, her lifetime of service continues to influence decisions and communities across the country today. Whether hiking through the hills, floating a river, or traveling the world, Letty leaves behind a legacy of friendship, wisdom, and extraordinary accomplishments.

I, like so many, am forever grateful for her mentorship and friendship and join those who are honoring her memory and mourning her loss.

It is with the deepest condolences and prayers, Mr. Speaker, that I send my love to her family, to her community, and to everyone who called her friend, mentor, sister, mom, and grandma.

RECOGNIZING DONNA AUTRY

(Ms. FOXX of North Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a real hero in our midst and a dear friend of mine, Donna Autry.

Donna was a first grade teacher for over 30 years. Like most teachers, she was committed to doing one of the most important jobs in our Nation, but she has never sought the limelight. She simply did her job quietly and effectively.

Donna is also an artist who creates beautiful quilts and paintings that she gives to others. She is extremely generous with her time and talent. She also has a passion for dogs and volunteers with the Avery County Humane Society.

Mr. Speaker, we ought to recognize more people like Donna who live quiet lives and, at the same time, contribute so much to the world around them. We need more Donna Autrys in our world. They make a positive impact that deserves to be highlighted and praised.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Donna for being such a wonderful person.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

PROCEEDINGS OF FORMER MEMBERS PROGRAM

The following proceedings were held before the House convened for morning-hour debate:

UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS 2025 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

The meeting was called to order by the Honorable Donna F. Edwards, Vice President of Former Members of Congress Association, at 9 a.m.

PRAYER

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

Eternal God, to whom one day is as 1,000 years, and 1,000 years as one day, thank You not only for this day, but for the thousands of years of service this body represents.

We pause in gratitude for the calling You bestowed on each one here and all who have gone before, who have given so much of their time and energy in this very Chamber, to preserve and defend the laws of this Nation and the ideals on which it was founded.

Even as they gather this morning, uphold and encourage these former Members, their continued sense of duty to the American people. Bring their minds and desires together again, enhanced with their shared wisdom, and inspired by Your guiding spirit, that they may use their voices to speak into the consequential dialogue of these days.

Now unto You, who has established Your everlasting covenant for us and for all our descendants, we declare

Your power to each generation that follows and profess Your might to all who are yet to serve in these Halls.

In Your enduring and unfailing name, we pray.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable Donna Edwards led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

Ms. EDWARDS. The Chair is now honored to invite the Speaker of the House, MIKE JOHNSON of Louisiana, to address all Members.

The SPEAKER. I just want to welcome everybody back, Members, former Members, to the House floor. Some of you come back frequently, and we are always happy to see you. I certainly thank the former FMC President and all of you who serve this great organization to continue the tradition. I appreciate what Chaplain Kibben prayed. That is exactly the spirit of this. We have consequential dates upon us, and your voices are so important. The platform that you have as former Members is important. You have great spheres of influence, and I am moved all the time by the recognition of kind of the weight of things that are upon the country right now. In so many ways we are in uncharted waters as a country, and we are coming up on the 250th anniversary of what we all know to be the greatest Nation in the history of the world. It is not even close. We are the most free, the most powerful, the most successful, and the most benevolent ever on Earth.

I think we do well to remember why that is. The concern I have, and probably the concern many of you have is that I am—

Ms. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, our class did okay, didn't we?

The SPEAKER. Boy, I miss you around here. You should have stayed around. It has gotten kind of crazy.

Ms. DEMINGS. It made it so interesting.

The SPEAKER. "Interesting" is a good word.

My concern is probably the same as many of yours. It is that I am afraid the generations behind us do not have any longer a full recognition of what it is that we are so blessed by.

When I bring groups to the floor—and I had one in here yesterday, a little group from back home in Louisiana—I pause while we are here in the Chamber to just make note of the historic things and the bullet holes and all the fun stuff, but also the things that are more important and symbolic.

I will often stop and say: One of the first things I noticed when I walked into the Chamber for the first time was In God We Trust above the Speaker's rostrum.

I said: Do any of you wonder why that was put there?

Congress did that back in the early 1960s. If you were here on a regular day,

I told my group, if you turn over to page 21 of the visitor guide of the House, a booklet that we have, it says that Congress voted to put that there as a rebuke to the Soviet's philosophy at the height of the Cold War, and the Soviet philosophy was the opposite because, Marxism, communism, all the isms that come from that—socialism—begin with the premise that there is no God. That is a marked distinction from the founding of our country. That is what makes it so different.

I know you did so many tours on the House floor, but we often always point to the great lawgivers around the ceiling. One-half are turning this way and one-half that way. One face that looks down above us—and you have done the same thing—it is Moses looking down upon us. I have seen that as a recognition that we are supposed to remember that our duty and our responsibility here as Members and as citizens is to a higher power. It is not just to the civil authorities. It recognizes that Moses was the first lawgiver. He got the tablets on the mountain, and we are supposed to remember that what we do here is not inconsequential. It has, in effect, eternal significance, and the people elected to serve in this great body should always remember that and keep it in mind.

I do. I think these two things are symbols of that, but as we come up to the 250th anniversary of the country, I think that you and I have a great opportunity, because with every single group that you speak to, small or large, you can pivot now in the months ahead there won't be anything radical at all, go straight to the Declaration of Independence, which is the Nation's birth certificate. I have been doing this for a while now, and I go straight to the second paragraph. What is alarming to me is when I am speaking to university students or high school students, they don't have much recognition for the things that we had to memorize in school. They are not doing that anymore.

This is what G.K. Chesterton called the Creed of America. He was a great British statesman and philosopher. He said that America is the only Nation in the world that is founded on a creed. That creed is theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I think I will just take the time to unpack that and point out important things. It is not just born equal. It says created equal. It says that our rights do not derive from government. They come from our creator Himself, and He is the one who gives us those rights. The Founders understood they are supposed to be exercised in accordance with the responsibility that goes along with that.

What does that mean for a citizen, and what does it mean about our individual values, our duty, and our responsibility, not just as elected officials, but all of us?

If we take young people through that and make them pause just for a second on the eve and then next year on the birthday of the greatest country in the history of the world, then I think we do well to remind them of our basic civic duty.

I am afraid that schools aren't doing that as much as they did when we were all coming up, and it is a real peril to the continuation of this grand experiment in self-governance and intellectual property. We all agree on that.

I know that you all have given large measures and large parts of your life to service to keeping the Republic. I am just going to be stating the obvious. It may be more challenging right now than it was since the time of the Civil War. There is so much more polarization, so much division. Social media attacks our political system, as we all know, and it makes it so difficult for people to get along. When Val and I were freshmen here, it seems like 50 years ago now, but in the 115th Congress, we came in January 2017, and we all signed this document called Honor and Civility. We had this idea, this crazy idea, that the person on the other side of the aisle is not our enemy; that it is our fellow American, a colleague. We might have different policy ideas, but that is our friend. We are in this together, and we should treat one another with dignity and respect. We restated the golden rule in laymen's terms and sort of secular terms, and we circulated that. Every single Member of the freshman class, 53 of us, Rs and Ds, everybody signed on.

We committed to do that, except for one guy from New York. I said: You are the last signature up to add on to this. He said: I didn't come here to get along with anybody. I said: Okay, sorry I bothered you.

I think he lasted 2 years here.

Ms. DEMINGS. One and one-half years.

The SPEAKER. When we have recalcitrant Members these days, I try to remind them that unless the legislative body is a team sport, then you cannot come here to be an individual and build a brand. That is not what this is about. However, in the old days—the old days, you know, in previous Congresses, even right before we came in—before social media became such a force in the culture, the rank and file, you just got along. You didn't have much of a choice. You knew your role in the body, and then you earned the respect of your colleagues by working hard and by being productive.

Now it is sort of inverted. It is turned upside-down because now the way to get attention is to be a firebrand, as if that is the objective, to be famous.

The more bombastic you are online, feeding that beast, then the more attention you get and, in some cases, the more money you raise. There is a race to be more and more outrageous than the next person, which is terribly destructive to this process.

When we were freshmen, we would have events, bipartisan events. We had

an Honor and Civility Caucus. We all dined together, and we would go and have bipartisan events. I can't do these anymore because no one will turn up on the other side. The parties, the Rs and Ds, do not want to be photographed together. If they go to an event, they will be punished online if someone leaks the photo.

How do we put the genie back in the bottle?

Chaplain Kibben and I commiserate all the time. We have to figure it out.

The Founders had great challenges. The Civil War era had great challenges as far as civil rights. We have had our own. There is a common thread through a lot of it, but we have to figure it out.

I don't want to give you a long speech. All that is to say I am very bullish on the future of America. I know we have the greatest government, imperfect as it is. That is why everybody wants to come here, and that is why America has the longest lasting Constitution on the Earth and the model for all the others. It is the aspiration of everybody else. They want to do more like we have done and be more like us.

We had the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia here a couple of weeks ago, MBS. He is a controversial figure, but he came, and that is an important relationship with the Middle East. We all have mixed feelings about it. I was visiting with him. He told us Saudi Arabia aspires to be more like the United States. He said to a group of us—we had Republican and Democrat leaders on both sides of the House—in a forum with him. He said that our actual cultures are about 85 percent the same in his view, but they are trying.

That is an extreme example, but every country around the world tries to emulate and follow us and our popular culture and a lot of what we have done. We have a heavy responsibility. After World War II Ronald Reagan used to say—I think he was quoting Pope Pious XII—and he said that the leadership of the free world was placed upon the shoulders of the United States after World War II. We did not ask for that, but we have a role to play, and we have to model the things that built the Nation and built this institution.

It is virtue, religious principle, and morality. It is this basic moral consensus that we regard one another as friends and neighbors and fellow countrymen, and if we get elected to Congress, we come here, and certainly we should be exhibiting that as a bare minimum. We are trying to get back to that in the midst of this crazy hyperpartisanship at the moment.

