

Polymarket, avoid State regulation through this loophole. Rather than offering betting services, they sell event contracts, a legacy financial instrument with payouts based on the outcomes of real-world events.

Again, this is a loophole for a legitimate financial tool that has existed for decades, maybe even centuries, but they are using this as a loophole to allow for betting in all States.

In January, one investor netted over \$400,000 on Nicolas Maduro's fall from power, making the timely purchase just before President Trump announced the deposed leader's capture. Prediction market Kalshi claims that, legally, this is investing, not gambling.

I introduced H.R. 7840, the bipartisan Event Contract Enforcement Act, to address these concerns and put an end to reckless event-based gambling. This bill strengthens existing law, requiring the CFTC to prohibit event contracts related to terrorism, assassination, war, gaming, or criminal behavior.

The bill also bans trading on election outcomes and government activities to protect our elections from manipulation and insulate the government from insider trading opportunities.

This nonpartisan issue ensures event contracts can continue to serve in legitimate business interests while also protecting Americans from risk. I am looking forward to moving it through the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1810

MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Ms. RIVAS of California was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. RIVAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on the subject of my Special Order hour.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. RIVAS. Mr. Speaker, I am here today because we have yet to see a bill offered on the floor during my time in Congress that would make life more affordable for working families.

In fact, since the last time my freshmen colleagues and I were on this floor talking about the Republicans' affordability crisis, Donald Trump unconstitutionally started a war with Iran. So far there has been no meaningful plan or strategy to ensure that America's national security interests or our servicemembers are protected.

We mourn for the families and loved ones of the 13 servicemembers who have already lost their lives in this war, and we hope that another life is not lost.

After just over 2 weeks, Donald Trump's war in Iran has cost the American people \$11 billion. Donald Trump would rather pour billions of dollars to start a war with another country than address the affordability crisis that he and Republicans have created.

I recently conducted a survey of nearly 70,000 constituents in my district and asked them a simple yes-or-no question: Instead of the war in Iran, should Trump focus on making the cost of living more affordable? Over 90 percent of those who responded said "yes." This sentiment is reflected across the Nation.

Donald Trump's war in Iran has the worst-ever support for a war at its start. Trump's reckless and illegal war with Iran is yet another example of how this administration has been out of touch with the priorities of American families since he has been back in office.

The American people do not want our country to get sucked into another forever war. The American people want the Epstein files released. The American people want ICE to be reined in. The American people want to pay less at the grocery store, at the gas station, and at the doctor's office.

Since the war in Iran started, prices for gas, food, and other essentials have spiked. Gas prices shot up 50 cents in just one week, and oil prices hit \$100 a barrel.

Experts believe that Trump's war in Iran could push the average cost of gas to above \$4 a gallon within weeks. Gas stations in Los Angeles have hit over \$8 per gallon.

But Trump says he doesn't have any concern about skyrocketing gas prices. He even called anyone who is worried about the rising cost of gas a fool.

When asked whether Americans should feel scared about retaliatory attacks on U.S. soil, Trump replied: "When you go to war, some people will die."

It is not enough to say that Donald Trump is completely out of touch with the needs of the American people. He does not care about everyday Americans. He is more concerned about lining the pockets of his billionaire donors and starting wars to deflect from the issues people actually care about.

My House Democratic Caucus freshmen colleagues and I refuse to let Trump's distractions deter us from fighting for our constituents. We remain focused on lowering costs for our constituents and holding Trump accountable.

We all voted against Trump's war in Iran, to stop him from abusing his power. It is clear that the American public and Congress do not influence Trump's decisions, and he would rather be influenced by his impulses and emotion.

Our constituents sent us to Washington to make life more affordable for them, not to rubberstamp Trump and Republicans' agenda that actively makes their lives worse for them.

Tonight, we will hear from some of the freshmen Democratic Caucus members and the work that they are doing to make life more affordable for their constituents.

I will start with the Congresswoman from Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JOHNSON), my colleague and friend.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend Congresswoman RIVAS for hosting this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, millions of American families are struggling with the skyrocketing cost of living. They can't afford gas, groceries, or their bills.

Republicans in the White House week after week are gaslighting the American people. Now, we are seeing Donald Trump make reckless foreign policy decisions which are increasing the costs for American families as we speak.

Over the past few weeks, the news out of the Middle East has been alarming. Trump has significantly escalated military involvement in Iran, a war that puts American lives at risk.

Now, let's talk about what this means for working families. Wars aren't just fought overseas, but they are paid for right here in the United States. Every increase in military spending and every escalation of conflict has a ripple effect that touches grocery bills, utility costs, and most immediately the price at the pump.

Gas prices are rising with an average gallon in Texas now between \$3.26 and almost \$3.50, while diesel approaches \$5 a gallon, a jump of 25 cents just this past week.

It is families who are paying the price: parents who are driving their kids to school, commuters trying to get to work, and seniors who are trying to make their Social Security stretch just a bit further.

All of this is happening while Trump and Republicans continue to ignore the affordability crisis facing everyday Americans every day of every week and every hour.

We are talking about real families deciding whether to fill their car with gas or put food on the table. We are talking about the anxiety that comes from not knowing how to cover the next bill when our leaders gamble with the lives and the money of American taxpayers abroad.

The billion dollars that we are spending each day on this war could be spent on supporting families, tax relief, the child tax credit, healthcare, the Affordable Care Act—everything.

How many times have we heard from Republicans coming to this floor clutching their pearls saying: Oh, we don't have the money to spend to make healthcare accessible for so many people.

There are so many things that Republicans come down here to say that we don't have the funding for, yet they are willing to let this President spend

their hard-earned tax money on a war overseas instead of the needs of the people right here at home.

While families are tightening their belts, Republicans in Washington are going on a spending spree. They are continuing to try to fund a foreign war with no end in sight, which the American people do not want. All without addressing concerns right here on affordability right now, at kitchen tables at home right now, for people in this country.

The picture could not be clearer. While Republicans prioritize reckless wars over the well-being of the American people, Democrats are laser focused on protecting working families and making sure they can afford what they need to survive.

I urge Republicans to remember the people behind the numbers. Remember the families struggling to fill their tanks, to buy their groceries, and to pay their rent. Remember that every dollar spent on this never-ending war is a dollar taken from American families already stretched too thin.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today not just to call attention to the human cost of war but to call on all of us to act to protect the families of this country, act to prioritize affordability and lower the costs for those who need it, and act to ensure that the promise of the American Dream is not priced out of reach for the millions of people who sent us here to fight for them.

Ms. RIVAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. GRIJALVA), my colleague and friend.

Mrs. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of southern Arizonans who are being squeezed to the brink, families who cannot keep up with rising healthcare costs, soaring gas prices, and a future that feels further and further out of reach.

Working families are struggling to get by. Instead of relief, they are being ignored, all while Trump and House Republicans continue to serve their billionaire friends and special interests.

Nearly 60 percent of families in this country are living paycheck to paycheck. Yet, there is always money for war but never enough money for the urgent needs of everyday people here at home.

The American people want healthcare, not warfare. This war alone has cost us \$22.8 billion. Think about that. That kind of investment could have provided Medicaid to over 6 million children, funded head start for 1.3 million families, canceled \$20,000 in student debt for 1 million borrowers, or funded the ACA premium assistance that Republicans refused to extend.

□ 1820

These are investments southern Arizonans and Americans across the country want to see. Working people are not interested in funding another endless war while they struggle to fill their gas tanks and pay their bills. Instead of putting billionaires first, Con-

gress should focus on policies that make people's lives better. It is time to start putting the American people first.

Ms. RIVAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MENEFE).

Mr. MENEFE. Mr. Speaker, when I was 5 years old, Tupac Shakur said: "You know, it's funny when it rains it pours. They got money for wars, but can't feed the poor."

Those words hit differently today.

Mr. President, nobody wants this war, and the American people cannot afford it.

I am not an economist, but I do know this: The U.S. war with Iran has rattled global markets, driven up oil prices more than 40 percent, and sparked real fears of a worldwide recession. We feel it at home. Gas is more expensive than it has been in a very long time. Flights cost more, and groceries cost more.

However, this is bigger than just economics. It is about accountability. I am a lawyer, and I know that every President swears an oath to defend the Constitution, and that Constitution empowers Congress to declare war, not the President. In this instance, Congress was sidelined. The American people got no clear cause, no strategy, and no endgame.

I say this as a proud son of two veterans. Their sacrifice meant something. Mr. Speaker, you do not send our sons and our daughters into harm's way without purpose, without justification, and without an imminent threat.

We cannot afford this war, not economically, and not morally. When a leader promises peace but delivers war, that is not just a policy failure; that is a betrayal.

Americans do not support this war, and the President should end it immediately.

Ms. RIVAS. I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the poster behind me. This is a real photo that my staff took of a gas station in Los Angeles. It is a real photo. It is not AI, and it is not photoshopped. Your eyes are not deceiving you, Mr. Speaker. You are seeing a real gas station showing \$8.71 a gallon for regular gas. In the span of 1 week, gas prices shot up 50 cents—in just 1 week—and oil prices hit \$100 a barrel.

Gas prices are nearly \$3.50 per gallon on average across the country, but experts believe Trump's war in Iran could push the average cost of gas to above \$4 a gallon within weeks. Analysts say that Americans will spend nearly \$1 billion more on gas next week. Diesel prices are up 86 cents to \$4.60 per gallon, and jet fuel prices have skyrocketed, hiking prices for shipping and airfare.

Trump has not shown concern for how the rising cost of gas could hurt Americans' wallets saying: "If they rise, they rise."

The United States produces more oil than any country on Earth, and even

that supply could not stop gas prices from surging 50 percent in 10 days. Drilling more will not help Americans at the gas pump when oil companies are shipping oil barrels overseas, and it certainly will not help when a strategic waterway, the Strait of Hormuz, is shut down.

Trump's only response is to call us fools and gaslight the American people into thinking he is doing a good job. That is an out-of-touch response from an out-of-touch person. Working families in Los Angeles and across the country cannot afford Trump's war.

Across the country, families are sitting around the kitchen table and are seeing their monthly costs rise with no help in sight. It is adding up quickly, but then they turn on the TV and see that Trump has unconstitutionally started a war in Iran without strategy or justification.

Housing costs are skyrocketing. Grocery costs haven't gone down. Healthcare is being placed out of reach for millions of Americans. Republicans estimate that Trump's war is costing taxpayers upwards of \$2 billion a day, and yet they cannot find a dime to lower the cost of living in this country.

Already, the cost of this war could have likely paid for extending the Affordable Care Act tax credits this year. Instead, families across the country are seeing their healthcare costs double and triple. In my district, 31,000 families have seen their healthcare costs rise because of Republican inaction. Additionally, nearly 11,000 people in California's 29th District will lose access to health coverage because of Republicans' refusal to extend the Affordable Care Act tax credits.

The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that annual out-of-pocket premium payments for ACA marketplace enrollees will increase from \$888 in 2025 to over \$1,900 in 2026.

Constituents in my district have made their voices heard: They would rather Trump and Republicans focus on making healthcare more affordable, not getting involved in another foreign conflict.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. HERNÁNDEZ).

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. There is a common thread that connects families across Puerto Rico and the United States. It is the feeling of looking at a grocery receipt and wondering if the math is wrong. It is the worry that comes when the baby formula runs low or the doctor's bill comes due.

It is the simple, honest truth that for too many of our neighbors: It has simply become too expensive to live, and they are right to be frustrated. That is because while they are doing the hard work, waking up before dawn to get to the job and stretching every dollar to keep the lights on, Washington has made a different choice.

Donald Trump has chosen a war of his own making in Iran. As a result, every one of us is being asked to pay a war tax that we never voted for and that we cannot afford.

In Puerto Rico, we feel this more deeply than most. We see the ships on the horizon, and we know that almost everything we need to survive—the food for our tables, the clothes for our children, and the fuel for our cars—comes from abroad.

When a war starts halfway around the world, it doesn't stay there. It makes the cost of running these ships higher, and so the cost of war shows up at our local gas station. It shows up at the supermarket in the price of a pound of chicken. It shows up in our paycheck where \$10 here and \$20 there are being snatched away to pay for a conflict we don't need.

Washington should focus more on us, not on another endless foreign war. Democrats are here fighting for Puerto Ricans. We are fighting for the mother in Puerto Rico who deserves the same help from SNAP to buy groceries as a mother in Florida or California. We are fighting for the grandfather who shouldn't be turned away at a medical appointment by his doctor because Medicaid ran out of money.

We are fighting for every family who deserves to know that when they flip the switch, they won't go bankrupt because of higher electricity and utility rates.

The Republican Party is thinking about war rooms and drones. We are thinking about living rooms and kitchen tables. Americans and Puerto Ricans should not have to bear the brunt of reckless decisions made thousands of miles away. We have done our part. Americans have worked the hours, they have kept the faith, and they deserve a government that finally puts them and their families first.

□ 1830

Ms. RIVAS. Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to once again take a moment to mourn the lives that have already been lost to this conflict.

My heart goes out to the families and loved ones of the 13 servicemembers who have been killed in this war. My heart also goes out to the innocent lives that have been taken as a result of this war, including the over 170 people, mostly young girls, who were killed in a school.

As we have seen, Donald Trump does not have a strategy to keep innocent lives or our servicemembers safe. He started a war because he once again refuses to address the issues Americans actually care about: releasing the Epstein files, reining in ICE, and addressing the affordability crisis he and Republicans started.

My House Democratic colleagues and I know that working Americans are not interested in another forever war. They want to be able to afford their rent, pay for their groceries, see their doctor, and fill their tank without fear of going into debt.

I am proud to work with my colleagues to drive down the high cost of living, fix our broken healthcare system, and make sure that immigration

enforcement in this country is fair, just, and humane. House Democrats stand with working Americans and will always work on solutions to alleviate their fears and keep their dreams within reach.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

HONORING CONSTITUENTS OF GEORGIA

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. CARTER of Georgia was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Michael Proctor, who, sadly, passed away on February 12 at the age of 58.

Michael, a Georgia native, attended Worth County High School, where he first showcased his natural athletic ability. He started for the Murray State Racers at Murray State University as quarterback, where he was honored with the nickname "The General."

During this time, he earned All-Ohio Valley Conference honors and OVC Offensive Player of the Year, and he set the Murray State record in career yards. He was inducted into the Murray State University Athletic Hall of Fame in 2000, with his No. 11 being retired.

After college, Proctor played briefly for the New England Patriots, the Cleveland Browns, the World League of American Football, and the Canadian Football League. He was an accomplished football player with incredible talent and determination.

Proctor's journey from small-town Georgia to the football spotlight is truly inspirational. May he rest in peace, and his legacy live on.

HONORING SCOTT MORRISON

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Pastor Scott Morrison. He serves as discipleship pastor at the First Baptist Church of Vidalia, Georgia.

Pastor Morrison has a legacy of leadership with over 25 years of experience. In 2001, he became the minister of students, making discipleship a priority for the youth of the church. Several of his students entered the ministry and later became missionaries themselves.

Pastor Scott embodies the Scripture through his work at First Baptist Church, helping others every day. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he started a nonprofit effort at Vidalia High School called Whisper to address rising mental health concerns. His efforts have increased student well-being across the region, as it has expanded to other schools. His dedication to bettering the lives of young people in his community sets an example for us all.

Pastor Scott is married to Mindy, and they have two sons and a daughter.

I thank Pastor Scott Morrison for his community leadership and service to others over the past 25 years. He is and will be a critical part of the Vidalia community for years to come.

HONORING MAYOR JOHN WILLIAM GRANT, JR.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of former Milledgeville Mayor John William Grant, Jr., who passed away on February 14 at the age of 99.

Mayor Grant was born in 1926, serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II and graduating from college soon after. Back in Milledgeville, he successfully ran his family jewelry business while simultaneously serving 20 years as a Milledgeville city councilman and 4 years as mayor.

He was known for his integrity, thoughtful leadership, and deep commitment to the people of Milledgeville during his time in office. He led with a hands-on approach, focusing on improving infrastructure, encouraging community growth, and fostering unity among residents.

Mayor Grant is survived by his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and countless friends. He will be remembered as a kindhearted leader who truly cared about the people of Milledgeville.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family and the entire community.

REMEMBERING TONY PETREA

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Tony Petrea, a proud Savannah native who passed away at his home in Statesboro surrounded by his loving family and friends.

Tony was a man of discipline, integrity, and strength who built a respected name for himself in his community through hard work and dedication.

He cherished his years coaching baseball, sharing his time and wisdom with young athletes. He was also an amateur radio enthusiast and loved to travel, exploring destinations from Mexico to the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas.

In addition to his many passions, Tony established the J.L. Petrea Construction Scholarship at Ogeechee Technical College, allowing two students each year to receive financial support to pursue their education.

Tony's generosity and kind spirit were a hallmark of his life. He connected easily with others, gave selflessly, and never sought recognition for his good deeds. His legacy will live on through the lives he touched and the opportunities he created for others.

RECOGNIZING GEORGIA SOUTHERN'S ETHICS BOWL TEAM

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding achievement by the Georgia Southern University Ethics Bowl team from Statesboro, Georgia.

This talented group of Eagles has qualified for the 2026 APPE Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl National Competition in St. Louis, Missouri.