

protect Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. They wanted me to lower costs and make life much more affordable. They wanted me to eliminate government corruption. That is what I plan to do.

The number one issue by far was protecting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. People didn't talk about these programs in abstract terms. They talked about their lives, how Social Security is how they pay their bills; Medicare is how they get healthcare without going broke; and Medicaid is how their kids, their parents, and neighbors with disabilities can get the support and help they need.

These aren't government programs to them. They are lifelines promised to them after a lifetime of work and service. That is why I have been and will continue to be hyperfocused on protecting them.

I have worked across the aisle to introduce bipartisan legislation to keep Social Security offices open and services running during government shutdowns because seniors shouldn't lose access to help just because Congress can't get its act together.

I have pushed the Social Security Administration to stop clawing back overpayments when the mistakes were not the fault of the seniors.

I introduced legislation to make sure survivors of domestic violence are not punished under Social Security rules for leaving unsafe marriages.

If you have worked your entire life and paid in every paycheck, Congress should keep its promise in its Social Security program.

The second big issue that people raised was the cost of living and lowering costs. Families feel it everywhere: gas, groceries, housing, healthcare. It just costs too much to live.

□ 1015

People are working just as hard as they always have, but they are falling behind. That is why I have been fighting to extend the ACA's tax credits to lower healthcare costs, especially for our most vulnerable citizens. It is why I voted against the big, ugly bill that is now putting healthcare coverage at risk for millions of Americans while raising energy costs for families.

In fact, just today there is a report that came out that showed over 120,000 Ohioans chose to forgo their healthcare because they simply couldn't afford it. These are real people, and that bill had real consequences. Not only does it impact us in terms of healthcare in my district, it also impacts our number one economy, which is healthcare systems and hospitals.

Additionally, I introduced legislation to crack down on junk fees that would drain family budgets, and I have worked in a bipartisan manner to lower costs and improve clean water infrastructure in communities that need it the most.

I have stood up for homebuyers, pushing back against corporate prac-

tices that drive up housing prices and shut families out of the market.

Instead of staying focused on lowering costs, House Republicans have spent too much time protecting tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires, blocking reforms that would help families, and threatening government shutdowns that only add to more chaos. I would also mention the no tax on overtime that they have so happily touted doesn't really help so many people in organized labor. We do have a bipartisan fix for that, but we haven't been able to get to it because making sure people have more money in their pockets is simply not a priority for House Republicans.

Finally, the third issue people raised with me is they wanted to fight government corruption. People are tired of feeling like the rules are different for those at the top. They want accountability that actually means something. They want ethics laws to apply to everyone, no matter their title or their party. They are seeing that this corruption is raising their costs and making it more expensive. They see the connection between the two.

That is why I have helped lead a package of reforms with a new generation of lawmakers to close loopholes, strengthen ethics rules, and bring some common sense and some integrity back to Washington, D.C.

Public service should be just that: serving the public, not helping yourself. When you look at these survey results, Mr. Speaker, the contrast is hard to miss. My constituents are asking us to protect their earned benefits while the leadership, Mr. Speaker, is keeping them at risk.

They are asking us to lower costs while House Republicans and this President get distracted by the wrong fights. They are asking us to clean up corruption while Republicans enable this President to treat accountability as optional while he is getting richer and everyone else is getting poorer.

That is not what the people sent us here to do, and it is certainly not what my constituents sent me here to do.

Mr. Speaker, listening to your constituents should not be controversial. It is our job. I will keep fighting for what the people of Ohio's 13th Congressional District made clear when they sent me here because this Congress does not belong to party leaders or special interests. It belongs to the people.

HONORING THE LIFE OF LARRY BATTERTON

(Mr. BAUMGARTNER of Washington was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor another of the bright lights of eastern Washington, but I also rise with sadness as I honor the life of Larry Batterton, a devoted husband, father, and community leader from eastern Washington who passed away on January 16 of this year.