The reason I mention that to all of you is that you, as a former Member, from my perspective you have a unique platform to be able to speak into this crazy moment that we are in as a country because you have the respect and admiration of people for having served here. You have a long history of service to the country and unique opportunity

because you can be filmed with people on the other side of the aisle and set that example as you do.

I don't think there has been a more important moment than probably right now for the Former Members of Congress group, as to what this can be and what you can do.

I am very grateful for all of that. I want to be a resource to you. Any time you are here, pop in and say hello. I will roll out my little red carpet for you, and you get all the accoutrements of the Speaker's balcony.

I was on a podcast a few weeks ago and was asked: What are the perks of being a Speaker?

I had to think for a moment. Honestly, I wasn't prepared for the question. The first thing that came to my mind was the balcony of the Speaker. The balcony is awesome. It is not the most fun job in the world right now, but it is a duty, as all these positions are.

I thank you for serving so well and admirably and being an example. Increasingly, I think we have to look for those examples of people in this room and on this floor. I am grateful.

Merry Christmas, welcome back, happy Hanukkah, and happy new year to everyone.

Ms. EDWARDS. I thank the Speaker so much for giving your time out of your incredibly busy schedule. You are always really generous with your time for the former Members. Thank you so much.

The SPEAKER. Stay as long as you want.

Ms. EDWARDS. We appreciate that, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair now recognizes the Honorable Barbara Comstock of Virginia, who is president of the Former Members of Congress Association to address the Members.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Good morning. Thank you, Donna. It is always a great honor and distinct pleasure to return to this Chamber, especially when being able to do so with so many of our friends and former colleagues.

Let me begin by also thanking Speaker JOHNSON for inviting our association into the House Chamber for our annual report and for greeting us this morning. We appreciate very much his staff support and his support for our association, whether it be for our events like today or for the annual memorial service in Statuary Hall.

Like most of us, I appreciate my service in Congress and consider it one of the most impactful chapters of my professional life, and the memories this Chamber evokes are among the highlights of my work. I cherish the relationships I was able to forge with my fellow Members, and I am proud of the legislation I was part of, both as a Member and as a staffer before I ran for Congress. That makes FMC, the Former Members of Congress Association, so special, and it empowers those of us who had this experience to continue to give back.

We do so by involving both Senators and Representatives, and, more importantly, we do so by inviting Democrats and Republicans alike to work together to further FMC's mission of strengthening democracy at home and abroad.

FMC is 100 percent bipartisan. It was founded in 1970, received its congressional charter in 1983, and functions as a standalone 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization.

Though chartered by Congress, no taxpayer dollars are earmarked for our work. Everything we do is founded through foundation grants and contributions, and all of our former Members donate their time pro bono. We don't pay any fee or honorarium to former Members to participate in FMC's many programs.

In 2025, our membership donated about 7,000 volunteer hours to the FMC cause, whether by serving as a panelist for an issue-specific discussion open to the public, or by spending days visiting with students as part of one of the many Congress to Campus programs or by traveling overseas with other former Members for legislative strengthening and democracy building work.

Now, 2025 was the 55th year of FMC's operation as a nonprofit chartered by Congress to strengthen representative democracy, teach about the Article I branch, and inspire the next generation when it comes to the importance and dignity of public service. Throughout FMC's history, we have been able to grow this organization, grow it in size, grow its fundraising success, grow its staff, grow its programs, and grow the number of former Members involved who donate their time to us pro bono.

Without a doubt, we have been able to grow because we have been fortunate, since day one back in 1970, to have outstanding former Members step up and benefit FMC with their inspiring leadership.

Today we want to acknowledge that outstanding leadership. Starting in 1974, FMC has recognized exemplary public service before, during, and after Congress through our Distinguished Service Award. We have done so every year, commencing in 1974, with President Gerald Ford as our first honoree, and last year we gave it to Representative STEPHANIE BICE as our most recent honoree.

For this year, we have decided to look inward and thank those colleagues of ours who, over the years, have given us their sage counsel, insight, and their energy in their leadership by serving as FMC's president. Through their commitment as leaders of this organization, they have played an invaluable role in continuing our mission of bipartisanship, civic education, and engaging the next generation in our representative democracy.

Their impact on our organization and on democracy worldwide has been truly inspiring. Since 1970, 36 men and 3 women have served as FMC's president, always limited to one term, and always

switching between the parties. In 1996, we expanded the term from 1 year to 2 so that we could build consistency into our leadership structure. In 2018, we started electing the president and the president-elect at the same time so that we would have the luxury of long-term planning with the same team in place for several years.

I can't overstate how productive a system that is thanks to my wonderful partnership with our outstanding president-elect, Donna Edwards. I was also able to serve as president-elect with President L.F. Payne. Without the leadership of these terrific former Members who guided FMC through good times and also challenging ones, we also embraced the mission of this organization and who were 100 percent committed to bipartisanship and to highlighting everything that is so inspiring about the Article I branch.

FMC would not be the thriving and impactful organization it is today without that leadership. We, therefore, are thrilled to recognize FMC's former president with the 2025 Distinguished Service Award.

We have invited all of FMC's living past presidents to join us today so that we can thank them in person, and we are thrilled that a great many of them have made the trip back to Capitol Hill to be with us today.

We would like to present each of them with a commemorative gavel. And Pete, who has worked closely with each and every one of them during his long tenure with FMC will help me do that in just a moment.

The way we would like to structure this presentation is that I will acknowledge each of them individually and then also read into the RECORD the names of these former FMC presidents who could not join us today in person. After that, we will invite all of them to join me here at the dais.

If you wouldn't mind, I think it would be best if we hold all applause until they are here with me at the dais and then we can thank and applaud them as a group.

Let me start with Matt McHugh, a Democrat from New York. I am sorry, Matt was not able to be here. He served as FMC president from 1998 to 2000. Matt does send his regards, but, unfortunately, he could not join us today after all. Some of the many highlights of his presidency include FMC hosting a delegation of the members of the Chinese National People's Congress for a week of meetings here in D.C. and via a grant from the Ford Foundation sending three delegations of former Members on study missions to Cuba.

Now, Larry LaRocco, who is with us, is a Democrat from Idaho, possibly the last Democrat from Idaho who served as FMC president from 2002 to 2004. During his presidency, FMC was recognized by the U.S. Capitol Historical Society with its annual Freedom Award, and they also sent a current senior congressional staff delegation to Mexico for a peer-to-peer exchange with their colleagues in Mexico City.

Jim Slattery, a Democrat from Kansas—and actually we have a Democrat as Governor right now—served as FMC President from 2006 to 2008. During his presidency, FMC initiated a training program for former legislators to serve as election observers worldwide. This program was created in partnership with our sister organizations in Ottawa and Brussels. Also during Jim's presidency, FMC produced over one dozen webcasts for use across the country in high school civics classrooms. I thank Jim.

Dennis Hertel, a Democrat from Michigan, who also is not able to be here today, served as FMC President from 2010 to 2012. Thanks to Dennis' leadership, FMC launched several new programs, including our Diplomatic Advisory Council and the Congressional Study Group on Europe.

In addition, during his presidency, FMC published a book titled: "Political Rules of the Road," sharing some of the unique and unparalleled insights inherent in our membership.

Dennis was succeeded by Congresswoman Connie Morella, a Republican from Maryland—also a unique thing—who served as FMC's president from 2012 to 2014. I also was privileged to serve in Congress with Connie as a staffer. Among her many achievements on behalf of FMC is a major expansion of our international legislative exchange programs to now also include senior congressional staff on a bipartisan basis in the work in overseas delegation of FMC's Congressional Study Groups.

During Connie's presidency, FMC also produced a number of instructional videos which then were incorporated into the national AP government high school curriculum. I also would like to take a personal privilege to say when I was a staffer, Connie was a hero for all the female staffers on the Hill.

Thank you, Connie, for being one of those heroes for the female staffers.

Cliff Stearns, a Republican from Florida, had hoped to be here today but at the last minute had to change his schedule. He served as FMC's president from 2016 to the 2018. It is due to Cliff's leadership that FMC initiated what has become one of our most important and moving annual events, the memorial service. This is where every year in Statuary Hall we recognize and commemorate the public service of current and former Members who passed away the previous year.

In addition, during Cliff's presidency, FMC expanded its program focused on congressional staff to now also include district directors across the country.

Cliff was succeeded by Martin Frost, a Democrat from Texas, who served as FMC's president from 2018 to 2020. Martin is with us today. It was during Martin's presidency that FMC launched the very successful congressional study group on Korea which quickly became one of our most active international legislative exchanges presenting cur-

rent Members of Congress and their colleagues in the National Assembly of Korea and with an unparalleled opportunity to connect and deliberate together.

Also FMC published "Congress At a Crossroads," a collection of over two dozen interviews with current Members of Congress to capture their thoughts on bipartisanship, regular order, and other aspects of their congressional lives.

L.F. Payne, a Democrat from the Commonwealth of Virginia, served as FMC's president from 2022 until 2024. I had the great pleasure to serve with L.F. as FMC's president-elect. In addition to bringing his business acumen to updating and strengthening our organization in financial processes, during L.F.'s presidency, FMC's Congress to Campus program connected with our largest number ever of students both here in the United States and abroad and more than doubled Congress to Campus visits to HBCUs and HSIs. L.F. also worked hard with FMC staff to lead the organization out of the turmoil of the COVID lockdown to emerge stronger than ever before both financially and when it comes to the number and quality of our many programs.

As I said earlier, not every one of FMC's living past presidents was able to come back to D.C. so let me read their names into the RECORD. FMC will send them their gavel as a small token of our appreciation.

They are Jim Symington of Missouri, Phil Ruppe of Michigan, Barbara Kennelly of Connecticut, and Charles Boustany of Louisiana. I hope they know how much of a positive impact they have had on this organization.

With that, I would be so pleased and honored to have FMC's former presidents join me here at the dais.

I thank you for the applause for these 2025 distinguished service recipients, and I thank you for all being here today.

Ms. EDWARDS. I want to add my congratulations to FMC's past presidents and to thank them for their role in creating this incredibly important vibrant and impactful organization, which is a perfect transition to the next part of our agenda focused on FMC's work in 2025 and our vision for 2026.

