

There is so much more to discuss and that I want to share with Members about DiasporaLink and the National Defense Authorization Acts. Let's remember that everyone has a history, we should not forget that history, and let us celebrate it as we move forward.

#### YOSEMITE BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE

(Mr. McCLINTOCK of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, a well-known bureaucratic response to any attempt to reduce government spending is called the Washington Monument strategy. If anybody suggests cutting the budget, then just shut down the Washington Monument until enough tourists complain to their Congressman.

We saw this strategy implemented with a vengeance during the government shutdown under Obama. All reservations at the national parks were canceled. Vendors were ordered to close, perishable deliveries were turned back, The National Mall was cordoned off, gates to the national parks were chained, and even highway turnouts with a view of Yosemite Valley were barricaded.

Now, compare that to the government shutdown in the first Trump administration. Vendors remained in business, the public lands remained fully open to the public, no monuments were obstructed, no barricades were erected, and the gates to the national parks remained fully accessible.

Today, opponents of President Trump's war on government waste have revived the Washington Monument strategy to maintain a bloated Federal workforce that is crushing American taxpayers. Every dollar of discretionary spending, which fully or partially funds every department within the Federal Government, is now borrowed. Instead of long-overdue streamlining, the Democrats are pushing for a tax increase that will amount to about \$1,500 on a family earning just \$75,000.

At Yosemite National Park, in my district, disgruntled employees hung a giant American flag upside-down on El Capitan the other day, ruining the view for tourists who came to enjoy Yosemite's famous firefall. Remote cameras at the park are now blocked by protest signs. A Yosemite biologist told glib reporters that the staff cuts would doom the Sierra Nevada red fox to extinction. Others warned that layoffs would result in visitors stuck in restrooms and fires raging out of control.

This is human sacrifice, dogs and cats living together, mass hysteria, as a "Ghostbusters" character once put it.

What is the actual number of layoffs at Yosemite National Park that will bring the beautiful valley to rack and ruin?

Mr. Speaker, 10, the number is 10 probationary employees, 10 out of nearly

500 full-time winter employees, 25 if you include early retirements and no firefighters.

This begs some important questions: Is the park so poorly managed that only one employee has keys to the restrooms serving the 748,000-acre national park?

Apparently.

□ 1015

How will the Sierra Nevada red fox survive with only eight remaining biologists at Yosemite looking out for it rather than nine? I guess we will just have to find out.

How many of Yosemite's employees are working from home? We don't know because the park management won't tell us. We do know that 34 percent of National Park Service employees across the country were still working from home in 2023. Need to find the nearest unlocked restroom? Just email them.

Indeed, the employees who provide most of the visitor amenities, such as the hotels, shops, and restaurants, don't even work for the Park Service. They work for the park's private concessionaire.

It is true that hiring seasonal employees was delayed for a few weeks when the administration put a temporary hold on new hires, but that hold was soon lifted. These positions will actually increase by about 50.

More than a decade ago, when I first met with park management, I noticed a placard in the conference room. It read: Is it good for the park?

I suggested that was the wrong question. The right question is: Is it good for the park's visitors?

It is a matter of attitude.

The Yosemite Grant Act of 1864 was the first time that land was set aside for the use, resort, and recreation of the American people. It says nothing about the park's employees. They work for the people, who, in turn, have selected Donald Trump to exercise the executive powers of the government and charged him to take care that the laws be faithfully executed. He can't do that if he can't open the books, look at where the money is spent, and determine whether it is being spent efficiently and in accordance with the law or stop it when it isn't.

The antics of some of Yosemite's employees dishonor the silent majority at the park, who are genuinely devoted to public service.

As Hamilton said: "Here, sir, the people govern."

All 2.4 million employees in the Federal workforce exercise powers delegated by the President through our Constitution by virtue of his election. Any Federal employee who doesn't respect the authority of the people and the President they elected has no business working for them.

#### HONORING KEVIN G. BANES

(Mr. KENNEDY of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life and legacy of my friend, Kevin G. Banes, a man whose kindness, passion, and unwavering dedication to others made this world a better place.

