

President Trump's successes to strengthen our economy, to make our streets safer, and our Nation healthier.

The American people are crying out for change, and tomorrow night President Trump will detail this change for the entire world to hear. The golden age of America is opening doors for all Americans.

PROTECTING AMERICAN HOMELAND FROM
CHINESE INFLUENCE

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the Chinese Communist Party continues to infiltrate our homeland by purchasing American farmland and property around government installations.

I have heard the concerns from many farmers throughout Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District about the aggressive infiltration of the Chinese Communist Party into American farmland as they outbid American farmers for critical land.

We cannot sit back as our sovereignty is threatened. To push back against the Chinese aggression, I cosponsored the Protecting American Agriculture from Foreign Adversaries Act and the No American Land for Communist China Act.

These commonsense pieces of legislation will allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture to review land purchases by foreign entities and ban China from buying land next to Federal property.

The Chinese Communist Party has tried to undermine not just our values but American industries for decades. It is time that we give the American people peace of mind and protect our American homeland from Chinese influence.

I am proud to support these efforts to protect our national security and our food security, and I look forward to working with President Trump on making these bills the law of this great land.

HONORING THE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS OF
THE SHADY GROVE RURITAN CLUB

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the members and volunteers of the Shady Grove Ruritan Club in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. These are individuals who have participated in Hurricane Helene relief efforts for the devastated rural areas of North Carolina.

Delivering supplies ranging from nonperishable food and water to clothes and basic necessities, the Shady Grove Ruritan Club has made 12 deliveries of aid since October of 2024 worth over \$300,000.

In collaboration with other North Carolina Ruritan Clubs, the Shady Grove club even served a traditional Christmas dinner for the Newland, North Carolina, community and delivered wrapped gifts for the children there.

Under the leadership of Shady Grove Ruritan Club Vice President Seth Martin, individuals, families, churches, and businesses have mobilized to give aid, support, and comfort to the victims of Hurricane Helene.

I could not be more proud of everyone involved with the Shady Grove Ruritan Club. Their compassion for their fellow Americans serves as an inspiration for all Americans.

DRAINING THE SWAMP IN ORDER
TO PUT AMERICA FIRST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear to my constituents in Kentucky what my objectives are over the next 22 months of the 119th Congress.

First of all, President Trump received an overwhelming mandate not just in Kentucky's First Congressional District, but all across Kentucky.

The mandate was to do two major things. First of all, obviously, the mandate involved draining the swamp. That is what President Trump campaigned on; and, secondly, to pass an America First agenda.

With respect to draining the swamp, President Trump nominated disrupters to lead his Cabinet and agencies, people like Kash Patel at the FBI; John Ratcliffe at the CIA; and RFK, Jr., at HHS.

I was proud to support every single nominee, and I am pretty confident that every single nominee will win Senate confirmation, which has never happened before.

With respect to passing an America First agenda, the first step in that was what we voted on last week, a budget reconciliation bill. I was proud to work with our House Oversight and Government Reform Committee as a major committee of jurisdiction on the budget reconciliation bill. We pledged to come up with \$50 billion in savings to go along with the first real effort in the entire 8 years I have been in Congress by this body to actually save money and to cut wasteful, unnecessary expenses which is what the mandate was all about.

This is what President Trump campaigned on not just in Kentucky but all across America. I pledge to continue to work with President Trump.

Next, he has asked us to pass a continuing resolution. It is a shame that Congress is broken. In the entire 8 years I have been here, the Senate has failed to pass any individual appropriations bill, and this is what we have to do to be able to pass the Trump agenda with respect to renewing the Trump tax cuts, with respect to creating and passing legislation to prohibit tax on tips and tax on overtime, and all the new blue-collar, working-class tax cuts that President Trump campaigned on and received a mandate to do.

After the mandate, draining the swamp, and passing the America First agenda, next is to work with DOGE. In the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee we created a DOGE Subcommittee. I asked MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE from Georgia to lead that subcommittee.

The first three hearings of that subcommittee have involved improper payments and looking at the USAID's mishandling of funds. The next hearing will be on defunding NPR and other government-funded media outlets.

This is exactly what President Trump campaigned on. This is exactly what I talked about with my constituents when I ran for reelection last November. We want to look at the spending. I know there are protesters, there are the Indivisible groups funded by George Soros who also funded the Congressional Integrity Project who spent at least \$2 million harassing me over past 2 years with banners and all the TV cameras, the mobile TV units that drove through rural Kentucky trying to intimidate me from the Biden investigation, which, by the way, ended with Joe Biden's last act as President of the United States to pardon his entire family.

I know my friends on the other side of the aisle don't like to think about that, but that is a fact.

All DOGE is wanting to do is look at spending and see if we can cut out unnecessary spending. I think the American taxpayers want that. We continue to pledge to see if we can find wasteful spending and eliminate it altogether.

RECOGNIZING TERRY FORCHT OF THE FORCHT
BANK

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Terry Forcht, Forcht Group of Kentucky chairman and CEO of the Forcht Bank, for an impressive 40 years of service and dedication to communities across the Commonwealth, including in the First Congressional District.

The core banking principles of Forcht Bank are respecting the customer, offering competitive rates, and serving the community. Across Kentucky, with 23 banking centers and three loan production offices, Forcht Bank continues to serve Kentuckians and Bluegrass businesses.

Mr. Forcht's role has allowed for the enhancement and visionary leadership of Forcht Bank to celebrate this 40th anniversary signifying exceptional dedication and service to Kentucky communities.

I consider Terry Forcht a close friend, and I appreciate all that he has done for all the communities in Kentucky and all the charitable organizations. I congratulate him on his outstanding achievement.

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ENSURING VETERANS RECEIVE
CARE THEY EARNED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. VASQUEZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the men and women who have served this Nation and defended our freedoms. They now face unnecessary obstacles in accessing the care and support that they have earned.

New Mexico is home to a strong and proud veteran community with a deep military tradition, spanning from Holloman Air Force Base to White Sands Missile Range and from Kirtland Air Force Base to Cannon Air Force Base.

We owe it to those who have served to ensure that they can access healthcare, reliable transportation, and opportunities to succeed in civilian life.

That is why I am introducing a package of bills focused on real solutions: expanding healthcare access, improving transportation, and easing financial burdens for veterans pursuing an education.

No one understands these challenges better than my guest for the joint address, Master Sergeant Roland L. Cooper. Roland, known to many back home as “Coopdawg,” has spent years fighting for veterans in New Mexico.

As chairman of the Lincoln/Otero County Veterans Leadership Council, he has seen firsthand the barriers that rural veterans face: long travel times for medical care, unreliable transportation, and a system that too often overlooks them.

His advocacy directly shaped my New Mexico Rural Veteran Health Care Access Act, which will redraw the Veterans Integrated Service Network lines. This change will allow veterans in Otero County and Eddy County to receive care at a closer VA facility in El Paso rather than have to travel 4 hours to Albuquerque.

Access to care means little if veterans can't get there. That is why I am also introducing the Rural Veterans Transportation to Care Act, which expands transportation options for rural veterans so that no one has to miss an appointment simply because they can't afford the trip.

In rural communities across New Mexico and beyond, lack of transportation remains one of the greatest barriers to accessing healthcare. We also need to support veterans transitioning into civilian life. Education is a key part of that transition for many, but rising costs are making it harder.

The GI Bill book and supply stipend has remained at \$1,000 since 2008, even as the cost of textbooks has skyrocketed. My Veteran Education Assistance Adjustment Act will increase that stipend to \$1,400, ensuring that no veteran is forced to choose between buying books or paying their utilities or rent.

These bills were written with input from veterans who have lived these challenges. Even as we work to strengthen these resources, recent job cuts at the Department of Veterans Affairs are making access even harder.

