

powers in our Constitution that belongs to the people of the United States, not just the President, our Nation is now at war with a religious state.

Valiant members of our Armed Forces have been sent into battle in one of the most complex and combustible regions of the world. Never in the entire history of our Nation has any such consequential decision to take our military and the American people to war been made solely by any former President without a vote of Congress. Valiant members of our Armed Forces are being killed.

We, as Members of Congress, must offer consolation to their families and the communities from which they come, and we must pay tribute to their bravery and sheer patriotism. However, like their families, we remain stunned as we, too, were unaware they were being deployed into war in territory we know to be very dangerous.

Last week, Senator RAND PAUL of Kentucky was quoted as saying he would oppose any Iran supplemental. He said that he is hearing from farmers in his State impacted by rising costs on everything, including oil, that stem from the war. He thinks Congress should focus on domestic issues.

Well, we can't do just that, but I do agree with Senator RAND PAUL that the war places a tourniquet on global energy supplies, and prices on almost everything will continue to rise. I can comment that as planting season is upon us, diesel and fertilizer costs are through the roof, and our farmers, producers, and growers are really feeling it.

Now, the Trump administration says that it seeks Congress to appropriate—get ready for this—\$200 billion more of additional financial support for this undeclared war.

□ 1110

No Member of Congress would abandon our troops in harm's way. I will repeat that. No Member of Congress would abandon our troops in harm's way, but here are vital questions that must be asked by the American people and this Congress and answered by the administration: What does victory look like? What does it look like? Which nations are our allies in this struggle and are placing troops on the ground? How many troops in each adjoining nation are already on the ground? How will the Trump administration raise the funds to pay for what will likely be a half trillion dollars or more not just for the war but for the rebuilding of a very troubled, difficult region?

There will be a lingering instability that could pose more unrest in that region. Chaos is a possibility. The President has already in his first and now second administrations added over \$6 trillion to America's debt, and it is rising.

Does the President intend to borrow the funds necessary and from whom, indebting the American people for gen-

erations to come? Trillions of dollars is a lot of money.

To conduct this undeclared war on Iran and apparently adjoining countries, the Trump administration is increasing our debt and borrowing even more money from China to spend against Iran. China, looking at our debt accounts, can ask for payment on those bonds at any time.

I don't like the prospect of that. At the same time, with the billions of defense dollars being spent in the Middle East, too many of our global assets are being repositioned from the Pacific and the European NATO commitment.

The President relatedly announced he is going to lift oil sanctions on Russia. That means he is empowering Russia, the fiercest foe of liberty, at the same time as he is enriching China.

Did liberty in our world just turn upside down? Have key Trump officials forgotten the difference between liberty and tyranny?

Mr. Speaker, I ask America to pay attention.

Now, let us be serious about the accounting of these ongoing war efforts. The first week alone was reported to cost \$11.3 billion, not a penny of that brought before the respective congressional appropriations committees for approval. Just in the first week, \$11.3 billion spent. At a pace of \$2 billion per day, that means we are spending \$23,000 per second.

At this pace, spending could reach \$1 trillion more by November 2027. I can guarantee you our Defense Appropriations Subcommittee has not approved a single penny of this spending for the war on Iran.

This is a war of Presidential choice. Billions have been spent. As of today, we estimate about \$40 billion, the 20th day of President Trump's war.

The President is erasing money from other accounts, I guess, in order to put it into this undeclared, fateful military engagement, erasing it from accounts he has to, like health insurance and food for children. We are asking where has the President emptied the accounts to pay for this war?

Our debt gets worse every day, and since he took office 14 months ago, our national debt has ballooned to \$39 trillion. That is \$3 trillion more than just over a year ago. That translates into a growing tax on generations to come and that is wrong.

The President must present to Congress his plan to pay for his war of choice. Otherwise, our ship of state is going to be tilting in ways that harm the American people. They are already seeing it in the price of essentials like food, gas, fertilizer for our farmers, medical care, diesel, energy prices, water prices are going up, and housing is unaffordable and rising every day. I can guarantee you the American people are feeling the raw pinch of this already.

I have questions. Who exactly will be President Trump's emissaries to negotiate a lasting peace in the Middle

East? What background do they have in that part of the world? What qualifications do they have to offer in the way of expertise? It is obvious the ones that he assigned, his son-in-law and Mr. Witkoff, had no success. They had no experience in that part of the world. They had no experience in negotiating peace. It is obvious the current negotiators were unable to prevent war.

The only President of whom I am aware who made consequential peace in the Middle East was President Jimmy Carter, a man I served nearly half a century ago.

