

Her extensive history of community service includes the Open Door Mission and organizing gift drives for overseas troops and local seniors. Ms. Anthony is known for her compassionate leadership and is a role model for her peers.

Mr. Speaker, I greatly admire these leaders in the Second District of Nebraska. They make our district better and our community better.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN DERAILMENT

(Mrs. SYKES of Ohio was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. SYKES. Mr. Speaker, this week marks 3 years since a Norfolk Southern train derailed in East Palestine, Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it has been 3 years since toxic chemicals burned in the sky, families were forced from their homes, and a small town became a warning sign for what happens when corporate negligence meets congressional inaction.

For the people of East Palestine, this anniversary is not symbolic. It is personal, and it is ongoing. It is a constant reminder of a Congress who continues to put profits and corporations over people.

From the very beginning, I have shown up for this community. I don't represent East Palestine, Ohio, but within weeks of the derailment, I traveled there. I met with residents. I pressed FEMA, the EPA, the CDC, Health and Human Services, and the Department of Transportation for answers and resources.

I helped secure an EPA order, forcing Norfolk Southern, not taxpayers, to pay for the cleanup and remediation. When families were told that they may be taxed on disaster relief, I fought to change the law and succeeded. In 2024, President Joe Biden signed the East Palestine Tax Relief Act. That is what accountability looks like. That is what results look like.

Mr. Speaker, 3 years later, the most important question remains unanswered. What has Congress done to prevent this from ever happening again to East Palestine or any other American city? The answer is not enough.

That is why this week I am introducing the Railroad Safety and Accountability Act to protect labor and public interest voices in rail safety decisions, voices that Federal regulators have tried to push aside.

That is why I have continued fighting for passage of the bipartisan RAIL Act led by Democrats and Republicans representing Ohio. It is one of the most comprehensive rail safety proposals before Congress.

The bill would require two-person train crews and increased inspections, especially for trains carrying hazardous materials. It would strengthen emergency notification so first responders are not left in the dark. It would raise penalties for safety violations and address the exact equipment failures that caused the East Palestine derailment.

The RAIL Act is supported by rail workers, local governments, and a bipartisan group of lawmakers, Democrats and Republicans in and out of Ohio. Yet, for two consecutive Congresses, House Republican leadership has refused to even give the bill a hearing. That is not gridlock. That is a decision and a terrible one at that. It is a decision to put profits over people.

Since the derailment, President Trump, Vice President VANCE, members of the Cabinet, and Ohio Republicans have all visited East Palestine, held press conferences, and promised action.

Here is the reality. Mr. Speaker, 3 years later, this Republicans House has not passed a single rail safety law to prevent another East Palestine. It is not even that. It is not just that the law has not passed. There hasn't even been a hearing.

On February 3, 2025, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy made the following statement: "In partnership with the Trump-Vance administration and Congress, USDOT will work to advance rail safety. As President Trump has pledged, we will ensure that people of East Palestine are not forgotten, and we will use every resource to prevent other communities from enduring what they experienced."

During a Transportation and Infrastructure hearing last year, I asked Secretary Duffy directly what concrete steps were being taken to stop another derailment like this one. I asked him directly and specifically had he worked with the chair of the committee to move forward any legislation. His answer was no. Further, he said he talked about it on Fox News before anyone else.

Here is a news flash for Secretary Duffy and House Republicans. Talking on television does not make trains safer. Talking on television does not make our communities safer. Talking on television does not do what East Palestinian residents have asked us to do for over 3 years. Press conferences do not replace legislation, and communities cannot rebuild on empty words.

Meanwhile, large corporations continue to resist stronger national safety rules and real accountability, while pursuing massive corporate expansion and relying on congressional inaction to protect its bottom line.

Monitoring the damage after a disaster matters, but monitoring alone is not prevention. Studying the aftermath is not the same as fixing the cause.

Mr. Speaker, the contrast is clear. I have legislated. I have shown up. I have questioned those in power and refused to let East Palestine be forgotten.

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Others have toured the site, issued statements, and moved on, while blocking the very reforms that would keep another town from becoming another headline in a disaster.

Mr. Speaker, 3 years later, East Palestine has heard plenty of promises and

many pledges, but Congress and the administration have not delivered the safety laws to stop the next disaster.

Mr. Speaker, East Palestine deserves action. America deserves action. We deserve accountability. We deserve a Congress that puts people over profits, and I will keep fighting until that happens.

NATIONAL OVERSIGHT FOR BIOLOGICAL LABS

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

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for Congress to act with urgency to address the alarming news that we have just heard from Las Vegas of the discovery of yet another illegal, dangerous biolab run by Chinese nationals.

In 2023, when the secret lab in Reedley, California, came to light, thanks to the tremendous efforts of local officials there, I gave several speeches on this floor calling attention to the danger that this posed to all Americans. I noted that we don't know how many similar such labs might be out there.

After I requested an investigation, the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party reached a similar conclusion that we don't know what other such labs might be out there.

Unfortunately, it turned out to be true that we had reason for concern because the lab that was just discovered in Las Vegas is run by the same individuals under the same sham LLC as the one that was uncovered in Reedley.

What is more, officials there described materials and equipment that are consistent with the operation that was going on in Reedley: commercial-grade freezers and refrigerators, equipment for processing biological materials, and thousands of vials which are now under examination by the FBI.

In Reedley, the pathogens that were discovered included E. coli, Ebola, malaria, HIV, and tuberculosis. We have every reason to believe that these same dangerous pathogens have been found in this latest Las Vegas lab.

Mr. Speaker, the question still remains: How many other such labs are out there?

As my colleague from Fresno, Mr. COSTA, just said on this floor, many local communities simply don't have the ability to uncover these things on their own. That is why we need a national framework. We need national resources. We need more national oversight, and that is precisely what my bipartisan bill, authored together with Mr. COSTA, will do.

Mr. Speaker, I am calling today for an immediate markup of this legislation so that we can get it passed through the House and signed into law in order to protect our communities.

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL UPDATE

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide a brief update on the California high-speed rail,

which, thankfully, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, this House just voted to cut funding off for. The President just signed that legislation into law.

We are also now raising questions about what has happened to the \$17 billion that has already been spent and whether, perhaps, there might be fraud at issue, or at least waste or a lack of diligence in the use of taxpayer funds.

I don't think it is any coincidence that, as these efforts ramp up, the legislature is now considering a bill, which the Governor himself provided language for in a budget trailer bill, seeking to keep records related to the high-speed rail secret and seeking to make it so that this particular project has a greater ability to keep information secret than anything else in the public domain in California.

It just goes to show how desperate the political leaders in California are, starting with the Governor, to avoid any accountability here.

Mr. Speaker, the Governor, for his part, held a big ceremony yesterday with much hoopla about a supposed milestone for high-speed rail, which is to say the completion of a single railhead in Kern County.

Mr. Speaker, I will remind the Governor that this is the year 2026. The high-speed rail project was supposed to be completed, having a full-fledged, high-speed rail system from Los Angeles to San Francisco, 6 years ago, in 2020. Yet, we are supposed to get excited about the completion of a single railhead in 2026.

Mr. Speaker, after 17 years and \$17 billion, there still has not been any track laid for this project. The New York Times estimated that it won't be finished this century at the current pace. Even the rosiest, most optimistic projections of the authorities are that by 2045, almost 20 years from now, we might have a line that goes from Gilroy to Palmdale.

That would mean that if you wanted to go from L.A. to San Francisco, you would have to take one transit system for 2 hours, get off of that, get on the high-speed rail, then get off of that in Gilroy and take another transit system for 2 hours to get into San Francisco. That would be a 6-hour trip with three transit systems in 2045 that you could do today in 1 hour on Southwest Airlines.

Mr. Speaker, we have cut off Federal funding for this boondoggle. It is time for the State to do the same and stop wasting the precious dollars of our hardworking taxpayers.

RECOGNIZING SEAN DEMETROPOLIS

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Orange City Fire Chief Sean deMetropolis, who is retiring from the

city of Orange after 30 years of stellar service.

Chief deMetropolis began his career in 1995 and worked his way up to be fire chief. In addition to serving our community, Chief deMetropolis also stepped up to serve our great country by serving on FEMA's Task Force 5, which included a 20-day deployment to support Hurricane Katrina victims.

Chief deMetropolis has always led by example by dedicating his life to keeping the city of Orange safe.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Sean on his well-deserved retirement, and I thank Sean for his service.

RECOGNIZING OTONIEL GOMEZ

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the heroic actions of my neighbor, Otoniel Gomez.

Mr. Gomez lives in Santa Ana with his family. On December 5, tragedy struck. The Gomez family woke up to the smell of smoke.

Otoniel jumped out of a second-story window to escape the fire. Then, without missing a beat, he grabbed ladders to help his wife and children climb to safety.

Thanks to his bravery and quick thinking, the entire Gomez family, including their dog, Lyka, escaped without injury. That night, Mr. Gomez did show us what true bravery is all about.

Mr. Speaker, I pray that Otoniel's family continues to recover from the loss of their home.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DORIS ANN DERLETH HIROTA

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of Doris Ann Derleth Hirota.

Doris was a Santa Ana resident, the youngest of seven, and she was born at the beginning of the Great Depression in Rochester, New York, in 1932.

Doris went on to attend nursing school in Chicago, where she met her husband, Tomio, when they both began their life of service to others.

In 1965, Doris and Tomio bought their home in Santa Ana, California, where they raised eight children and countless grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It was in this same house, on January 14, 2026, that Doris passed away at the age of 93.

Doris was surrounded by her family, sending her back to Heaven, where they all know she came from.

Mr. Speaker, Doris' legacy and memory will live on in her family.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF HOWARD KOCH

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of World War II and Korean war veteran Howard Koch.

During World War II, Howard served in the Army's elite 10th Mountain Division, America's only mountain and winter warfare fighting unit.

This unit, the elite 10th Mountain Division, was formed to defeat the Nazis who were entrenched high up in the snowy mountains of Italy.

This unit was made up of champion skiers, mountain climbers, and Euro-

pean mountaineers. After intensive training atop the Colorado Rockies, they climbed Italy's Riva Ridge and defeated the Nazi troops in a surprise attack.

That was not without paying a heavy price. Nearly 1,000 soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division were killed, and some 4,000 were wounded in 4 months of fighting the Germans. They were successful, and the Germans surrendered.

Howard lived to be 101 years old, making his final journey to Heaven just last month.

Mr. Speaker, the memory of my very good friend, Howard, will live on, and his heroism will continue to inspire all of us.

REPEAL OF SENATE PAYDAY PROVISION

(Mr. ROSE of Tennessee was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, President Trump signed a funding bill into law yesterday that did more than just end a partial government shutdown. It corrected a serious wrong.

Buried deep inside the funding bill that the Senate passed and sent to us last November was a hidden provision that never should have seen the light of day. It was quietly inserted without transparency, without debate, and without notice to House leadership.

It allowed a handful of United States Senators to sue taxpayers for the rogue actions of the last administration. It enabled them to seek \$500,000, per occurrence, for having their phone data seized by the Biden FBI.

This could have resulted in millions of tax dollars lining the pockets of a select group of United States Senators. It is no doubt that they were the architects of this provision. That is not accountability. That is corruption.

Nevertheless, Leader THUNE and these Senators forced the House to swallow that provision in order to reopen the government after 43 long days. Families across the country were hurting. Pay for our troops was in jeopardy. Our airports were facing serious safety risks. In the meantime, congressional Democrats were referring to the shutdown as leverage.

Ultimately, House Republicans voted to fund the government and end the suffering. However, we never lost sight of undoing the self-serving money grab from taxpayers by a select group of Senators.

Hours before our vote, I introduced the first standalone bill to kill that provision. I also cosponsored Representative AUSTIN SCOTT's legislation, which achieved the same outcome. It passed the House unanimously.

Yet, just like the SAVE Act, the bill sat on Leader THUNE's desk week after week, month after month. I introduced a resolution that would have enabled Speaker JOHNSON to argue the unconstitutionality of the Senate payday