Larry dedicated his life to service—first to his country as an Air Force dependent, and later to his community in Spokane and Stevens Counties. He was active in We Believe, We Vote and active in civics, community, and government in Stevens County. In these roles he led with faith, kindness, and conviction, always working to strengthen trust in our elections and unity in our civic life.

Larry and his wife, Susan, shared 54 years of marriage and built a wonderful family of four children and many grandchildren.

His faith guided everything he did, and Larry's steady leadership left a lasting mark on eastern Washington.

We give thanks for the life of Larry Batterton, his love of family, his enduring service to his community, and our State. When our Founders created this wonderful Republic that we live in, they thought of its foundation of good people like Larry Batterton. He will be deeply missed.

IN OPPOSITION TO WASHINGTON STATE'S PROPOSED MILLIONAIRE'S TAX

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the tax proposal in Washington State of Governor Bob Ferguson and his so-called millionaire's tax.

Mr. Speaker, I hear frequently from folks back home that they are very pleased with the work of this Washington and what Republican leadership has done to give our country the largest tax reduction in history. They tell me how much they enjoy and look forward to no taxes on tips, no taxes on overtime, a tax deduction on interest for loans for American-made cars, and new tax credits for education.

All the work we have done here in Washington, this Washington, reduces the cost of living for Americans, but I hear very frequently, as well, while this is going on, in the other Washington, my home of Washington State, that the Democrat leadership there is increasing taxes.

It is time for a reality check about budgets.

In Washington State, the legislative session has just begun, and the Governor has proposed a new income tax that would push Seattle's top earners into one of the highest tax brackets of anywhere in the country. There would be higher taxes in Washington State than even deep blue States like New York and California.

It doesn't stop there.

Other taxes are being considered, too, such as higher payroll taxes and higher business taxes for starters. It is sad. Just 3 years ago, Washington State had a \$14 billion surplus, and instead of saving for a rainy day, the Democrats in Olympia spent recklessly.

State revenues went up by 25 percent, billions of extra dollars, but it was all spent, all to wind up \$12 billion in the red today. That is after last year when the Democrats gave our State the largest tax increase in history, and now they want even more taxes.

Implementing this tax will hurt job creators in Washington State, hurt our innovative economy, hurt our family farms, hurt job creation, and hurt growth.

In the Federal Government we have a better record. Again, I voted for the largest tax reduction in history joining my Republican colleagues. The Democrats and Governor Ferguson in Olympia need to learn this lesson, not go even deeper into our pocketbooks and drive even more job creators out of the State.

My message to Governor Ferguson is this: Get spending under control. Stop taxing the good people of Washington State.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MATTHEW J. FISHER

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

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Matthew J. Fisher, a pillar of south Buffalo, who tragically passed away on December 12, 2025, at the age of 57.

Born and raised in south Buffalo by his parents, Richard Sr. and Joann, Matt grew up surrounded by family, friends, and the close-knit parish of St. Ambrose Catholic Church. It was there that he built lifelong friendships and learned what it meant to belong to a community rooted in shared responsibility to one another.

A graduate of Canisius High School and Buffalo State University, he studied in the community that raised him, carrying those lessons with him throughout his life.

Matt was a loving husband, a devoted father, a man of deep faith and a humble voice for good whose impact will continue to be felt in our community for generations.

He lived out his values through acts of service, compassion, and an unwavering belief that making the world a better place begins in our neighborhoods, in our houses of worship, and in the everyday moments where dignity and care matter most.

That sense of belonging stayed with him his entire life and guided his decision to raise his own family in the very same neighborhood that raised him.

Matt was a devout Catholic, an active parishioner, and a eucharistic minister who lived his faith outwardly. He prayed for those who were struggling. He showed up for those in need, and he treated everyone he encountered with authenticity, humility, and genuine care.

Matt's spirit of service defined his professional pursuits as a housing and economic development professional. Whether working for Erie County, the city of Buffalo, or organizations like the Old First Ward Community Association, Matt devoted his career to public service. Because of his work, countless families in western New York were able to remain in their homes, in-

vest in their families, and navigate systems that are often overwhelming and complex.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Matt's heart was firmly planted in our community. Matt served as chairman of the South Buffalo Neighborhood Accountability Board and founded South Buffalo CREW, Concerned Residents Engaged in Work.

In those roles, Matt championed grassroots initiatives that focused on beautifying our neighborhood and supporting our small businesses.

As president of South Buffalo Baseball, he mentored countless young people. He was committed to keeping the program affordable, inclusive, and rooted in the neighborhood because he believed every child deserved a place to belong.

Matt Fisher's legacy reminds us that the soul of this country is found in people who live extraordinary lives of service and the neighbors who coach little league teams, check in on the elderly, serve at their parish, and quietly make their community stronger day by day.

To his beloved wife, Dina, and to their children Joseph, Hannah, Anthony, Veronica, Nicholas, and Aidan: Our community, State, and Nation mourns with you.

South Buffalo and western New York are stronger because of Matt Fisher. Our community and our country are better because of him.

May we carry forward his example and care for our neighbors with the same faith, generosity, and love that Matthew J. Fisher showed us every single day. May he rest in peace.

PROUD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS of Iowa was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that through community project funding, my team and I have secured \$3 million for southeast Iowa, delivering targeted investments in public safety, water infrastructure, and housing development.

These investments include: \$500,000 for the SAFECity Initiative in Oskaloosa, bringing advanced public safety technology to the community to help prevent crime, improve emergency response times, and keep Oskaloosa residents safe; \$2 million for the Pa-poose Creek Redundant Force Main in Muscatine to support a critical water infrastructure upgrade. This will protect homes, improve flood control, support growth, and strengthen environmental safety for years to come.

I also secured \$750,000 for the Veterans District sewer project in Knoxville to help build a sanitary lift station and storm and sewer lines to serve more than 110 acres of future housing in the Veterans District.

With these historic investments, I have now secured over \$8 million for southeast Iowa and will continue fight-

ing to secure all the Federal resources our communities need and deserve.

RECOGNIZING HALEY DEGREVE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Haley DeGreve, founder and president of The Gray Matters Collective, and local leader Jon Zumkehr for their partnership in raising awareness about mental health and suicide prevention among correctional officers and law enforcement officers.

Their work became a lifeline for many after the tragic death by suicide of correctional officer Blake Schwarz who worked at Thomson Federal Prison but lived in Iowa, a loss that rocked our community and exposed the silent suffering of so many who serve behind the walls.

In the aftermath, Jon Zumkehr, an 18-year veteran of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, reached out to Haley and invited her to Thomson. She shared her own journey of survival and hope, speaking openly about her struggles and recovery and the realities that far too many correctional officers face in silence, many of whom are former military veterans.

On August 28, Haley nearly became another statistic, believing suicide was her only way out of pain. Instead, she chose to fight and founded The Gray Matters Collective, a nonprofit with chapters for veterans and first responders. She has listened to hundreds of stories like her own and like Blake's, and she has made it her mission to break the stigma and offer real support.

Jon and Haley's partnership has made a real difference. Together, they have sent 24 officers at Thomson to ASSIST training, organized suicide prevention walks, and led multiple staff recalls focused on mental health and resources. They have also created a law enforcement support group open to all staff with licensed counselors and free to anyone who needs it.

After Blake's death, I was honored to sit down with Jon and work to introduce Correctional Officer Blake Schwarz Suicide Prevention Act, legislation aimed at providing the resources and recognition our correctional officers deserve. I thank Jon and Haley for their courage, compassion, and relentless advocacy bringing attention to this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wish a very happy birthday to my nephew, Andrew Martino.

Happy birthday, Andrew.

□ 1030

CITIZENS UNITED 16TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the 16th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court's Citizens United decision, a decision that