With that, the Chair, again, recognizes FMC's current president, Barbara Comstock, to offer her remarks.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. I will do things a little bit differently this year as we offer our annual report to Congress. I do want to give a quick report on our 2025 work in finances, but I also want to reserve some time to look ahead to 2026 given the important work we are about to enter as part of our Nation's semiquincentennial.

Let me start by focusing on FMC's finances. We just received the findings from our annual audit for fiscal year 2024, and I am very pleased to report that the independent auditor, again, gave us a clean bill of fiscal health. As

I said earlier, FMC receives no taxpayer dollars for its work, and even though we are congressionally chartered, there are no appropriations or earmarks flowing into our coffers.

About two-thirds of our income derives from grants, donations, and membership dues from former Senators and Representatives.

The other main category on the plus side also comes from our own membership, and that is their in-kind donation of their time and expertise as they volunteer for our various programs.

As I already mentioned, but it bears repeating, former Members continue to come through for us and on a bipartisan basis almost 7,000 hours were donated by our membership pro bono. Finally, about 15 percent of our budget is based on the success of our sole fundraiser, the annual Statesmanship Awards Celebration, which in 2025 honored Senator BOOKER and Senator YOUNG and Representatives CASE and KIM, as well as Aflac as our corporate honoree.

On the spending side, we have a very healthy ratio with about two-thirds of our budget going toward programming and one-third taking care of overhead and salaries.

Programming in 2025 continued our wide variety of events, panels, overseas delegations, townhalls, and, of course, our outreach to students across the country.

Of the well over 100 programs we have implemented in 2025, almost one-half were focused on student audiences, mostly at college level, through Congress to Campus but also high school and middle school kids.

With these students, our bipartisan teams of former Members have an open and sometimes challenging discussion on issues of the day and also try to inspire them when it comes to public service, bipartisanship, and getting actively engaged in our representative democracy.

Almost all of these programs are now back to being in-person events, but we also learned through COVID that we can reach wider student audiences by hosting the occasional virtual discussions. Roughly the other one-half of our programs take place on Capitol Hill, at embassies around D.C., and occasionally in other parts of the United States, such as when we hosted our annual meeting in Atlanta and, quite often, overseas.

We do tons of work bringing current Members together across the political aisle for discussions with issue experts on topics that include AI, China, fiscal policy, or international trade relations. We do lots of work to create a network of peers through our bipartisan legislative exchanges that focus on parliaments in other countries. This is most often as part of our Congressional Study Groups, and the goal is to create, with elected officials across the globe, an impactful dialogue that is informative, does not engage in any advocacy, and is fully bipartisan.

FMC views this work as our mandate to support current Members of Congress and congressional staff in their work so that through us they can engage with their colleagues in Congress, their peers in legislative branches overseas, and issue experts from academia and the think tank world.

As I said, this is mostly accomplished through our Congressional Study Groups, and we are thrilled that in 2025, we added to our roster of international legislative exchanges for current Members and current senior staff when we launched the Congressional Study Group on India this summer.

These current member Congressional Study Groups, along with a number of former member delegations, resulted in over one dozen overseas study missions where we brought bipartisan groups of legislators together with elected officials in parliaments overseas.

This was just a brief summary of our work in 2025, and I hope you will take time to read the much more detailed report which I am submitting for the RECORD.

2025 REPORT TO CONGRESS BY THE FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ASSOCIATION, A CONGRESSIONALLY CHARTERED 501(c)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

I. FINANCES, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Former Members of Congress Association (FMC) is a bipartisan, nonprofit, voluntary alliance of former United States Senators and Representatives, educating about representative democracy at home and abroad. FMC was established in 1970, is incorporated in the District of Columbia, and received a Congressional Charter in 1983. The organization is recognized by the IRS as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit. No taxpayer dollars are earmarked or appropriated to support any of FMC's many programs, and all FMC projects are self-funded via foundation grants, membership dues, an annual fundraising event, and donations. Former Members of Congress are not compensated for their participation in FMC programs such as Congress to Campus, and FMC does not seek a fee or an honorarium to compensate Former Members for their time or expertise. In 2025, Former Members of Congress donated approximately 7,000 volunteer hours pro bono to participate in FMC projects across the country and overseas. Per its Congressional Charter, FMC annually undergoes an audit by an independent auditor. In FY2024, roughly two-thirds of FMC's income was spent on programming and roughly one-third on administrative costs and overhead.

FMC is led by an Executive Committee, which consists of five Former Members of Congress: President Barbara Comstock (R-VA), President-Elect Donna F. Edwards (D-MD), VP Dennis Ross (R-FL), VP Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), and Immediate Past President L.F. Payne (D-VA). All serve one two-year term, and the President and President-elect are limited to one term only. The Executive Committee is part of the FMC board of directors, which includes 24 voting Members divided into three classes, each class serving a three-year term, and every year a different class is up for reelection. The board is split evenly between the two major parties. Directors are eligible to be reelected without limits to additional three-year terms. In addition, all past presidents of FMC are automatically offered a lifetime non-voting seat

on the board that is not subject to election. Currently 10 former FMC presidents serve in that capacity on FMC's board. Lastly, FMC created a bipartisan group of Counselors, which is a non-voting group of former board members who no longer are subject to an election to the board, but continue counseling the organization on a volunteer basis. There currently are 12 counselors. FMC board members as of December 2025:

Hon. Charles Boustany (R-LA), President Emeritus Council; Hon. Larry Bucshon (R-IN); Hon. Cheri Bustos (D-IL); Hon. Russ Carnahan (D-MO); Hon. Bob Clement (D-TN), non-voting Counselor; Hon. Barbara Comstock (R-VA), FMC President; Hon. Rodney Davis (R-IL); Hon. Val Demings (D-FL); Hon. Jeff Denham (R-CA); Hon. Charlie Dent (R-PA); Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND), non-voting Counselor; Hon. Donna Edwards (D-MD), FMC President-Elect; Hon. Elizabeth Esty (D-CT); Hon. Martin Frost (D-TX), President Emeritus Council; Hon. Tom Graves (R-GA); Sec. Dan Glickman (D-KS), non-voting Counselor; Hon. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA); Hon. Bart Gordon (D-TN); Hon. Lee Hamilton (D-IN), non-voting Counselor; Hon. Dennis Hertel (D-MI), President Emeritus Council; Sen. Tim Hutchinson (R-AR), non-voting Counselor; Sen. Doug Jones (D-AL); Amb. Jim Jones (D-OK), non-voting Counselor; Hon. Barbara Kennelly (D-CT), President-Emeritus Council.

Hon. Dan Kildee (D-MI); Hon. Derek Kilmer (D-WA); Hon. Ken Kramer (R-CO), non-voting Counselor; Hon. Larry LaRocco (D-ID), President Emeritus Council; Hon. Martin Lancaster (D-NC), non-voting Counselor; Hon. Brenda Lawrence (D-MI); Hon. Kathy Manning (D-NC); Hon. Matt McHugh (D-NY), President Emeritus Council; Amb. Carol Moseley Braun (D-IL), non-voting Counselor; Hon. Jim Moran (D-VA), non-voting Counselor; Amb. Connie Morella (R-MD), President Emeritus Council; Hon. L.F. Payne (D-VA), Immediate Past President; Hon. Tim Petri (R-WI), non-voting Counselor; Hon. Peter Roskam (R-IL); Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL); Hon. Dennis Ross (R-FL), FMC Vice President; Hon. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), FMC Vice President; Hon. James Slattery (D-KS), President Emeritus Council; Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), non-voting Counselor; Hon. Cliff Stearns (R-FL), President Emeritus Council; Hon. Fred Upton (R-MI); Hon. Greg Walden (R-OR); Hon. Al Wynn (D-MD), non-voting Counselor.

FMC employs a staff of 16 professionals, 13 of whom are full-time employees of FMC, plus one part-time employee, and two fellows. They are:

Peter M. Weichlein, CEO; Sabine Schleidt, COO; Lorraine Harbison, Programs Director; Patrick Egenhofer, Associate Programs Director; Erica Daye, Associate Operations Director; Steve Scully, Senior Fellow; Ty Baker, Program Manager; Miles Monaco, Development Operations Manager; Olivia Truesdale, Program Manager; Andriana Gregovic, Communications and Events Officer; Abby Haas, Program Officer; Caitlin Rissmiller, Program Officer; Abigail Cate, Program Officer; Nanako Kondo, Program Officer; Gopika Ramesh, India Fellow; Renne Perkins, Administrative Specialist.

It should also be noted, that in 2025, FMC recognized all of its past President's with FMC's Distinguished Service Award. The following former Members have served as Presidents of the organization:

Chronological list of all Presidents of the Former Members of Congress Association:

Hon. Walter H. Judd (R-MN); Hon. Brooks Hays (D-AR); Hon. George Meader (R-MI); Hon. Jeffery Cohelan (D-CA); The Hon. J. Caleb Boggs (R-DE); Hon. Horace R. Kornegay (D-NC); Hon. Charles Brownson (R-MI); Hon. Carlton R. Sickles (D-MD);

Hon. William S. Mailliard (R-CA); Hon. John S. Monagan (D-CT); Hon. Charles E. Chamberlain (R-MI); Hon. Frank E. Moss (D-UT); Hon. J. Gleann Beall, Jr. (R-MD); Hon. James M. Quigley (D-PA); Hon. Edward J. Derwinski (R-IL); Hon. John V. Lindsay (D-NY); Hon. Elford A. Cederberg (R-MI); Hon. Abner J. Mikva (D-IL); Hon. John J. Rhodes (R-AZ); Hon. William D. Hathaway (D-ME).

