

They will do it regardless of what anybody on this side of the aisle says.

We have nothing to do with what they do, but I can tell you this: We have suffered because two Senators would not vote to pass legislation that could have made a difference in the lives of the American people as well as in the lives of specific people who have suffered great injustices, great injustices, grave injustices, lives lost.

I believe that the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act would save lives. Voters would receive a better path to getting their votes into the process. More of them would participate.

I am not saying the election was rigged, none of that. What I am saying is that we had legislation that people would have appreciated, and we could have marketed that legislation by simply saying here is what we accomplished that benefits you at a different level.

Yes, we passed the infrastructure bill. It is a great bill. Yes, we passed the CHIPS and Science Act. I am glad we did it. These are the kinds of kitchen-table issues, this is the kitchen-table legislation, that people were talking about, and the lack of seeing this legislation passed dampened the enthusiasm of key aspects of the Democratic base.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to know there are some people who now want to back off of this legislation. They want to try to become Republican lite. That is what I call it. We have to be ourselves. This is what has been important to our base. We have to stay with what has been important to our base.

There is nothing wrong with any one of these issues. Nothing has changed. We still need them. America needs them. America wants them. We just have to pass this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I am always grateful to have this opportunity to speak. It means something to me because I don't hate the country. I love this country. That is why I want to improve it with this legislation. It means something to me. I am proud to say that I stand here in this place to speak on behalf of people who cannot speak for themselves, and I pray that one day we will be able to say that we were there to vote, to take maybe hard votes and pass legislation that makes a difference.

Mr. Speaker, I guarantee you, if my colleagues on the other side run into a roadblock, they will do as I said.

Our time will come again. We will have to take advantage of the time.

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

#### COMMEMORATING ANTHONY PESCETTI

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRANK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to commemorate the life of Anthony

Pescetti, of Granite Bay, who passed away unexpectedly in early December.

Anthony Pescetti lived a life of service. He was an elected member of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, serving 7 years, from 1987 to 1994.

Later, he served two terms in the California State Assembly, from 1998 to 2002.

During his time in public service, Assembly Member Pescetti was well-regarded for the level of communication that he brought to the office and was considered fair and easy to approach. He took pride in listening and keeping in touch with his constituents, holding monthly breakfasts for the public in each community of his district.

Assembly Member Pescetti was also an advocate for his district and secured various victories, such as for public safety and recreation, during his tenure.

Assembly Member Pescetti followed his internal compass. He decided not to run for reelection in 2002, and after 4 years of training, he was ordained deacon with the Sacramento Catholic Diocese. He went on to serve at St. Mel Parish, St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, and later at Presentation Parish in Sacramento.

Anthony loved people, and people loved him. He put a tremendous amount of work and effort toward his community to improve their quality of life.

He also enjoyed his family life with his wife, Kathy, and their son and daughter, Anthony and Sarina. The world was a richer place with Anthony Pescetti, and we will sincerely miss him.

#### RECOGNIZING CHIEF RICK BARTEE

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize retiring Roseville Fire Department Chief Rick Bartee for his years of service in the Roseville area.

Rick Bartee's devoted career of service to the Roseville community and his country has spanned over four decades, including the last 9 years as chief of the Roseville Fire Department.

Chief Bartee's longstanding commitment to public safety goes back to the age of 18 when he first joined the fire service. He built a strong educational foundation, earning his bachelor's of applied science degree, studying public safety and emergency management at Grand Canyon University.

Before embarking on his service to the city of Roseville, Chief Bartee had a decorated career in several capacities, including his over three decades of service for the Phoenix Fire Department.

Over the course of his tenure, Chief Bartee conducted the duties of engineer, captain, battalion chief, shift commander, managing the Homeland Defense Bureau, deputy chief, and many others.

Chief Bartee's dedication to public safety also went beyond his department and region. Throughout his time in the fire service, he also served on FEMA's urban search and rescue team.

Chief Bartee was onsite at some of the most destructive disasters our country has seen, providing much-needed response and relief. He sifted through the rubble at Ground Zero after 9/11, responded to the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster, aided along the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina, and responded to many other catastrophes during his service to the task force. He has demonstrated selflessness in his deployments, locating and extricating disaster victims.

Chief Bartee's experience and scope of duties over his accomplished career, in conjunction with his devotion to service, enabled him to be an exemplary leader as chief of the Roseville Fire Department.

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Over the last 9 years, Chief Bartee has been steadfast in his leadership in overseeing 130 firefighters in the department.

During his tenure as fire chief, Rick also performed the duties of Incident Support Team Leader of the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Task Force. Chief Bartee's expertise in specialized training and disaster relief has truly brought invaluable knowledge and experience to the region.

Chief Bartee's lifetime dedication to service and public safety will leave a longstanding legacy, as his selfless leadership will benefit the Roseville area for many, many years to come.

The unwavering commitment to the public and leadership by example of people like Chief Rick Bartee ensures the Roseville area will remain a wonderful and safe place to live.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives, it is a great honor and privilege to recognize Roseville Fire Chief Rick Bartee for his career in public service. I join the Roseville community in wishing him the very best in retirement.

#### OPTIMISM FOR CALIFORNIA

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, near the beginning of last year, I rose on the floor of this House to say a few words about my home State of California and how it was on potentially a path back to sanity, and how that opportunity lay ahead of us.

The reason for that optimism was that there were two potential policy changes then being considered that could set our State on an entirely new course when it comes to the key issues of public safety and homelessness.

California voters were about to consider Proposition 36, an initiative to make crime illegal again in California by largely reversing the disastrous proposition known as Prop 47.

Then there was a case before the United States Supreme Court, which I wrote an amicus brief for, called the Grants Pass case that would potentially liberate our communities from a Ninth Circuit decision that made it virtually impossible for them to clear out homeless encampments.

These two opportunities together presented a path back to law and order,

sanity and livability in California, especially in our major cities. Of course, we were victorious on both counts.

With respect to Prop 36, despite the Governor, the supermajority doing everything they possibly could to stop it from passing, California voters gave it a smashing victory, almost 70 percent of the vote, passing it in each and every one of California's 58 counties.

The U.S. Supreme Court in the Grants Pass case overturned the Ninth Circuit's existing Boise decision and said that our communities once again have the ability to regulate encampments and to stop homeless from camping in our parks, on our sidewalks, around schools, and in our public spaces.

I am very pleased at this point to be able to say that the prediction as to the potentially transformative nature of these changes that I made back then is turning out to be true. I want to cite just a few examples today of how the passage of Prop 36 and the decision in Grants Pass are already serving to turn California around.

Here are just a few recent headlines. From KRON San Francisco: Fremont police credit Prop 36 for nine shoplifting arrests.

CBS San Francisco: Petaluma theft suspects arrested, one with prior convictions subject to Prop 36 charges.

KTLA-TV in Los Angeles: Man charged with drug possession now facing consequences of recently passed Prop 36.

From the San Francisco Examiner: Shoplifter at Brawley Walmart faces jail because Prop 36 passed.

KTLA-TV in Los Angeles: Southern California woman facing enhanced charges with Prop 36 now in effect.

Victorville Daily Press: San Bernardino County theft suspects face potential increased penalties under Prop 36.

KXTV Sacramento: Folsom police arrest 30 people in retail theft sting, including two with possible Prop 36.

KRON, San Francisco: San Francisco DA files charges in city's first Prop 36 case.

KXTV Sacramento: Crackdown on retail theft continues after passage of Prop 36.

KCRA Sacramento: Yuba City police say man caught stealing packages will face felony charges, citing Prop 36.

The list goes on and on. One sting operation resulted in 110 arrests of people who will now finally face consequences because crime is once again illegal in California. Keep in mind, the law has only been in effect now for a few weeks.

There was even an example where there was dash cam footage of a suspect who had been arrested and then was surprised to learn that stealing was once again a felony in California and expressed dismay about these new laws.

Let this serve as a public service announcement to potential thieves in California that crime is illegal once again in our State, and there will be consequences for criminal activity.

On top of that, in the wake of the Grants Pass decision on homelessness, we have seen a number of communities actually start to clean up encampments and to reclaim their public spaces.

For example, in Stockton, homeless under an overpass were given 72 hours' notice of a clearing and were notified they would be arrested if they refused to leave.

In San Francisco, multiple clearings are now occurring every day. Much of the debris being removed, by the way, is either drugs or human waste.

In San Jose, around 100 people were removed from the airport.

In Santa Ana, homeless were cleared from private railroads, and five were arrested. It turns out the arrestees had prior convictions for drugs and murder.