He worked diligently for months and months, and I daresay years, at that astounding achievement of a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. I urge President Trump's associates to contact the Carter Center and identify some of those who are currently living and participated in that extraordinary achievement and seek their advice. This is not a simple engagement, and it will have lasting repercussions.

Recall it was President Trump during his first term that pulled the rug out from Afghanistan in 2018 when he withdrew from that deal, and as we watched greater instability grow, he actually made a deal with the Taliban who are our enemies and then our allies in Afghanistan collapsed. He precipitated the U.S. withdrawal, not Joe Biden.

When Joe Biden took office, the damage had already been done. As I view the road forward, who will be the diplomatic corps that will be necessary to follow on this major invasion with negotiations for a just and lasting peace?

In the national interest, partisanship has to be put aside, and the most intelligent and experienced people in our country must be drawn together. To find a way forward, levelheaded people with foreign policy experience and budgetary know-how must be brought to the forefront. This heedlessness on multiple fronts cannot continue.

Our people deserve a White House focused on resolution and here at home, affordability for the American people, not another endless foreign war with no strategy and no way out. What is truly troubling to me as I watch this engagement is, I don't see some of the richest tyrannies in the Middle East, like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, where are their troops on the ground? They are not there.

We need a clear path forward for the American people, and the President needs to come to Congress as we attempt to negotiate the ship of state toward a stable Middle East, engaging countries around the world who are also suffering from this decision.

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

□ 1120

ATTENTION MUST BE PAID

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. GROTHMAN of Wisconsin was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, on today, the day when Members fly out, I want to leave the body with some thoughts regarding some issues that I don't think enough attention has been paid to.

The first issue I want to talk about is the issue regarding sheltered workshops or community rehabilitation providers. Maybe some of my colleagues have taken tours of these wonderful facilities. They are largely places in which people who have different abilities work, perhaps they have Down syndrome, perhaps they have spina bifida, perhaps they are even quadriplegic.

These facilities, however, offer opportunities of employment for people. These are people who years ago had no employment and were stuck, sitting at home, perhaps with their parents, perhaps in a group home, without the opportunity to share in the satisfaction of work and without the ability to supplement their other income. Frequently, that other income amounts to some sort of Social Security disability payment.

In any event, I have a bill introduced, which I hope becomes part of the WIOA package in the Education Committee. Under that bill, we are going to try to stop the current trend of closing down these facilities.

People who want to close down these facilities do it, in part, by saying people have to try and fail and work three times and get fired three times in the community before they are allowed to work at these facilities. That is really just a horrible thing. As a practical matter, it makes it very difficult for people to work in these sorts of facilities.

Secondly, right now, it creates a situation in which these folks do not have the ability to get outside of what I will refer to as day services. Right now—and I encourage all my colleagues to tour facilities like this—right now, if a person works in a facility like this, they have the joy and satisfaction of getting a paycheck just like perhaps the siblings of these people do.

There is a great deal of satisfaction in buying your own clothes and in buying gifts for your relatives, which is why it is so important we keep the facilities open and stop the attack of the people who are trying to shut down these facilities.

We might ask: Why would anybody shut down these facilities? First of all, people don't like the fact that in these facilities people are frequently making minimum wage, which is true.

However, people with some abilities, if we look at the light work they are doing, it is hard to imagine that a profit-making business or any sort of business could operate paying some folks like this over \$7.50 an hour. Upon touring them, we immediately see why some of these folks make \$6 an hour, \$4 an hour, or \$3 an hour.

The other criticism of them is they feel it is segregating people to put

them in a facility with other people who have handicaps. That, of course, is ridiculous. First of all, sitting in facilities like this, we have what I will refer to as management or sometimes people working part time so that they can ramp up the amount of production in these facilities.

In any event, they may get to know these folks for 10 or 20 or 30 years. They get to know not only the people with disabilities themselves but, again, people in management. That is much less turnover than if these folks got a job in the community for 5 or 6 hours a week at a fast-food enterprise where there is a great deal of turnover.

Like I said, it would be very difficult to find anybody in the community that frequently can provide a 30-hour-a-week or 35-hour-a-week job that you really need if you are going to feel like a working member of the community.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly encourage this body, when we pass the WIOA Act out of the Education Committee, we pass a bill with it strengthening these facilities and stopping the foolish regulations that right now are causing, sadly, many of these facilities to close.

One more time I ask my colleagues, even if they are doing it to get re-elected, why don't they take a tour of these community rehabilitation providers and watch the enjoyment that these employees get in working just like everybody else in society and the huge social benefits they get by establishing lifelong friendships in these facilities, who they enjoy spending time with.

After all, for these folks, it is even more important than other people to socialize with people they work with. All of us to a degree socialize with our fellow employees. Again, people who have Down syndrome or spina bifida, I think their parents frequently worry what type of friends they will have when they are gone. These facilities provide those lifelong friendships that are so important.

BUDGET REQUESTS AND EXCESSIVE EMPLOYEES

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, the next thing I would like to address is soon we are going to take up a budget and begin to take up appropriation bills for the year beginning September 1. We also may be taking up some sort of bill dealing with the hostilities in Iran.

Given that, I want to remind people we recently hit \$39 trillion in debt in this country. We are borrowing about 25 or 26 percent of our budget. I think all of the folks back home ought to stop and think. Can you imagine what it is like borrowing 26 percent of your budget? It is utterly reckless for anyone to do that in their life or their business, but that is what we are doing right now.

Right now, about 14 percent of our tax dollars sent to Washington already go to interest. Obviously, that is the beginning of the downward spiral toward bankruptcy when 14 percent of our budget is on interest.

What I will ask—I am sure we will be asked to spend money on a supplemental for the war in Iran, and I am prepared to do that. I do ask leadership to step up to the plate and pass a reconciliation bill or appropriation bills that are a little more responsible than the irresponsible ones in the past.

After all, if it is worthwhile to spend billions of dollars, tens of billions, maybe hundreds of billions of dollars in Iran, it is certainly worthwhile that maybe we don't reduce spending to cover all of that but reduce spending to a degree.

DOGE, which people begin to forget about, pointed out the huge number of excessive employees in all government agencies. In the Department of Defense right now, we still have just under 700,000 people who are nonuniformed personnel. In other words, people are sitting in front of a computer for the Department of Defense.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody can argue that that number is high. We reduced the number mildly by providing buyouts for people. We reduced the number by putting in hiring freezes so if that people retire, they don't get replaced. That only reduced the employment by 60,000 or 70,000 people.

Mr. Speaker, I think if you ask around, you will find people who know through their relatives or people in their apartment building or people in their church that there are still probably hundreds of thousands of people who are working there unnecessarily.

Before the Department of Defense comes back with or at the same time they come back with requests for a supplemental to spend more money, I think it is important for the Department of Defense to come back and explain to us what they have done to reduce the number of employees there and for the administration overall to look at the number of employees in all other agencies, as well as programs in other agencies, and say this is what we have to cut if we are going to begin to fund the Iran war.

□ 1130

I am not even asking for \$1 for \$1 or \$1 cut for every \$2 spent. Maybe \$1 reduction for every \$3 spent would be appropriate, but I hope they don't insult the next generation by just asking for additional spending.

NO FUNDING FOR EARLY TRANSGENDER SURGERIES

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, the next issue I would like to address is one that Dr. Oz got in the paper for, and that is the transgender situation in this country.

I frequently hear conservative commentators, FOX News in particular, who talk about boys in girls' sports. We shouldn't have boys in girls' sports. However, I think that kind of implies that if we solve that problem, we solve the transgender problem.

That is not true. Recent studies have shown a dramatic reduction in the number of people who claim to be

transgender. I think for people like me, that is not a surprise at all because I think a lot of people who are being transgender are being transgender because they are egged on by psychiatrists or egged on by school counselors, or even more, egged on by popular culture as a way to find a peer group and as way to kind of be, you know, the cool rebel.

Yet, Dr. Oz has taken on the medical groups, including the American Psychiatric Association, who have been in favor of identifying people as transgender and even giving them puberty blockers and, worse, giving them surgeries before age 18.

Now, I don't know how anybody, any medical professional, anybody with a wit of common sense, would give anybody surgery before 25 years old because you know that people change their minds about things, and obviously if you have one of these dramatic surgeries and realize later that you made a mistake, it is going to result in huge psychiatric problems.

So I strongly encourage Dr. Oz to get more involved in this. I strongly encourage this body to lower their opinion of the American Psychiatric Association because these people who have spent a long period of time in school apparently have a complete and utter lack of common sense, and one wonders why we are listening to them or why we are required to give them money for their ridiculous efforts on behalf of early surgeries on transgender people.

In any event, I hope that all conservative commentators, when they talk about the transgender thing, in addition to talking about the relatively tiny number of men who participate in women's sports, go after the psychiatrists and psychologists who are giving puberty blockers and, even more, giving outright surgeries on our young people that I would bet in very, very many cases, they will regret and they will regret listening to the professionals who went to school at length for such a preposterous endeavor.

FINDING WASTE IN INCOME TRANSFER PROGRAMS

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, the next thing I would like to point out is I thank Congressman OWENS for introducing a bill that we recently dealt with in the Education Committee.

Over time, certainly in Minnesota but across the country, we are finding shocking amounts of money being wasted on income transfer programs. We found another one here. We are right now giving aid to students who may not even exist, and maybe some of that money winds up with colleges and universities toward tuition, but a lot of the money winds up with what we will call ghost students, students who don't exist except for on paper, and somebody winds up stealing money that the government is printing.

First of all, one more time, it gives a lesson as to why things ought to be handled on a State and local level because I think State and local govern-

ments are going to be much quicker to pick up on the fact that they are being taken advantage of than the unwieldy Federal Government.

Secondly, it is continuing a trend that we have in this country of encouraging the crooks in society to take advantage of the Federal Government and get wildly rich.

We are, in this bill, going to make it a much more difficult thing and require the government to look into this matter and into the students who are getting these aid payments so that things in one more program don't wind up completely out of control.

I strongly encourage this body to pare back on any of these programs that are wrought with fraud. I think a conclusion that ought to be dealt with once you get done looking at fraud for food stamps or fraud for Medicaid or fraud for earned income tax credit is that if you let the Federal Government do anything, there will be tons of fraud in it and the less of these programs, the better.

It doesn't mean that people can't be helped, but the people should be helped by either private charity, or they should be helped by State and local governments.

FAMILIES WITHOUT MEN

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, my final thing I am going to point out, and I recently had a meeting on this with the Vice President, but what I think is the biggest problem with the government right today, which is further related to all of these income transfer payments, is the fact that right now in this government and really for the last 60 years, we have been penalizing couples who have children in wedlock.

This has been a longtime dream of getting rid of the nuclear family. It was Karl Marx's dream. It was Kate Millett, the mother of the women's studies department, dream, families without men. All sorts of families can succeed. I assume you know many single parents who have done a fantastic job of raising their children.

Nevertheless, as they work toward their goal of keeping men out of the family, it statistically overall does hurt the children to a degree. It is not something that we should be encouraging.

I sit here and listen to hearings about educational achievement. I listen to hearings about crime problems, hearings about depression, hearings about drug use, and to a degree, I think the answer is never brought up in these hearings.

The answer is: Stronger families. Yet, if this government is going to give a bonus of \$25,000 per year or penalize somebody \$25,000 per year for getting married before they have children, it is obviously, first of all, unfair on its face, or grotesquely favoring one lifestyle over another lifestyle. Secondly, we are reducing the number of children who do have a mother and father at home.

I strongly encourage Vice President VANCE and President Trump to step

forward and appoint some sort of committee or commission to recommend what we should do instead of dramatically penalizing couples who decide to get married.

I will point out that you are hurting the children, which is true. I think you are hurting the mothers, which is true. Yet, according to expert sociologists like George Gilder, you are hurting the prospective husbands or fathers because the way society is built up, the primary purpose of most men in the country is supposed to be to take care of their wives and children.

As an Indian immigrant friend of mine said: When you have the government marrying the woman, it kind of leaves the man out of the picture, and he loses what is supposed to be his natural purpose in life.

I strongly encourage Speaker JOHN-SON, Majority Leader THUNE, and President Trump to establish some sort of committee in which we can look at all of these programs. There are about 70 programs out there in which we penalize people for getting married.

Pell grants, it is much easier to get a college scholarship if you are a single parent than a married parent. Food stamps, low-income housing, earned income tax credit, daycare subsidies, like I said, about 70 programs, and it looks, to a certain extent, the way they were put together, their design was to cause the breakdown of the American family.

I hope that is something that can be done over the next couple of months. I thought it would be done today, but I think the war in Iran is taking everybody's focus. Yet, I would like to see us by the time June rolls around to have these committees or commissions at work preparing recommendations so that we no longer exhibit this hatred that we apparently have in this country of people who decide to get married before they have children.

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

□ 1140

SPEAKING TRUTH ABOUT CRYPTO AND CONGRESS

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, with a very special topic. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, because I am a liberated, unbought, unbossed Democrat.

I not only speak the truth to power; I speak truth about power. You speak truth to power by simply saying: "Power, there is a problem. Let's solve it." It is a great thing to do. When you speak truth about power, you say: "Power, there is a problem, and you are it."

Today, I am going to speak truth about power. I am going to do so because I will not allow the power that I am to speak about to intimidate me. I insist on having the full benefit of my