Hon. Clarence J. Bown (R-OH); Hon. James W. Symington (D-MO); Hon. Philip E. Rupp, (R-MI); Hon. Lindy Boggs (D-LA); Hon. Louis Frey, Jr. (R-FL); Hon. Matthew F. McHugh (D-NY); Hon. John N. Erlernborn (R-IL); Hon. Larry LaRocco (D-ID); Hon. Jack Buechner (R-MO); Hon. Jim Slattery (D-KS); Hon. Jay Rhodes (R-AZ); Hon. Dennis Hertel (D-MI); Hon. Connie Morella (R-MD); Hon. Barbara Kennelly (D-CT); Hon. Cliff Stearns (R-FL); Hon. Martin Frost (D-TX); Hon. Charles Boustany (RI-LA); Hon. L.F. Payne (D-VA); Hon. Barbara Comstock (R-VA).

Communications is a crucial component of any brand in the modern era, and FMC is no different. Analyzing trends, monitoring mentions, and remaining aware of conversations surrounding the organization allow FMC to grow our awareness and ensure we stay relevant in conversations surrounding Congress and Former Members. In 2025, FMC was mentioned in the news and on the social media platform X a total of 522 times, with notable peaks in May during FMC's Statesmanship Awards Celebration, and in September with the launch of FMC's Congressional Study Group on India and the annual Memorial Service.

An important component to review is the estimated reach of an organization, which is the total number of unique individuals who have been exposed to a specific piece of content, such as press releases or articles. FMC and our Congressional Study Groups saw an estimated reach of 1.5 billion in 2025, up 10% from 2024, and experienced significant growth in our coverage in South Korea. Estimated reach is an important metric to consider when seeing the impact of PR and communications efforts, and the audience reached based on the different news platforms that cover the organization. However, it should be kept in mind that estimate reach focuses more on the potential audience reached and is not an accurate count of views. Despite this caveat, it is clear that FMC expanded its audience and coverage around the world in 2025 and will continue to grow in the new year.

Finally, FMC was able to calculate the Advertising Value Equivalence (AVE) of our efforts this year, which is a metric used to estimate the monetary value of public relations efforts by comparing media coverage to the cost of equivalent advertising space. In 2025, FMC achieved over \$12 million in AVE, with a significant rise again in May of 2025. Notably, over half of this AVE was generated in South Korea due to the attention paid to FMC's Congressional Study Group current Member of Congress trip and two Former Member of Congress delegations to the peninsula this year. Our communications monitoring efforts show us that the Republic of Korea maintains a strong connection to the United States and is incredibly interested in FMC and the Congressional Study Group on Korea's efforts to build upon this relationship. Overall, FMC saw growth in reach, awareness, and new trends in viewership in 2025. Taking these lessons and building upon them in 2026 will allow us to have a successful year that amplifies our voice, mission, and audience!

II. FMC PROGRAMMING FOCUSED ON FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

FMC programming can generally be divided into two types of activities: projects

involving Former Members of Congress and those involving Current Members of Congress. Both types of programs engage domestic as well as international audiences. Current Member programs often also extend to senior Congressional Staff, such as Chiefs of Staff or District Directors. Most importantly, all of FMC's programs invite Democrats and Republicans to participate, and all of FMC's projects are impactful and successful because they are based on bipartisanship, commitment to pragmatic policy making, and respectful and civil discourse.

The main objective of programs involving Former Members of Congress is to bring to bear the unique and exceptional experience inherent in FMC's membership and to involve a great variety of audiences in a constructive dialogue about representative democracy. Most of FMC's work in this field focuses on bringing bipartisan groups of Former Members together with university and high school students for a discussion on public service, the Article One branch, being a well informed and active citizen, and the issues of the day. This is mostly accomplished via FMC's flagship civic-education program, Congress to Campus.

In 2025, Congress to Campus continued its commitment to fostering bipartisan dialogue, civic engagement, and public service among thousands of college students across the country. Over the course of three days during the fall and spring semesters, Congress to Campus brings a bipartisan team of former U.S. Representatives and Senators to colleges and universities, giving students a unique opportunity to engage directly with those who have served in Congress and gain candid insights into the workings of our democracy. Each Congress to Campus program is unique and tailored to the topics most important to the host campus. FMC selects Former Members whose backgrounds align with the program's focus areas to ensure they can offer meaningful insights and relevant personal experiences.

This year, Congress to Campus conducted a total of 22 programs, including one at a Historically Black College and University, one at a community college, four at Hispanic-Serving Institutions, two at military service academies, and two international programs in the UK and Germany.

Congress to Campus is impactful for students because it models what civil, substantive political debate should look like. Former Members engage one another, even on the most challenging issues, with respect and thoughtfulness. The program also encourages students to consider careers in public service by offering advice and demonstrating the many pathways to a political career.

Another 2025 achievement is FMC creating and implementing a dedicated Congress to Campus website to serve as a resource for schools, students, and participating Former Members. For campuses, the site offers guidance on how to host a program, from understanding the program model and logistics to providing sample schedules, promotional materials, and planning guides. It is designed to make planning straightforward and to help institutions get the most out of their visit from Former Members.

The website also functions as an educational resource for students. It introduces key concepts central to Congress to Campus, including civic education, the continuity of Congress, and the value of bipartisan cooperation. The site equips participating students with background information to help them prepare before Members arrive on campus, offering tools to ask thoughtful questions and shedding light on important issues.

Every year, Former Members donate between 800 and 1,000 hours to the program.

FMC would like to thank the following Former Members for donating their time to inspire the next generation of Americans to pursue careers in public service. A great many of them participated in multiple Congress to Campus visits during the year:

Hon. Ann Marie Buerkle (R-NY); Hon. Mike Capuano (D-MA); Hon. Sam Copper-smith (D-AZ); Hon. Tom Davis (R-VA); Hon. Peter DeFazio (D-OR); Hon. Donna Edwards (D-MD); Hon. Bill Enyart (D-IL); Hon. Abby Finkenaue (D-IA); Hon. John Faso (R-NY); Hon. Chris Gibson (R-NY); Hon. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA); Hon. Garret Graves (R-LA); Hon. Jim Gerlach (R-PA); Hon. Gil Gutknecht (R-MN); Hon. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO); Hon. Joe Heck (R-NV); Hon. Joe Hoefel (D-PA); Hon. Bob Inglis (R-SC); Hon. Peter Kostmayer (D-PA).

Hon. Annie Kuster (D-NH); Hon. Andy Levin (D-MI); Hon. Dave Loebsack (D-IA); Hon. Marjorie Margolies (D-PA); Hon. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL); Hon. Erik Paulsen (R-MN); Hon. Greg Pence (R-IN); Hon. L.F. Payne (D-VA); Hon. Tom Reed (R-NY); Hon. Dennis Ross (R-FL); Governor Mark Sanford (R-SC); Hon. Bill Sarpalius (D-TX); Hon. Joe Sestak (D-PA); Hon. Chris Shays (R-CT); Hon. John Shimkus (R-IL); Hon. David Skaggs (D-CO); Hon. Robin Tallon (D-SC); Hon. Dave Trott (R-MI); Hon. Fred Upton (R-MI).

As we reflect on this year's programming, we are grateful to the Stennis Center and the Park Foundation for their generous support, which has been instrumental in making Congress to Campus possible. Looking ahead, we're excited to expand Congress to Campus to even more institutions and young Americans next year, with a special focus on incorporating America 250 and the upcoming midterm elections into each program.

An important expansion of FMC's regular Congress to Campus programming has been made possible for several years by the Sumners Foundation in Texas. The Sumners Foundation has been a strong partner of FMC's for many years now, and we're proud to have watched this partnership flourish and grow in new ways in 2025. For the first time ever, FMC organized and hosted three virtual programs for Sumners scholars over the course of the year, each featuring a different pair of Former Members of Congress and covering a new topic relevant to that month.

The first panel, held in February, focused on what to expect from the second Trump Administration and featured Former Members Mike Burgess (R-TX) and Carolyn Bourdeaux (D-GA), moderated by Bob Francis with the Fort Worth Report. The second virtual conversation was in April and welcomed Former Members Bob Gibbs (R-OH) and Kathy Manning (D-NC) and was moderated by FMC Senior Fellow Steve Scully. The pair reflected on the first 100 days of the Trump Administration and analyzed the impacts of the President's policies. Finally, our third virtual conversation in late October welcomed back moderator Bob Francis and featured for the first time two former Senators, Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD). The pair were able to share with the Sumners Scholars their experiences governing in both the House and Senate, important perspectives on bipartisanship, and predictions for the 2026 Mid-term elections.

On October 4th and 5th, FMC hosted students from across Texas and Oklahoma in Dallas, Texas for our annual Policy Weekend, a two-day program where Sumners Scholars listen to a variety of panels featuring our Former Members of Congress and touching on some of the most pressing political topics of today. It is the largest program FMC hosts with the Sumners Foundation

every year. This year, we were proud to be joined by Former Members Charles Boustany (R-LA), Larry Bucshon (B-IN), Dan Kildee (D-MI), Nick Lampson (D-TX), Brenda Lawrence (D-MI), and John Shimkus (R-IL), as well as Steve Scully as our moderator for the week. Over the weekend, almost 100 students listened to five panels of our Former Members: The Legislative Branch and Checks & Balances; Immigration Solutions and Border Security; America First vs. Internationalism; Trade, Tariffs, and the Economy; and breakout panels on Party Past, Present, and Future. They also were able to dine with the Former Members, ask questions directly to the former legislators during Q&A portions of the panel, and speak with them during designated networking portions or before and after panels.

Student participation for both the virtual and the in-person interactions continues to grow year after year, showcasing the success of our programs and the interest students have in participating in this type of frank, civil and productive dialogue. Our Former Members have also shared how thoroughly they enjoy being able to speak with students and answer their questions in a more intimate setting. We look forward to continuing this partnership in 2026.

Not all of FMC's civic education projects engage university students. FMC also brings to the Capitol middle school students from across the country. Every Summer, FMC is proud to partner with Envision by WorldStrides to bring hundreds of students to the United States House of Representatives floor to discuss the importance of civil service and civic education. A small group of Former Members of Congress meet with the students every week to field their questions and give them an opportunity to learn more about life as a public servant as well as working in Congress.

Engaging with future leaders from all over the country is a unique and important task, and these touchpoints have become a yearly tradition for our membership. We are proud to educate on these issues while also providing a platform for the next generation of Americans to engage with their government. In 2025, the following Former Members interacted with our students as we brought them into the House Chamber:

Hon. Tim Roemer (D-IN); Hon. Barbara Comstock (R-VA); Hon. Dan Kildee (D-MI); Hon. Lleana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL); Hon. Mike Kopetski (D-OR); Hon. Toby Roth (R-WI); Hon. Susan Wild (D-PA); Hon. Cheri Bustos (D-IL); Hon. Ken Kramer (R-CO); Hon. Val Demings (D-FL); Hon. Mike Ross (D-AR); Hon. Dave Trott (R-MI); Hon. Greg Pence (R-IN); Hon. Blanche Lincoln (D-AR); Hon. Joe Sestak (D-PA); Hon. Greg Pence (R-IN); Hon. Tom Davis (R-VA); Hon. Steven Palazzo (R-MS).

In addition to FMC's civic education programs and our mission to engage the next generation of America's voters, leaders and public servants, FMC is uniquely qualified to collect and record the invaluable insight that Members of Congress have about our Article One branch and the electoral process. In 2025, that work took many shapes, including numerous townhalls, discussions, media engagements and other opportunities bringing bipartisan groups of Former Members together with the public. One particularly impactful project was made possible by Unite America and focused on the way we elect our representatives.

Beginning in December 2024, FMC partnered with Unite America, a non-profit organization based in Denver, Colorado, with a focus on studying gerrymandering, primary reform, and the impacts these processes have on a legislator's ability to govern effectively. Through this partnership, FMC

interviewed almost two dozen retiring or Former Members of Congress about their experiences campaigning, raising money, being redistricted, and how their time in office was impacted by the demands of reelection. FMC was able to interview a number of Members in December 2024, during the lame duck period of their last year in Congress, granting unfiltered access to their concluding thoughts on the institution while they were preparing for departure. The interview project proceeded into 2025 with over a dozen more interviews with Members of both parties and both chambers. Each interview was conducted by FMC Senior Fellow Steve Scully and was recorded, either on video or audio, for use in further research and analysis.

Throughout the interviews, Members agreed that the disproportionate importance of primary elections is moving both parties to the extremes as Members typically must appear more partisan to successfully push off primary challengers. This issue further manifests itself when the Members arrive at Congress and must consider how a vote will impact their future primary races. The Former Members interviewed also offered practical solutions to these challenges, such as open all-candidate-primaries, rank choice voting, and reforms to the campaign finance system. The findings from these interviews were compiled into a report on FMC's website entitled "Elections and Representation: Insights from Former Members" and each interview is presented in a format to be used by researchers and students as a resource for FMC's Congress to Campus program. Some of the professionally recorded interviews also aired on episodes of "The Briefing with Steve Scully," a SiriusXM radio show that receives hundreds of thousands of listeners across its live and recorded streaming episodes.

As a conclusion to this project, FMC hosted a fireside chat event at the campus of The George Washington University in conjunction with the GW Graduate School of Political Management, in which Steve Scully led Sen. Doug Jones (D-AL) and former Representatives Rodney Davis (R-IL), Garret Graves (R-LA), and Kathy Manning (D-NC) in an open discussion about these challenges and the other structural issues in Congress that are inhibiting a Member's ability to collaborate with colleagues from the other side of the political aisle and best serve his or her constituents. The panelists were also joined by Unite America's Executive Director Nick Trioano, who shared context on the issue and provided substantive solutions for the audience and panelists to consider in their personal and political lives. The event drew an audience of over 100 in-person attendees, including a large number of university students from schools around D.C. and many members of FMC's diplomatic contacts from various embassies. The event was also broadcast live on C-SPAN and posted to C-SPAN's website for subsequent viewing.

FMC would like to thank Unite America for their ongoing support of FMC, and the George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management for their partnership in the roll out of the report. FMC would also like to thank the following Former Members for participating in this project and providing their valuable insights on this important topic:

Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO); Hon. Larry Bucshon (R-IN); Hon. Cheri Bustos (D-IL); Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD); Hon. Lacy Clay (D-MO); Hon. Barbara Comstock (R-VA); Hon. Rodney Davis (R-IL); Hon. Bart Gordon (D-TN); Hon. Garret Graves (R-LA); Sen. Doug Jones (D-AL); Hon. John Katko (R-NY); Hon. Dan Kildee (D-MI); Hon. Derek Kilmer (D-

WA); Hon. Andy Levin (D-MI); Hon. Kathy Manning (D-NC); Hon. Jim Moran (D-VA); Hon. Tim Petri (R-WI); Lleana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL); Hon. John Sarbanes (D-MD); Hon. Brad Wenstrup (R-OH); Hon. Fred Upton (R-MI).

FMC's work involving bipartisan groups of Former Members of Congress mostly takes place in universities, high schools, and public meetings across the United States. There are, in addition, a number of opportunities for Former Members to engage with audiences overseas. FMC has taken the Congress to Campus model and replicated it for university and high school audiences in the United Kingdom, Korea, Japan and Germany, to name just a few. Throughout week-long programs, Former Members encourage conversations oftentimes overlooked in the greater transatlantic dialogue space: a true dialogue with international student audiences about US foreign policy and US politics, and often divisive issues such as environmental policy or global conflict resolution. These international student engagements are made possible by a variety of partners, including the British Library, Amerikahaus, and the European Recovery Program, which is a grant administered by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs.

In addition, for almost a decade, FMC has sent Former Member delegations-or ExDELS to South Korea several times a year. The goal of these delegation is to help Members to understand better the US-South Korean relationship based on the common experience of the Korean War, and also to gain tremendous insight into the strong trade relations and opportunities that tie the two countries, thanks to great discussions with companies such as Korea Zinc, Hyundai or Samsung. These delegations have also played an active part in the annual Asia Leadership Conference, a global security symposium organized by Korea's Chosun Daily. These Korea ExDELS are made possible by Former Member of Congress Jay Kim (R-CA) and his wife Jennifer Ahn as well as the Jay Kim Foundation.

III. FMC PROGRAMMING FOCUSED ON CURRENT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

There are, of course, many synergies between the work involving Former Members and FMC's mission of supporting current Members of Congress and strengthening Congress as an institution. For example, FMC is a longtime sponsor of the Annual Congressional Baseball Game, because it is such a wonderful tradition of bipartisanship, collegiality and Congressional camaraderie. Also, one of FMC's most important undertaking to support the current Congress is an annual event celebrating bipartisanship on Capitol Hill. FMC each year bestows its Annual Statesmanship Awards on two Senators and two Representatives, one from each party, who are committed to pragmatic and civil policy making by putting solutions over partisanship. In 2025, the honorees were Senators CORY BOOKER and TODD YOUNG, and Representatives ED CASE and YOUNG KIM, recognized at a gala evening event at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. The 2026 event is scheduled for April 21st, to be held at the Library of Congress, with confirmed honorees being Senator RAPHAEL WARNOCK, Senator JOHN BOOZMAN, Representative BILL HUIZENGA, and Representative GREGORY MEEKS. The event also appreciates that statesmanship and public service comes in many different varieties, including corporate responsibility. In 2025, FMC recognized Aflac as its corporate honoree, and in 2026 FMC will give its corporate Statesmanship Award to Deutsche Telekom.

The mission of FMC is to create dialogue and bring different points of view together

for productive and informative discussions on a wide-ranging set of issues. Throughout 2025, we implemented this mission in many ways. Thanks to a grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust FMC was able to convene multiple sessions involving current Members and senior Congressional staff in a bipartisan, off-the-record manner in order to promote healthy across-the-aisle dialogue and build relationships within Congress. FMC receives constant feedback from Former Members who wish they had more opportunities to connect with their colleagues of both parties while in Washington, D.C. and this partnership with the Murdock Charitable Trust allowed FMC to put together over a dozen events engaging Members of Congress and Senior Congressional Staff in off-the-record, relationship building events. These events engaged over 50 Members of Congress and over a dozen Senior Congressional Staff in a bipartisan manner on a variety of topics ranging from trade, AI, security, fiscal policy, and energy solutions. FMC would like to thank our partners at the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trusts for their support in fulfilling this mission of building bipartisan relationships and looks forward to continuing this work in 2026.

In a further effort to engage current Members of Congress in thoughtful, fruitful, and engaging conversations with their peers, FMC received support from the Peter G. Peterson Foundation to create a series of breakfast events for Members of Congress to discuss the important issue of the U.S. deficit and national debt. These off-the-record, Chatham House Rules-styled events gathered over a dozen Members of Congress along with subject matter experts from the Peter G. Peterson Foundation and the Concord Coalition to talk through the challenges Congress faces when addressing budgetary problems and practical solutions they can pursue moving forward. The Members learned about the issue at a deeper level, discussed ways to educate their constituents about the severity of the problem, and created new bipartisan relationships that could lead to increased collaboration in Committees across the Hill. FMC looks forward to continuing our partnership with the Peterson Foundation in 2026.

Arguably one of the most important and effective ways in which FMC supports the current Congress in its work is through FMC's Congressional Study Groups. Because FMC is a bipartisan, Congressionally Chartered organization committed to non-advocacy, we are able unlike any other organization to bring current Members together—across the political aisle—with their peers in parliaments and the legislative branches of other countries. These legislative exchanges now include elected representatives and officials in Germany, Korea, Europe, Japan and, as of September 2025, India.

In 2025, FMC's Congressional Study Groups continued our mission to support Congress and provide a forum for bipartisan and candid discussion on timely issues at home and abroad. The Congressional Study Group on India was launched in 2025, welcoming a new cohort of Co-Chairs, Rep. ROB WITTMAN (R-VA) and Rep. DEBORAH ROSS (D-NC) in the House of Representatives. By connecting Congress at the Member and staff levels with their international counterparts, the diplomatic community, academia, and the business community, FMC fosters mutual understanding, personal relationships, and continued presence that is essential for Congress to legislate on behalf of the American people. All this important activity is accomplished through international Member and Staff delegations overseas, roundtable programs here in Washington, as well as regional gath-

erings. The Congressional Study Groups provide an essential and unparalleled forum that brings together elected officials in the United States with their elected counterparts overseas, thus creating a network of peers.

Together, the Study Groups are proud to count over 200 current Representatives and Senators as members, and each Study Group is led by a bipartisan, bicameral group of Co-Chairs. These dedicated Co-Chairs embody the Study Groups' commitment to meaningful and dynamic engagement and take the mission to heart by donating their valuable time and energy to support FMC's programming. Beyond their contributions at official Study Group events, they actively collaborate with embassies and external organizations, participating in panels, attending roundtables, and meeting with numerous visiting delegations to advance the objectives of their respective Study Groups and strengthen the international relationships they foster.

The work of the Study Groups would not be possible without the generous support of a committed group of individuals, organizations, and Business Advisory Council members. Organizations that supported FMC's Study Groups include the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, German Marshall Fund, Korea Society, and Roundglass Foundation. In particular, FMC would like to recognize Mr. Sunny Singh of the Roundglass Foundation, whose support was instrumental to the establishment of the Congressional Study Group on India this year. Additionally, FMC would also like to offer special thanks to its longtime partner, Korea Society President & CEO Thomas Byrne, who has been a champion of the Congressional Study Group on Korea's work and vision for developing this unique, bipartisan forum for expanding ties between the U.S. and Korea. Our Business Advisory Council continues to benefit from the guidance and leadership of Advisory Board Members Anna Schneider of Volkswagen, Brad Knox of Aflac, Jeff Werner of Panasonic, Majida Mourad of M2M Advisors, Nancy Ziuzin Schlegel of Lockheed Martin, and Danny O'Brien of Hanwha QCells America. Amidst economic uncertainties, supply chain difficulties, and energy security, these companies continue to be champions for effective and productive dialogue between our elected parliaments.

In 2025, FMC led 6 international Study Tours for Members of Congress and their Senior Staff, engaged over 600 unique attendees across all Study Group events in Washington and overseas, and held over 100 Study Group-specific events on issues ranging from global security to international trade. Throughout FMC's Congressional Study Groups, 2025 saw a variety of memorable achievements. Notable highlights of these achievements include: In April, Senate Co-Chair Sen. MAZIE HIRONO (D-HI) traveled to Japan for the first time with the Congressional Study Group on Japan; during the year, FMC's Congressional Study Groups welcomed 3 new House Co-Chair: (1) Rep. CHRISSEY HOULAHAN (D-PA), Co-Chair of the Congressional Study Group on Europe, (2) Rep. DEBORAH ROSS (D-NC), Co-Chair of the Congressional Study Group on India, and (3) Rep. ROB WITTMAN (R-VA), Co-Chair of the Congressional Study Group on India; for the first time since 2022, the Congressional Study Group on Japan conducted a Study Tour to Japan for Congressional District Directors, as FMC's programming continues to expand its congressional outreach; for the first time since before the pandemic, the Congressional Study Group on Europe facilitated a Study Tour for Members of Congress, in partnership with the Embassy of Spain; in

October, the Congressional Study Group on Korea was awarded The Korea Society's prestigious James A. Van Fleet Award for deepening bipartisan understanding and cooperation between the United States and Korea and thereby strengthening U.S.-ROK ties.

This work is made possible by many partners to FMC, whether they are US foundations awarding grants to FMC, or the US and international corporations that make up FMC's Business Advisory Council. Specifically, they include:

AARP; Aflac; All Nippon Airways Co., Ltd.; Allianz; American Honda Motor Co., Inc.; B. Braun Medical, Inc.; BASF; Bayer; The Carnegie Corporation; Central Japan Railway Co.; CJ America; Deutsche Telekom Inc.; DHL; The German Marshall Fund of the United States; Glaborgarstroy (GBS); Hanwha Qcells America, Inc.; Hitachi, Ltd.; Hyundai Motor Group; ITOCHU International, Inc.; The Japan US Friendship Commission; JTI USA Inc.; Keidanren; KITA; The Korea Society; LG; Lockheed Martin International.

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The international work of FMC's Congressional Study Groups is further enhanced by a number of embassies in Washington, DC, participating in FMC's Diplomatic Advisory Council. FMC's Diplomatic Advisory Council (DAC) is an informal body of current Ambassadors serving in the nation's capital and provides direct outreach to our strategic allies abroad. With nearly three dozen Ambassadors in our DAC, each member country is active and engaged in almost all aspects of our programming. This year, we added a collection of new Ambassadors to our ranks, including H.E. Petra Schneebauer of Austria, H.E. Maguy Maccario Doyle of Monaco, and H.E. Iztok Mirošič of Slovenia. We are proud to engage with the international community here in DC. The Ambassadors engaged in FMC's Diplomatic Advisory Council include:

H.E. Kevin Rudd, Ambassador of Australia to the U.S.; H.E. Petra Schneebauer, Ambassador of Austria to the U.S.; H.E. Frédéric Bernard, Ambassador of Belgium to the U.S.; H.E. Kirsten Hillman, Ambassador of Canada to the U.S.; H.E. Juan Gabriel Valdés, Ambassador of Chile to the U.S.; H.E. Catalina Crespo Sancho, Ambassador of Costa Rica to the U.S.; H.E. Miloslav Stasek, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the U.S.; H.E. Jesper Møller Sørensen, Ambassador of Denmark to the U.S.; H.E. Jovita Neliupšienė, Ambassador of the European Union to the U.S.; H.E. Leena-Kaisa Mikkola, Ambassador of Finland to the U.S.; H.E. Laurent Bili, Ambassador of France to the U.S.; H.E. Jens Hanefeld, Ambassador of Germany to the U.S.; H.E. Svanhildur Hólm Valsdóttir, Ambassador of Iceland to the U.S.; H.E. Vinay Kwatra, Ambassador of India to the U.S.; H.E. Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ambassador of Ireland to the U.S.; H.E. Mariangela Zappia, Ambassador of Italy to the U.S.

H.E. Shigeo Yamada, Ambassador of Japan; H.E. Kyung-wha Kang, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the U.S.; H.E. Georg

Sparber, Ambassador of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the U.S.; H.E. Nicole Bintner-Bakshian, Ambassador of Luxembourg to the U.S.; H.E. Godfrey Xuereb, Ambassador of Malta to the U.S.; H.E. Maguy Maccario Doyle, Ambassador of Monaco to the U.S.; H.E. Birgitta Tazelaar, Ambassador of the Netherlands to the U.S.; H.E. Rosemary Banks, Ambassador of New Zealand to the U.S.; H.E. Anniken Huitfeldt, Ambassador of Norway to the U.S.; H.E. Jose Manuel Romualdez, Ambassador of the Philippines to the U.S.; H.E. Francisco Duarte Lopes, Ambassador of Portugal to the U.S.; H.E. Sheikh Meshal Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Ambassador of Qatar to the U.S.; H.E. Dan-Andrei Muraru, Ambassador of Romania to the U.S.; H.E. Lui Tuck Yew, Ambassador of Singapore to the U.S.; H.E. Iztok Mirošič, Ambassador of Slovenia to the U.S.; H.E. Angeles Moreno Bau, Ambassador of Spain to the U.S.; H.E. Urban Ahlin, Ambassador of Sweden to the U.S.

This concludes the 2025 report by the Former Members of Congress Association. As required by FMC's Congressional Charter, this report, along with FMC's most recent audited financial statements, will be shared with the House Judiciary Committee. It will also be made available to the public on FMC's website at www.usafmc.org.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. I now yield back my time.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you, Barbara, for this report of FMC's work in 2025. I hope you all will take the time, as Barbara said, to read the more in-depth narrative.

We are proud of all that has been accomplished this year. We, FMC staff and leadership, have spent a lot of time thinking about FMC's role celebrating America's milestone next year, America250—specifically how FMC can engage audiences across the country and even overseas in a discourse about our representative democracy as part of the Nation's semiquincentennial celebration.

As part of our contribution to America250, we want to engage in a dialogue with many different audiences, and we want that dialogue to be credible, inspirational, genuine, and motivating. FMC's exceptional deliverable is an insider's view on the Article I branch and an unparalleled experience of living the notion of consent by the governed.

FMC's first articulation of how we view our contribution to America250 celebration is actually starting right now. We have asked a bipartisan group of former Members to deliver 1 minutes as part of our report to Congress and to share with the public what makes this institution so special and important.

We realize that Congress is not perfect. Nothing is. However, we also know, like no others, how challenging a public service each and every current Member performs, no matter the party. We are in awe of the tremendous power of the Article I branch, and we want to give encouragement and inspiration to the next generation as we are looking back on 250 years.

With that, I will recognize from this chair a bipartisan group of former Members who have asked to deliver short remarks about their experience

serving in this august institution. I realize that other Members in the Chamber may want to speak as well, but in the interest of time, we will have to confine this part of our presentation to the Members I already have on my list.

I now recognize the Honorable Barbara Comstock of Virginia for 1 minute.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. As we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary, it is difficult to consider the principles that unite us when we do hear so much noise that divides us.

However, recent history does tell when Congress got its work done despite contentious times. I recall during the Presidential impeachment and a government shutdown during Bill Clinton's time when Republicans and Democrats got welfare reform and tax reform done and balanced the budget at the same time. After 9/11, despite a 50–50 2000 election and a 5–4 Supreme Court, Congress stood on the steps in front here after three planes hit our homeland and vowed never again would that happen, and we worked together at least long enough that we have never experienced a major terrorist attack again on our homeland ever since.

I know when I came to Congress in 2015, despite partisanship, I worked together with people on issues like sexual harassment, the opioid epidemic, gang violence, and STEM initiatives. Congress can and should be a body that can get things done working together, and we can't let the loud voices that divide us win out.