Already, 2,400 VA employees have been dismissed. Another 1,400 were fired after them. These cuts include doctors, mental health professionals, and benefits processors. These are critical roles that veterans rely on. Behind these numbers are real people, real

consequences, and real veterans waiting longer for care.

VA employees have come forward anonymously, warning that these job cuts are affecting veterans' care and leading to many errors. Some of the people let go were even working on the veterans suicide crisis hotline.

VA services are already stretched thin. These job losses are making it worse. That is why I am proud to introduce these crucial bills and to host Roland “Coopdawg” Cooper today.

This is about the veterans in Otero County and Eddy County and all rural veterans who shouldn't have to choose between buying textbooks and paying rent or spending half a day on the road just to see a doctor for 20 minutes. It is about every veteran who has served this Nation with honor and deserves a government that stands with them, not one that makes them fight for the benefits that they have already earned.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support these bills. Let's ensure that veterans in my district and other rural districts across the Nation receive the care, benefits, and opportunities that they have earned because it should mean something when we say: “Thank you for your service.” It is our duty to back that up here in Congress.

RECOGNIZING THON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary group of students at Penn State University for their dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to a cause that truly changes lives.

For the past year, as Penn Staters have done for more than 50 years, these students devoted countless hours to supporting pediatric cancer patients through THON, the largest student-run philanthropic organization in the entire world.

THON is a yearlong fundraising effort culminating in a 46-hour dance marathon, providing critical financial and emotional support to more than 4,800 families battling childhood cancer.

On February 21, Penn State community students, staff, families, friends, and volunteers filled the Bryce Jordan Center for the 53rd annual THON, raising funds for the Four Diamonds foundation.

What began in 1973 as a small fundraiser organized by Penn State's fraternities and sororities, raising just \$2,000, has since grown into the largest student-run philanthropic organization in the world, with more than 16,500 student volunteers across Pennsylvania.

Since partnering with the Four Diamonds foundation in 1977, THON has ensured that not a single Four Diamonds family going through cancer treatment has received a medical bill,

thanks in large part to the tireless efforts of Penn State students.

The foundation itself was born from heartbreak and hope. Charles and Irma Millard established Four Diamonds in 1972 in honor of their son, Christopher, who had passed away from cancer at just 11 years old.

Before his passing, Christopher wrote a story about a brave knight seeking the four diamonds of courage, wisdom, honesty, and strength, qualities his parents knew were essential in the fight against cancer. In his memory, they created Four Diamonds to support families facing the same battle.

This year, from 6 p.m. on Friday, February 21, until 4 p.m. on February 23, Penn State students stood for 46 hours straight, demonstrating incredible resilience and dedication.

Mr. Speaker, the true impact goes beyond their endurance. This year, Penn State students raised a record-breaking \$17,737,040.93. This surpasses THON's 2024 record-breaking total by nearly \$800,000. To date, Penn State students have raised more than \$250 million in the fight against pediatric cancer over the last 53 years.

If my colleagues ask any Penn State student, they will be the first to say that THON isn't about them. It is about the children. It is about the families getting to celebrate birthdays, piano recitals, science fairs, graduations, and every other moment a child should experience free from the fear of cancer.

THON exists so that, one day, no parent will ever have to hear the words: “Your child has cancer.”

Mr. Speaker, I am incredibly proud of these students at my alma mater and, more importantly, of the brave children and families who fight this battle every day.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate everyone who made THON 2025 a record-breaking success.

We Are.

PREEMINENT ANTIPOVERTY PROGRAM FOR ELDERLY AND CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak directly about the Nation's preeminent anti-poverty program for the elderly and the Nation's preeminent anti-poverty program for children. This is something that Congress and the administration need to focus on.

My colleagues can imagine how many Americans, whether they are here today or listening at home, reacted when they heard over the weekend that Elon Musk, the wealthiest man in the world, the billionaire, said that Social Security is a scam and a Ponzi scheme.

That Ponzi scheme that assists over 70 million Americans is hardly a Ponzi scheme, nor is it a scam. The real scam