In L.A., 50 to 60 people were removed from a beach and healthcare workers arrived with police to assist with any medical issues the homeless were having.

The benefits of this are twofold. Number one, it is restoring a sense of order to our public spaces so that people feel safe going there again, so they don't serve to spawn further criminal activity; and, number two, it is giving us an opportunity to get homeless individuals into shelters, get a roof over their heads, and get them the help that they need.

With these two developments, with crime now being illegal again in California and with our communities reclaiming our public spaces, I am more optimistic about our State's future than I have been in a very long time. I can tell that the people of California are truly ready to move our State in a new direction.

#### CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE SPECIAL SESSION

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, as we speak, the California legislature has gavelled in a special emergency session of its legislature. You might say, well, of course they have, L.A. is burning to the ground right now.

However, it turns out that is not actually what this special session is about. No, no. The legislature has gavelled into a special session called by Gavin Newsom to provide millions of dollars in funding for filing lawsuits against the incoming Trump administration. That is what their priority is at this very moment.

Mr. Speaker, there could not be a starker illustration of the abject political failure that has gotten our State to this point and that has served to bring about the horrifying scenes that the whole country is seeing on their television sets right now and that folks in Los Angeles are suffering through.

I want to go over a few of the failures that have gotten us to this point, but I do want to say first that my prayers are with the people in L.A., the victims of this horrifying apocalyptic set of fires, with over 100,000 people under evacuation orders, with at least five—sadly, probably more—people who have

lost their lives and their families, and with our firefighters and first responders who are working around the clock doing everything they possibly can to get this blaze under control.

I am truly grateful for all of the communities in California and across the entire country that have come together to try to help the L.A. area in this hour of dire need. It is appreciated beyond measure, and I thank them.

After we do manage to get the fire under control, there are going to be a lot of questions that need answering. Indeed, even though we don't know the specific cause of each fire, we can already identify the failures that we know have contributed to these conflagrations, these catastrophic events that have hit our communities time and time again.

Our politicians have obsessed over things like banning lawnmowers, banning leaf blowers, all the while neglecting our forests and leaving our communities vulnerable. In fact, when it comes to the forests, it is worse than neglect. The State and, frankly, the Federal Government have put up unnecessary hurdles to doing proper forest management, to clearing vegetation, to doing prescribed burns, which has turned many of our forests and areas adjoining residential areas in many cases into tinderboxes and caused fires that have in many cases become truly catastrophic, community-destroying events, and we have seen it happen, sadly, time and time again.

The perversity of it all is that these restrictions on being able to manage our forests—which have decimated the timber industry, by the way—are imposed in the name of the environment, but nothing could be worse for the environment than a catastrophic wildfire.

Indeed, when you look at all of the emissions that are saved by every single emissions reduction program that California has, all of that gets wiped out many times over when you have a catastrophic wildfire, so there simply could not be a more backwards policy.

In fact, last year, in the fall, a decision was made to halt prescribed burns. Now, we don't yet know if that would have made a difference here, but we do know that the lack of doing prescribed burns in a systematic, efficient, and timely way has contributed to this problem.

To make matters worse, Governor Newsom, when he came into office, started claiming that he was doing forest management, but he wasn't telling the truth. An investigation by Capital Public Radio, the local NPR affiliate, found that Newsom had exaggerated the amount of forest management work that had been done, the number of acres treated, he had exaggerated that number by a staggering 690 percent.

Our political leaders in California have allowed millions of acres to become overgrown and thereby left our communities in a vulnerable condition.

Not only that their mismanagement of our water supply has, among other things, diminished our capacity to respond to wildfires.

First of all, it has been decades since California has built significant new water storage, not since the State water project. Secondly, even the water that we do have, when it comes down, much of it gets diverted intentionally into the ocean, again, supposedly for environmental reasons.

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I can tell you that in 2023, when we had record storms in California, I visited the site of the Folsom Dam, and you had water cascading out of the dam, 10,000 cubic feet per second, almost all of it going eventually into the ocean.

At that time, by the way, we had a flood emergency declared, of course. Yet, somehow we were also still under a drought emergency. Californians were told, you are not allowed to water your lawn. The legislature was passing draconian restrictions on indoor water use to 25, 30 gallons a day.

Businesses were banned from having lawns in front of their property. In some parts of the State, you had to have a low-flow device for your shower head, and then they would punish you if you used too much water when you took a shower, if you didn't take a 5-minute shower.

All the while, we are sending staggering amounts of water into the ocean, and we are failing to build the storage that would actually catch the water and preserve it for when we need it.

Another example, relevant to the situation in L.A., the California Coastal Commission actually rejected the building of a desalination plant just a couple of years ago.

California, over the course of many years, has, in a political way, chosen to allow its forests to become overgrown and to impose artificial scarcity on its water supply.

At the same time, our State, and many of our municipalities, such as Los Angeles, have had completely backward priorities and have demonstrated a total failure of just basic competence when it comes to government performance and the provision of services.

That was highlighted very clearly in this case. When you had the Los Angeles Fire Department telling the city, do not deprive us of our funding. Yet, the city decided to do it anyway. The fire department said that the reduction in funding would severely limit the department's capacity to prepare for, train for, and respond to large-scale emergencies.

As the city council, the mayor, were deciding not to fully fund the fire department, they had plenty of time for things like passing a resolution reaffirming Los Angeles as a sanctuary city. It was already a sanctuary city. It is already a sanctuary State, but they

decided that was their priority, not to prepare for the risk of wildfire, not to fully fund the fire department, but to pass another resolution making itself a sanctuary city, yet again.

We will be learning more, I expect, about how it possibly could be that we have fire hydrants that are not working, that water isn't coming out of them, and how we didn't have the necessary personnel on hand despite the high wind conditions. It serves to underline on the one hand the misguided priorities, and on the other, the lack of basic competence.

Additionally, Los Angeles and California, more generally, have continued to lead the Nation in homelessness. California has roughly half the unsheltered homeless in the United States. There is a whole host of reasons that this is not a good thing, but one of them is that encampments tend to lead to a lot of fires.

In fact, in just one year, in 2023 alone, there were almost 14,000 fires related to homelessness. Again, we don't yet know exactly what caused the set of fires that are still ongoing, but we do know that this city has been as bad as any in terms of letting homelessness proliferate, allowing encampments to go unchecked, and, thereby, creating more dangerous conditions for its residents because of the risk of fire.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I will point out that California has an insurance crisis that has been growing and growing and growing, year after year after year, and our State's political leaders have simply allowed it to happen.

They have done not nearly enough to mitigate the risk of fire that is the underlying cause of the increased rates. They have done essentially nothing until recently to stabilize the situation, to stabilize the markets. As a result, you have insurers that have now pulled out of the State entirely, and millions of people are losing coverage.

In my district, we have whole communities where everyone has lost coverage, and they are kicked to the California FAIR Plan, forced to pay three times as much, four times as much, five times as much as they were paying before. The FAIR Plan is now on the verge of collapse, accounting for the absolutely catastrophic losses that we are seeing in Los Angeles.

Mr. Speaker, what is happening and is still ongoing, sadly, in Los Angeles is a truly unimaginable tragedy in terms of the images that we are seeing, in terms of the dislocation that it is causing. I expect that we will learn that, at least to an extent, it was an avoidable one.

This should serve as a major wake-up call that our State needs to start doing things differently, that we need to get back to basics. We need to get back to basics in California: Build our roads; manage our forests; store our water; maintain our grid; fund our police and our fire departments; do the things government is supposed to do, do them well, and do nothing else.

If we can get back to basics as a State, then we can stop catastrophes like this from happening in the future. Perhaps someday, in the not too distant future, we can start leading the Nation in the right ways again.

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

## ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, January 13, 2025, at noon for morning-hour debate.

## PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. YAKYM:

H.R. 241. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for access standards with respect to the provision by the Department of Veterans Affairs of hospital care, medical services, or extended care services that are applicable to certain veterans with mental disorders; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SESSIONS:

H.R. 242. A bill to require annual surveys of Federal employee managers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 243. A bill to prohibit United States recognition of Bidzina Ivanishvili or any Government of Georgia that is led by Bidzina Ivanishvili, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. STEUBE:

H.R. 244. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide eligibility for TRICARE Select to veterans with service-connected disabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. FOXX (for herself, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. GREEN of Tennessee, and Mr. MCCAUL):

H.R. 245. A bill to require any applicant for a Federal grant to submit a certification that such applicant is not in violation of section 274(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. UNDERWOOD (for herself and Mr. CASTEN):

H.R. 246. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the limitation on the amount individuals can deduct for certain State and local taxes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. UNDERWOOD (for herself, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms.