

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

provision and to ask the courts to strike it down.

I even attempted to insert a repeal amendment into the National Defense Authorization Act. Yet, when we sent our funding bill to the Senate last week, we gave Senate leadership a taste of their own medicine and forced them to choose between the Senate payday or reopening the government.

Let me be very clear. I support real accountability. Last October, I signed onto a letter urging Attorney General Pam Bondi to launch a criminal investigation into the activities of Special Counsel Jack Smith and to consider possible Fourth Amendment violations during Operation Arctic Frost.

That deserved scrutiny. That deserves answers. It doesn't merit restitution paid for by hardworking waitresses, truck drivers, and small business owners. Hardworking taxpayers shouldn't be punished to put millions of dollars into the pockets of a select group of Senators.

The Tennesseans who I represent have suffered enough because of the many failed policies of the last administration, and they shouldn't be forced to pay more.

The House prevailed in putting a stop to this.

UPHOLDING RULE OF LAW FOR FEDERAL OFFICERS

(Ms. JOHNSON of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Qualified Immunity Accountability Act because no one is above the law or the Constitution.

Across this country, we are witnessing a dangerous pattern: Federal law enforcement officers—specifically, ICE agents—operating with near total impunity. We have seen constitutional rights violated, and we have seen communities terrorized. We have seen American citizens harmed and, tragically, killed without meaningful accountability and reform.

Time and again, the Department of Homeland Security has failed to act or rein in its agents. That is not how we uphold the rule of law in this country.

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Qualified immunity protects government officials, including police officers, from being held liable in civil lawsuits. Qualified immunity was meant to be a good faith protection to protect good faith officers from frivolous lawsuits, but that is not how it functions today. In practice, qualified immunity has become a get-out-of-jail-free card, a legal shield that blocks accountability even when an officer violates someone's constitutional rights or uses excessive force when none was needed. I know this because, as an attorney, I have tried these exact cases in court.

My bill changes that. The Qualified Immunity Accountability Act lowers

the standard for prosecution so Federal law enforcement officers can be held accountable when they violate an individual's civil rights. It makes clear that no Federal agent, ICE included, is above the Constitution, and when rights are violated, there will be real consequences.

This bill simply reaffirms what is in the Constitution. It protects law enforcement who act in good faith, while ensuring that those who abuse their power cannot hide behind a doctrine that was never intended to excuse misconduct.

Accountability strengthens public safety. It builds trust between communities and police. Proper accountability does not weaken this. There are so many brave law enforcement officers who do their jobs and serve their communities with honor and distinction. Unfortunately, we have had some bad apples who are spoiling the bunch, and in doing so, are actually making it unsafe for law enforcement to do their jobs.

Across the country, ICE agents have conducted raids without warrants, detained U.S. citizens, used excessive force, and torn families apart, often with little oversight and no consequences. Communities are left traumatized, afraid to report crimes, afraid to seek medical care, and afraid to leave their homes to live their daily lives. This is not public safety. This is government-sanctioned fear.

When an agency can violate the Constitution and face no accountability at all, that agency is not enforcing the law, it is undermining it. The Constitution guarantees due process. It guarantees equal protection. It guarantees freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures. Those rights are not optional, and they are not discretionary. They are not suggestions. They do not disappear because someone wears a badge.

This bill sends a simple message. If you violate someone's civil rights, you will be held accountable, no matter who you are.

I originally submitted this bill as an amendment to the ICE funding bill that was voted on yesterday, but Republicans in this House refused to have any amendments on this important issue even considered.

It is clear that they want to continue to give Kristi Noem and Donald Trump the green light to continue terrorizing our communities and have untrained ICE agents run rogue, killing American citizens.

This is not how trust is rebuilt. This is not how we restore faith in the rule of law. This is not how we honor the oath that every public servant takes to support and defend the Constitution.

Justice can never be conditional, and accountability can never be optional.

I urge my colleagues to support the Qualified Immunity Accountability Act, pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, and stand on the side of the Constitution, the rule of law, and

the basic principle that justice must apply equally to everyone.

RETIREMENT OF JUDGE RONNIE FENDER

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the retirement of Mr. Ronnie Fender after 44 years of extraordinary judicial service to Cook County, Georgia.

For more than four decades, Judge Fender has served with integrity, with patience, and an unwavering commitment to justice as a justice of the peace and as a magistrate judge. His courtroom has been a place not only of law but of fairness and respect for all who appeared before him.

Beyond the bench, Judge Fender was an educator who shaped minds with the same care and wisdom he brought to the law. His influence extends far beyond written rulings. It lives on in the countless people he taught, mentored, and served.

Though retiring from full-time service, Judge Fender will continue contributing as a senior magistrate judge on an as-needed basis and as a court bailiff. We are grateful for that continued dedication.

HONORING PHARMACISTS AS KEY RESOURCES

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the invaluable role of pharmacists in supporting older adults as they navigate the difficulties of medication management.

This expertise is especially vital as we age when new prescriptions, changing doses, and potential drug interactions become more common, influenced by slower metabolism, reduced kidney function, and heightened drug sensitivity.

Pharmacists, after six to eight years of rigorous training, including a Doctor of Pharmacy degree, serve as trusted experts in how medications work, interact, and affect aging bodies.

Through services like medication therapy management, they review entire regimens, including prescriptions, over-the-counter products, vitamins, and supplements to identify duplicates, unnecessary drugs, or risky combinations that could lead to dizziness, falls, or confusion.

Pharmacists ensure medications are effective and taken correctly, while offering simplified routines, clear explanations of benefits and side effects, adherence tools such as pill organizers and synchronized refills, and convenient delivery options.

Pharmacists provide accessible guidance anytime, empowering informed decisions that promote safety, independence, and healthy aging.

RECOGNIZING SCOTTISH RITE MONUMENTS IN SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise here today to recognize the monuments being dedicated to the ancient Scottish Rite Valley of Savannah, Georgia.