Those who get things done have written the story for 250 years, and that is the story that FMC can and will continue to tell. Working together, we are the ones who can tell that story.

Ms. EDWARDS. I now recognize the Honorable Kathy Manning of North Carolina.

Ms. MANNING. Madam Speaker, I rise to call out the growing danger of anti-Semitism across the country and around the world. Anti-Semitism is no longer restricted to the fringes of society. It has become mainstream. Hateful stereotypes, lies, and despicable caricatures of Jews have become commonplace among famous influencers, political activists on college campuses, spread on social media, and on podcasts. Anti-Semitism has become normalized. This is not a Democratic problem, and it is not a Republican problem. It is an American problem, an Australian problem, a European problem, and a global problem.

Yesterday, Jews were murdered at a Hanukkah celebration in Sydney, Australia. Last month, synagogues were attacked in New York City and in Los Angeles. Last May, two young Jews were shot dead outside a museum in this very city.

This is what it means to globalize the intifada.

History teaches us what happens when anti-Semitism is ignored, excused, or politicized. Hatred, demonization, and dehumanization spreads to

other groups, eats away at democracy, and the results can be catastrophic.

This House must speak out and take action on a bipartisan basis to stop the spread of this ancient virus. The responsibility to combat anti-Semitism cannot rest with the Jewish community. It is a national problem that must be addressed by every Member of this august body.

Madam Speaker, I had intended to give remarks on the importance of a bipartisan effort to combat partisan gerrymandering, which I believe undermines trust in Congress, but the events of the weekend required different remarks.

I would like to submit my original remarks for the RECORD.

Madam Chair, I rise to address an issue that should be of concern to Republicans and Democrats alike: partisan gerrymandering. In too many districts, the outcome of an election is decided before a single vote is cast.

The result?

Accountability to voters is replaced with party allegiance,

Candidates cater to the extremes, and

Compromise is viewed as surrender rather than the underpinnings of good governance.

With changing maps, District offices are shut down, constituent work is disrupted, people don't even know who their representative is.

It's no wonder voters have lost faith in Congress.

We are in a race to the bottom—new maps in Texas prompted new maps in California. Other states have joined this war of mutual destruction.

Here's to the Hoosiers, who have said no to this game.

I call on Republicans and Democrats to end this battle. Our future depends on working together to solve problems that impact our economy, our safety, and our sense of community.

Faith in Congress will only be restored when Americans believe that both parties care more about fighting for all Americans than winning rigged elections.

Ms. EDWARDS. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Indiana, Larry Buchson.

Mr. BUCSHON. It is an honor to be at this podium again. When I reflect on my time in Congress and what this House means, I realize that less than 13,000 people in the history of the country have had the opportunity that I have had and I have today. I haven't forgotten that.

I came from Kincaid, Illinois, a town of 1,400 people. My dad was a coal miner.

If you talk to Members of Congress, those stories are common to people from everywhere, people from all walks of life.

Since the first Congress in 1789, this House has been closest to the people. It is the people's House. As was mentioned, it was only by the consent of the governed that what happens here establishes its relevance.

Looking forward, I can't tell you how optimistic I am about the future of this country because of the people who are in this room and the people who currently are serving and the history of

how Americans kind of come to the top. I have full confidence, again, that this will occur.

We have the best form of government that has ever been designed. It will persevere to our 250th anniversary of the Declaration this next summer and for another 250 years or more.

Ms. EDWARDS. The Chair recognizes the Honorable Dan Kildee of Michigan.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Chair, thanks to the Former Members of Congress Association for bringing us together and for being an opportunity for those who us who served here together to continue to enjoy one another's friendship and company.

I am going to reference one of my classmates and my roommate here in Congress, Derek Kilmer, who is not with us this morning. He said many times, and I want to repeat it, he said that they told him when he came here that if you want a friend in Washington, get a dog.

He also went on to say something I agree with, that that was not his experience at all. Some of the closest friendships I have developed in my lifetime were born of the pressure-filled moments that we shared here together—people that I agreed with and people that I disagreed with.

I served here for 12 years, but I had the very good fortune of having a bird's-eye view of this place for a lot longer than that. My uncle, Dale Kildee, with whom most of you in this room served, those of you who served here, was here for 36 years. I watched him often from that gallery. I also watched him up close and learned from him that you can fight hard for the positions you believe in. You can be passionate about the things you care about and still treat people with whom you have differences with dignity and respect.

I hope when I came here that I did something to live up to the example that he set. It is an important example not just because it is a message that we send to the rest of the country, but it is also really important in order to get things done here. When I was here many years ago, early in my term my hometown of Flint faced its most difficult moment in its history, a water crisis, lead poisoning thousands and thousands of young kids in my hometown. I needed to get something done to help that community recover.

I was in the minority at that time. I served in the minority and in the majority here, and I have a preference. But it was people like Fred Upton, my very good friend from the other side of the aisle, who stood with me when I needed help from the other side of the aisle to get help for my own hometown. That made a difference.

It wasn't just Fred. It was many others. It was actually Speaker Ryan and then Leader PELOSI who worked together to help me get that help done.

People ask if I miss this place. I do. I mostly miss the friendships and the relationships, but what I take away

from it—it is an important obligation that I hope we all share—is to go out and talk to people about the times that we did succeed here; that our differences are not something that ought to define our time here. Our differences should be celebrated not denigrated.

The notion of this place is to get as many different points of view as we possibly can in the same room to sit at a table of goodwill and try to find a path forward.

As I now have left Congress, one of my roles is to teach at Central Michigan University. What I hope to do in that role is to explain to those students that despite what they see and hear on the news is that this place is still a place for people of different points of view and different perspectives to come together at a table of goodwill and try to chart a path forward for our country. It still works. We just need to make sure we explain that to people and demonstrate that to people. The Former Members of Congress is a great vehicle to do that.

Ms. EDWARDS. The Chair recognizes the Honorable Fred Upton of Michigan.

Mr. UPTON. I thank my friend, Dan Kildee, not only did we work well together here, we have actually worked together since we both left. Thank goodness for cell phones that we didn't have a lot of years ago.

It is nice to be back in this respected Chamber with so many of my friends. I retired in 2023 after serving southwest Michigan for 36 years. Yesterday, I gave the commencement speech at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and I reflected somewhat on my career in the body, reflecting the strong bipartisan actions that I undertook from my first day of office.

You see, I learned a lot from my years in the Reagan White House, working with a very popular President who, guess what, had an amazing run leading our country through some very difficult times, and he did it with bipartisan support. He won 49 States when he ran for reelection in 1984. Yes, he worked across the aisle, and for the most part with a Democratic Congress.

I took a page from his success, and with very few exceptions worked with the Republicans and Democrats on the many issues of the day with very few regrets.

Today, we have so many issues that need this body's attention. The laundry list is long, and time is short. However, the challenge that I gave to the students yesterday and to this body today is pretty simple as we pass the torch to the next generation: We need leaders for today and tomorrow. This is not the time to stand by. It is the time, in fact, to stand up.

Frederick Douglass said: "I would unite with anyone to do right and with nobody to do wrong."

We need these graduates that I spoke to yesterday, and we need this body to act responsibly on the issues of today and tomorrow. Let's get to work. My closing remarks yesterday, of course, were: Go Blue. Beat the Bucks.

Ms. EDWARDS. The Chair recognizes the Honorable Val Demings of Florida.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Madam Speaker, I made a decision a long time ago to dedicate my life to public service. As the daughter of a maid and a janitor, I could have never imagined that I would be elected to serve in Congress. I am grateful for my parents' sacrifices and also grateful for Congress' commitment throughout history to pass laws that gave greater opportunities to all of America's sons and daughters.

I was honored during my three terms to join my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass legislation that I know will make a difference for generations to come; legislation like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which includes massive investment in our roads and in our bridges, broadband, and clean energy; legislation like the CHIPS and Science Act; legislation like the Safer Communities Act to address gun violence; and legislation that takes better care of our veterans like the PACT Act.

Since its inception, only about 12,500 people have served in Congress, what a privilege. When we put our heads and our hearts together, history proves that Congress can do some amazing things and make life better and safer for the American people.

Ms. EDWARDS. The Chair recognizes the Honorable Larry LaRocco of Idaho.

Mr. LAROCCO. Madam Speaker, it is a great honor to be back in the well of the House that I revere and where memories I cherish occurred. I am grateful for the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress for the recognition of the work I did for our great group of formers.

There is a common thread that links those of us who have served in this House and the Senate: public service.

The strictly bipartisan programs of the FMC are intended to reach broad audiences about our commitment to public service.

I found as a Member of Congress that I possessed two things that could not be diluted: my vote and my word. I was entrusted with a vote to represent the values of approximately 700,000 constituents. That vote belonged to the people of my district and was not intended to be controlled by the President, congressional leadership, or an interest group, and my word needed to be trusted by my colleagues.

Our Article I responsibilities obligated us to form alliances within and outside party affiliations. Bipartisanship is the glue that binds our unique form of democracy. We are not a parliamentary system that locks us in with strict party or personal loyalty. Our country is calling for a shattering of blatant partnership that holds us back from truly representing the needs of our great country.

While a Member of this body, I attempted to conduct myself by the words: "Do right. Risk consequences." This guiding phrase served me well then and now.

Ms. EDWARDS. The Chair recognizes the Honorable Tim Petri of Wisconsin on behalf of Cliff Stearns of Florida.

Mr. PETRI. I am reading the remarks of our former colleague, Chris Stearns from Florida, who titled his speech: "A Call for Civility and Collaboration."

As Former Members of Congress and the Nation celebrate our 250th anniversary, he writes, we need to remind ourselves how important public service is and the constant need today for bipartisanship, friendship, civility, and collaboration in Congress.

During my 24 years in Congress, I can remember many times when I worked with Democrats for the benefit of my constituency and of our Nation. Along with way, I made many Democratic friends such as Tom McMillen, Bart Gordon, Eddie Towns, Anna Eshoo, and Tom Downey. When I left Congress, I was so pleased to join Former Members of Congress as a Member and later to serve as its President.