A cherished member of communities in both Buffalo and Albany, Kevin's journey began in South Buffalo, a tight-knit neighborhood where he would learn the value of hard work and the importance of giving back to his community.

Kevin would go on to attend Bishop Timon-St. Jude High School, where he built friendships that lasted a lifetime. He later earned his B.A. in communications from the University at Buffalo and a master's in public relations from the University at Albany.

Kevin had a unique ability to make everyone feel valued. Whether family, friends, colleagues, or strangers, he greeted each person with kindness, respect, and a genuine heart. His presence had a way of bringing people together, forging bonds that transcended time and circumstance.

Kevin didn't just build relationships. He built bridges. He connected with people, not just on a personal level but in a way that inspired action and change. He wasn't content in simply understanding the struggles of others. He made them his own, fighting tirelessly on their behalf at the State capitol.

Kevin was a steadfast champion for those who needed a voice. He knew that real advocacy wasn't just about policy, but it was about people and about making sure that every individual, no matter their circumstances, had the support and opportunity that they deserved.

Kevin's legacy is one of action, impact, and an unwavering belief in the power of community. His advocacy wasn't simply his job, but it was his calling.

Kevin poured his heart into the causes closest to him, championing the Special Olympics, Wildwood Programs, and Deaf Adult Services, not just with words but with relentless effort, strategic thinking, and an unshakable determination to deliver results. He knew how to navigate the complexities of government, how to bring people together, and how to turn passion into progress.

Kevin's work was never about personal recognition, but it was always about lifting others up.

The impact he made will continue to be felt in the countless lives he touched, the coalitions he built, and the relationships he nurtured with such dedication and compassion. His work set a standard for what advocacy looks like, one rooted in empathy, persistence, and commitment to making the world a better, fairer place for everyone.

Kevin is survived by his mother, Kathleen Banes; brother Jeffrey and

his wife, Leeann Banes; brother Matthew and his wife, Jessie English; and his niece, Leah Banes.

They would be the first to tell my colleagues that his laughter was contagious, his compassion boundless, and that those fortunate enough to know him were better off for it.

We honor Kevin's legacy today knowing that his spirit will live on in the lives he touched and the causes that he fought for.

May Kevin Banes rest in peace.

HONORING EDWARD "MACHO" COLON

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Edward "Macho" Colon, a beloved coach, mentor, and community leader.

For more than 28 years, Coach Macho dedicated himself to the Westside Little League Football and Cheer, shaping the lives of countless youth athletes.

Even in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, he refused to let obstacles stand in the way of opportunity, growing the program from one team to five and adding three cheerleading squads. However, his impact went beyond the field. He wasn't just a coach. He was a role model, a guiding force, and a source of strength for so many in our community.

Beyond sports, Macho was a proud local businessowner. His restaurant, Sandwich'on By Macho, wasn't just a place to grab a meal. It was an extension of his lifetime commitment to giving back, spreading joy, and bringing people together.

Macho is survived by his loving wife of 33 years, Catherine Rivera; his children, Monica Roman, Elliott Roman, Kayla Colon, and Rhace Colon; and his 10 cherished grandchildren.

Macho's unwavering dedication to lifting up young Buffalonians is a legacy that will live on for generations. He made our community stronger, and Buffalo is a better place because of him.

May Edward "Macho" Colon rest in peace.

#### REGULATORY RELIEF, ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, AND LOWER PRICES

(Mr. LAMALFA of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, when my colleagues contemplate inflation, Members can really boil it down to two main drivers of inflation.

One would be profligate government spending. We have a \$2 trillion deficit the last couple of years, post-COVID. We need to get back, of course, to pre-COVID levels of government spending and get back on a better track.

Importantly, the other driver is the cost of energy because energy affects everything from the production side. Whether you are in the farm fields, in a mine, in a manufacturing plant, anything that is being made requires energy.

When you mine those products, take those raw materials, and turn them into something, there is energy consumed at every step of the chain.

Finally, delivery from factory or mill or whatever to the store shelf requires energy. Whether it is by a truck, train, or ship, what have you, they are all brought here because of energy.

The electricity in the plants that are producing things, sawing up timber, milling grain, whatever it is, all requires energy.

When those costs go up, I would say unnecessarily the last few years, then, of course, the price of everything has to go up. It would not be just at the store shelf, but at every step of the chain to when it finally reaches the store shelf. When people get in their vehicles and go get those items or order in when they have a grocery delivery, it still takes energy to get there.

With these prices driving everything, it really isn't just some abstract, where inflation comes from. These are the real-life consequences of policies that make it harder and more expensive to produce, transport, and buy these things that everyday families need.

The Biden administration's regulatory agenda imposed these costly mandates on energy production, and I am seeing it in my home State of California, which seems to be anti-energy, as well. Governor Newsom and the new State legislature are making it more and more impossible to locate and have fueling stations, as well as California's oil-rich holds it has underground, especially in that Kern County area.

Mr. Speaker, the Biden agenda has caused these things to go up. These rules don't just squeeze businesses or big, evil corporations and things like that. They hurt every American family and every American's bank account.

This week, we are taking action to reverse some of the most damaging regulations and restore some common-sense policies that actually work for Americans, that will lower costs for families, farmers, miners, timber people, manufacturers, and small businesses.

H. Res. 42 aims to stop the Department of Energy's overreach on household appliances and commercial equipment. The Biden administration imposed stricter efficiency standards for making everything from dishwashers to industrial equipment. It just drives up the cost and makes it more difficult for families when they want to replace something.

These regulations limit choices and drive up prices. If people want a new gas water heater, they are going to have to get one that doesn't fit in the same spot as the old one because it is going to be a lot thicker from more insulation and stuff in the idea of efficiency. The regulations make it more difficult to do that.

If Democrats take away the gas water heaters and gas stoves and make

them electric, people will have a whole other set of problems.

Outside in people's yards, my Democratic colleagues want to ban their gas lawnmowers and their gas leaf blowers. My favorite is when my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to ban, like in California, gas- or diesel-powered generators.

Mr. Speaker, when the power goes out, tell me what people are going to power a generator with if they don't have these fuels available and generators that use those fuels.

How do people turn a generator on if they don't have fuel to do it? Are they going to plug it into a battery or something like that? What fueled the battery? What if it is several days, like sometimes when we are having these ice storms in the mountainous areas like what happened in my district?

These mandates don't make a lick of sense, so we want to have, with H. Res. 42, the ability for families and businesses to purchase reliable and affordable products without bureaucratic interference and whatever the whim of the day is by a stroke of a pen.

H. Res. 61 seeks to reverse EPA's excessive emissions rule targeting rubber tire manufacturers. Mr. Speaker, can you believe that? The mandate drove up the cost of manufacturing tires, making essential goods more expensive because a lot of things we get come on a vehicle with tires, as well as the cost of tires on the vehicle itself.

Whether it is higher prices for tires or increased costs for transportation, this rule added a burden on families and businesses already struggling with inflation. Reversing this regulation protects manufacturers, safeguards jobs, and keeps products affordable for manufacturers, small businesses, and families.

S.J. Res. 11 aims to eliminate an unnecessary rule from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management that slowed down oil and gas development. The Biden administration required excessive archeological reports that make more energy production almost impossible.

#### PEOPLE, NOT STATISTICS

(Mr. FIGURES of Alabama was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. FIGURES. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege last night of sitting in this Chamber yet again, and I witnessed a lot of my colleagues cheering as the President rattled off the numbers, the statistics, and the data of how many people he has terminated and has laid off or fired. Whatever my colleagues want to call it, people are out of a job.

As I sat here, I sat in a little bit of amazement because these aren't just statistics that we are talking about. These are people. These are real people. These are real lives. These are not just data points in a spreadsheet.

These are real families that we are talking about. These aren't just numbers in some speech or in some press