What a joy it was to show up at my first board meeting and see Democrats and Republicans working together no matter what their political ideology was for the overall success of Former Members of Congress.

I believe the American people deserve better than a government constantly at war with itself. Our first President in his Farewell Address feared political parties becoming "tribal machines," to use his words. Civility and collaboration should be the cornerstone of service if you wish to serve in Congress today.

That is also the spirit of what we are doing here at Former Members of Congress.

Ms. EDWARDS. The Chair recognizes the Honorable L.F. Payne of Virginia.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, shortly after I was elected to represent Virginia's Fifth Congressional District, I learned of the Sandy River Reservoir. It was a local project which was much-needed to provide drinking water in my district. The county had spent millions of its taxpayer dollars building a dam and clearing a site only to be told by the Corps of Engineers that it could not be filled because it violated legislation on wetlands. The project sat unfilled for years and years as a monument to the failure of government to serve the people.

My Transportation Committee was working on transportation reauthorization, then known as ISTEA, and I worked on a bipartisan and collaborative basis with my colleagues and with the leadership of the committee, Norm Mineta and Bud Shuster at the time. We inserted language requiring the Corps to fill that reservoir. I worked along with Senator John Warner, a Republican from Virginia, who did the same thing in the Senate bill, and we passed the bill. President Bush 41 signed the bill, about which, incidentally, he said was one of the best things he did during his Presidency. Today, the Sandy River Reservoir is a beautiful 750-acre body of water providing

drinking water to thousands of Virginians and is recognized as one of the best freshwater fisheries in the Eastern United States.

Bipartisanship, collaboration, and congressional action, the Congress working for the people as it should, and may it always be so.

Point of personal privilege, I am joined today by my wife, Susan; my daughter, Anna; and my grandson, Ben Fife, who is 6 years old and who is in the Capitol for the very first time. It is my hope that Ben and his generation will visit this Capitol often and will provide the leadership that will be needed just as all of us have in our generation.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you all for these really wonderful insights, anecdotes, and celebration of the Article I branch. You have given us the perfect setting as FMC commences the America250 programing.

I now recognize Barbara Comstock, again, for concluding remarks.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Madam Speaker, I would just like to mention to you as when the Speaker opened our program today, he really implored us to focus on the civility that FMC is known for. He mentioned that when he came here in 2018, he was so focused on that. That is something that FMC very much is focused on and does a lot of our work on because it is a little easier when we leave to work together.

Whether it is dealing with anti-Semitic violence, that was mentioned here today by our colleagues, or gun violence, which is all too present which we tragically saw this weekend—when you have college students not just tragically to hear of school shootings in our college where two students at Brown who had already dealt with gun violence when they were in high school are now facing it again in college—or threats of violence to public officials. We do studies on this at FMC where we are seeing the rising threats of violence against public officials that it is causing our Members to leave Congress.

When we field studies on this, we are seeing many public officials are now leaving government service because of these threats of violence, and they are becoming exponentially more frequent.

This need for more civility is something that we are seeing a lot more discussion of. Just last week you had a very good discussion between Governor Cox of Utah and Governor Shapiro of Pennsylvania, both of whom have been dealing with this in their own State. Governor Shapiro was a victim of this in Pennsylvania, and Governor Cox, of course, is dealing with this in Utah. We need to have more of these discussions. I think as we are dealing with our 250th anniversary, this is very much a discussion that we need to have because the civility is what keeps our democracy, if we are going to keep it, which is something that is very important to us.

We all want our grandchildren to feel safe.

I know 3 years ago on this Christmas I had gone to visit Australia, and I was on Bondi Beach with my grandchildren. I have to say I felt that is a much safer place in Australia. They hadn't dealt with violence like this in over 30 years. Their immediate response in Australia was: We are going to take action, not just thoughts and prayers. They are going to take action.

We have to take action in this body when we have situations like this.

We as FMC can help those kinds of actions, and we hope we will.

Let me conclude by thanking two incredibly important groups of people without whom none of the things you just heard about would be possible. They are our outstanding professionals working at FMC, the folks on staff as well as some of our interns who are here with us today. Please seek them out and let them know how great a job they are all doing.

I made a point of including all of their names in the written report that we have submitted for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD earlier this morning.

My thanks also to our exceptional board of directors. I want to especially highlight the officers who make up our executive committee and are so invaluable to me as FMC's president.

They are Donna Edwards of Maryland, Dennis Ross of Florida, Loretta Sanchez of California, and L.F. Payne of Virginia.

I also have submitted all the board members' names for the RECORD.

Let me share two 2026 dates that I hope all Members will add to their calendars. On January 30 and 31, FMC is hosting a regional meeting in Miami. We hope that you can join us, especially Members from my class who were first sworn into Congress in this very Chamber 10 years ago.

April 21 is the date of our 29th annual Statesmanship Award Celebration which will be hosted at the Library of Congress. We are excited to recognize the public service and bipartisan work of Senators BOZEMAN and WARNOCK and Representatives HUIZENGA and MEEKS as well as Deutsche Telekom as our corporate honoree.

For those and any other events FMC is working on, please seek out an FMC team member if you would like to participate. I hope all of you, whether former Members or current Members not returning for the 120th Congress, will join us immediately after this program concludes for an informal coffee reception in H-120. For our retiring Members, this will be a great opportunity to connect with former Members, all of whom have gone through the professional and personal transition off the Hill that you are about to embark upon.

I will quote a former Member who called me up about 6 months after he had retired. He was very mad at me for not telling me how much fun it was after he had retired and why I hadn't encourage him earlier.

Please come and meet with us.

We will also be joined by the Capitol Historical Society, a great partner of ours and an organization that you all should be actively engaged with also. Over the years many of you have had a chance to meet and work with the Historical Society's president, Jane Campbell. Jane is also retiring. While she can't be with us this morning, I do thank her for her outstanding work and for her great partnership with FMC.

We are excited to welcome her replacement this morning, Roswell Encina, who spent many years with the Library of Congress and has been appointed president of the Society. We are excited to work with him in the years to come.

With that, I thank you all for joining us this morning, and I yield back my time to the Chair.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you so much, Barbara, for this report. Most importantly, thank you for your thoughtful and exemplary leadership of the FMC.

The Chair again wishes to thank the Former Members of the House for their presence here today.

On behalf of FMC, I thank all the congressional staff who have helped make today's presentation every year possible. You have been a terrific resource, and we really appreciate all you have done.

The meeting stands adjourned.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MOORE of Utah) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

Holy God, we seek Your encouragement and Your consolation, for as people of faith, striving side by side, we are deeply troubled by events at home and abroad that target believers of any faith. When those who celebrate the season of light and hope are extinguished like the very candles just lighted, we all suffer.

Let us not, O Lord, be intimidated by the opponent, the adversary, who seeks to silence the voices lifted up to You in prayer. Rather, may we persevere in prayer that would unite us to share in Your spirit, a spirit of compassion and sympathy, and foster mutual love among us and work together for the common good, that we may be of one mind to stand against evil.

Let it start here—that in our daily endeavors, we would do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit. But even here, may we look not to our own interests but to the interests of others. In humility, may we regard others as better than ourselves and serve You even as we serve them.

No matter how distant or close we may be to the events that have tran-

spired this weekend, may we each realize that within our own spheres of influence, if we are faithful to the example of love and sacrifice You have given us, then we also share in the divine power to bring forth peace.

In Your sovereign name we pray,
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

RECOGNIZING NITTANY LEATHERNECKS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Nittany Leathernecks' contribution to Christmas throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Nittany Leathernecks Detachment of the Marine Corps League is a community service organization composed of active, retired, and former Marines. Since 1947, the mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program has been to collect new, unwrapped toys through October, November, and December each year and distribute them as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community.

The Nittany Leathernecks Detachment coordinates Toys for Tots for Centre County. The detachment works with the Centre County Adult Services Office, which coordinates with the Centre County food pantries to identify needy children and to distribute toys.

The Nittany Leathernecks campaign annually provides a Christmas gift experience to more than 9,000 children.

Mr. Speaker, I thank these selfless Marines for their service to our country and their dedication to uplifting our communities.

AFFORDABILITY CRISIS IN AMERICA

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, today I express my outrage about the affordability crisis in American healthcare.

Republican leaders have failed to extend the expiring tax credits that help people afford their insurance. Consumers affected will face an average increase in their premium costs of 114 percent next year.

Rather than making healthcare more affordable and effective, Republican leaders and President Trump passed their big, ugly bill that kicks 10 million Americans off of Medicaid. It increases healthcare costs for 5 million small business owners and self-employed workers. It fails to extend critical tax credits. This is all to give billions of dollars of tax credits to the wealthiest Americans.

Time is running out, as we all know. I urge my Republican colleagues to do the right thing and work with Democrats to make healthcare more affordable and more effective for Americans.

EXPRESSING RECOGNITION FOR THOSE WOUNDED BY ISIS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Americans join President Donald Trump in expressing heartfelt recognition of the three great patriots killed and those wounded by ISIS in Syria.

Iowa National Guard Sergeants William Nathaniel Howard and Edgar Brown Torres-Tovar, as well as a civilian interpreter, were remembered by Mouaz Moustafa of the Syrian Emergency Task Force, who condemned the ISIS, Iranian, and Russia collaboration.

President Trump is being proven a visionary to give Syria a chance with U.S.-Syria full military cooperation and pledged serious retaliation, while praising Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa for his efforts to defeat ISIS.

Ambassador Tom Barrack, the Trump envoy for Syria, correctly cites: "Defeating ISIS on Syrian soil . . . with local forces is actively shielding America from far greater threats."

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Trump is reinstituting peace through strength, revealing war criminal Putin lies, insulting and mocking Trump, as Putin attacks utility infrastructures to freeze Ukrainians as Stalin starved Ukrainians.

We extend our sympathies for Brown University college Republican vice president, Ella Cook, of the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, Alabama; and Uzbek American, Mukhammad Aziz Umurzokov, of Virginia.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair