

Instead of reversing course, Trump's budget doubles down. It eliminates financial assistance for families that are facing rising utility bills. It slashes affordable housing programs like CDBG. It cuts nutrition and health assistance for women, infants, and children, WIC. It guts cancer research and public health funding, even as rural hospitals struggle to stay open.

This budget is a statement of values, and it shows clearly that the priority is not our people. It tells us exactly who this administration is willing to fight for and who it is willing to leave behind, with a 42-percent increase in funding for the Pentagon while cutting programs that support the American people here at home by 10 percent.

I will not support a budget that asks working families to sacrifice more just to bankroll endless wars abroad and hand out tax breaks to the wealthy.

"Our people deserve better"; "nuestra gente merece mejor."

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MENEFE), and I thank him for his patience. He was here at the beginning of this Special Order hour, waiting patiently to make the case for his district and the people he was sent to fight for here in Washington.

Mr. MENEFE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose President Trump's budget. A budget is a statement of values, and this one shows what President Trump cares about: his senseless war first and American families last.

Across the country and in my home in Houston, Americans are fed up with a government that seems more focused on endless wars than on whether people can afford groceries or gas.

President Trump's proposed budget cuts many of the programs that would offer even a little bit of relief to the economic pain he has caused. It would even cut childcare, ignoring the realities families face. As a father of two, I know how costly childcare is, and I am troubled by leaders who would make it harder, not easier, for parents to work and raise their children.

We are feeling these cuts uniquely in my city of Houston. Despite having some of the most food-insecure neighborhoods in the entire country, we have seen massive cuts to food banks, including tens of millions of dollars from the Houston Food Bank.

Despite having the largest medical research hub in the entire country in the Texas Medical Center, which relies on a routine basis on NIH grants, we have seen \$5 billion cut from the NIH.

Despite having some of the most environmental injustice-ridden communities in the entire United States of America, we have seen more than 50 percent in funding cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency. We know that those cuts are coming mostly from the environmental justice divisions.

This budget is immoral. It is an attack on Americans. It is going to severely harm people in Houston.

The President's policies have raised costs, worsened the affordability crisis, undermined access to healthcare, and delivered tax breaks for billionaires while working families fall further behind. Millions of people risk losing vital care and financial security while a small number of billionaires see their wealth grow. Think about that: Families are going without care so that the rich can get richer.

We are the wealthiest nation on Earth. Our budget can and must afford investments in childcare and healthcare and support for our seniors while managing our finances responsibly. What we cannot afford are priorities that put the richest first and leave working families behind.

Mr. Speaker, President Trump's budget represents not America First, but America last.

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB).

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for his continued effort to protect and fight for working families.

For the last 7 years that I have been here, I have been pushing for us to fund and acknowledge that safe, accessible, and affordable drinking water is a human right. Right now, in our United States, we have programs for electricity and gas shut-offs, but nothing for water. Water is life. It is sometimes literally a barrier to a public health crisis.

Congresswoman DEBBIE DINGELL and I are changing that. In 2021, we established the first-ever low-income housing water assistance program, a financial assistance program to pay off bills and debts and keep people's water connected during the pandemic. It was a total of \$1.1 billion.

The program saved countless lives, but the money has run out. Millions of Americans right now are struggling to keep up with the affordability crisis and having their water shut off.

It is not just an issue in Detroit, but also in communities like the city of Inkster, Redford Township, and other areas in the 12th Congressional District. This is a nationwide issue. Every Congressional district right now has a water crisis.

That is why Congresswoman DINGELL and I are introducing the Water Access and Affordability Act to establish a permanent low-income drinking water assistance program within the Environmental Protection Agency.

Our bill would dedicate \$20 billion every year to keep people's water flowing. This program would include direct financial assistance and bill payments, debt relief, reconnection assistance, and water efficiency upgrades.

It will set up community advisory committees to help advise the EPA on how to implement these programs to make the biggest difference possible.

This bill would ban water shutoffs as a punishment for not being able to afford their water bills. This is the rich-

est country in the world. We say it all the time, but it is important. Many families see the money flowing but not to essentials.

The President just requested a \$1.5 trillion military budget, but they want to tell us they don't have money to make sure that every family in our country has access to clean drinking water. This bill is an important first step in our movement to recognize, again, that water is life. It is a human right.

This has become an issue for me and something very important because there was an African-American couple in my community in their seventies. Their story was published in one of our local outlets. One of the homeowners had put snow in a bucket to melt so he had water to be able to flush the toilet.

Their story talked about the fact that they worked all their lives. They paid for their home. They have to pay their taxes every year on their home. They have a little bit of bills here and there, but the water costs went so high that they just couldn't afford it. They literally, in their seventies, in their retirement, couldn't afford water.

I say this lovingly to my colleagues: It is about time we find money for our families here at home. If our country has money for endless wars, we have money to make sure that people aren't melting snow to flush their toilets or living in fear of getting their children taken away because water has been shut off.

We will literally take children away from homes that don't have access to water and spend money on putting them in foster care, but not make sure that, again, we have programs like this one to make sure that they are protected and have access to something that is lifesaving.

Mr. Speaker, water is a human right, and I hope my colleagues will try to support, again, the funding of this program. Trust me, all across the country, you will find a family that is struggling to pay their water bill.

□ 1700

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues who joined us on the floor today, as well as Assistant Democratic Leader NEGUSE for cohosting this Special Order hour.

We are all elected to bring our constituents' voices here to Congress and to pass policies that help them live better lives. I urge my colleagues to protect housing, education, and healthcare especially; in other words, to prioritize the needs of all of our constituents.

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

#### CELEBRATING THE FREEDOM CAUCUS AND TIMOTHY REITZ

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

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I come here this evening as someone proud to be a

part of an organization called the House Freedom Caucus.

I have people that I represent in Texas, constituents, but I also have people throughout the entire State, people across the country who stop me in airports, and they talk about what we do as the Freedom Caucus.

I say: Pretty simply, we stand up for freedom. When people say: Well, why would I want to be in the House Freedom Caucus? My answer is: Well, why wouldn't you want to be in the House Freedom Caucus?

It is a caucus of individuals dedicated to the Constitution, dedicated to freedom, dedicated to limiting government, all of the principles on which most of us, at least on this side of the aisle, run on. We happen to believe that when you come to Washington, you should do what you say when you are campaigning, that you should do what you say. It shouldn't be that complicated. Unfortunately, it often is.

I am proud to be in the trenches often with so many colleagues in the Freedom Caucus who recognize the importance of standing up and fighting for the principles and for the changes the American people sent us here to carry out and execute.

We have had a number of really extraordinarily important issues before this body in my time in Congress and in recent years. Right now, we have extraordinary issues facing us.

Earlier today, when we had bills on the floor of the House, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were complaining and criticizing and alleging that we are not accomplishing anything, we are not getting anything done. Alternatively, when I talk to the people that I represent, when I talk to Texans, and I talk to the people that I said that stop me in airports and that thank us for doing what we do in the House Freedom Caucus for conservatives here on the House floor, I would say that I am very proud of the things that we have done over the last 15 months.

I am proud that we cut taxes. I am proud that we made sure that we put reforms in place to stop fraud and abuse. I am proud that we were able to put reforms in Medicaid and in food stamps to eliminate welfare for people who aren't working and for people who are illegal aliens. I am proud of the fact that this President has stopped the flow of illegal aliens at the border, that he has designated cartels as terrorist organizations, that he has taken the fight to the cartels and is going after Venezuela and trying to restore our dominance in the Western Hemisphere. I am proud that we have people now registering and enlisting in the United States military in record numbers because he has restored people's belief and confidence in the United States military. I am proud that he is standing up in defense of common sense, of saying that we shouldn't have boys in girls' locker rooms, and that we should be doing the things that

would restore order and common sense throughout our country.

I am proud of what we have been doing. I have to say that the House Freedom Caucus stands at the epicenter, I think, of the great things that we have been accomplishing. But for the Freedom Caucus 3 years ago, in a notorious event here with respect to the Speaker and selecting a Speaker, we demanded certain changes to this institution.

We demanded that we have better representation in the Rules Committee and on Appropriations, and we demanded that we move solid and strong legislation, like H.R. 2 and our border security bill that we passed 3 years ago. We demanded that we have reforms on spending and that we try to move regular order and get bills through so we can actually get appropriations done.

Over the course of these years, we managed to pass the strongest border security bill in the history of this body. We managed to pass spending bills that held spending flat for the last three cycles. For 3 fiscal years, we have been able to hold discretionary spending flat. We managed to have serious influence in shaping what happened in the big, beautiful bill, as it came to be known, in particular stopping the absurdity of the green new scam subsidies. We singlehandedly stood up and took the arrows to say: We are not going to pass this, and we are going to demand change, and we are going to demand reform.

I can go through a list of countless things, whether it was the FISA reforms from 2 years ago, which I am proud that we implemented because we demanded that we actually protect Americans from warrantless surveillance and warrantless searches. We should demand to protect citizens when we had abuse under FISA and abuse by our intelligence community and the FBI against the American people.

By the way, sidenote, we should do that again. We should have more reforms. We shouldn't allow the intelligence community to roll over us. We should stand up again here on the House floor and make sure that the American people are protected. I think there is bipartisan support for that.

The Freedom Caucus has stood at the center of these fights and tried to demand that we protect the American people, that we protect them against the long arm of the government, that we try to hold taxes in check, hold spending in check, do even an ounce of what we said we would do when we campaigned.

I am proud to affiliate with such a great group of people. I am proud of what we do. I have no problem taking the arrows from people in this town that I am a part of the Freedom Caucus because I can promise you, the American people thank me and the American people thank us. They thank us for standing up against the inevitability in this town of Big Govern-

ment, big spending and debt, and the expansion of the tyrannical bureaucratic state against the freedom of the American people.

I am proud to be affiliated with the Freedom Caucus. We are here today not only to talk about that and to talk about the things we need to do, but we are here to celebrate one of our own, one of our dear friends, Tim Reitz, who serves currently as the House Freedom Caucus executive director. Tim will be leaving this week to go continue to stay in the fight and go to an organization down the street. We will miss, Tim.

His work has been tireless in the advance of freedom. His work has been at the center of all that we have been able to accomplish over these last 4 years in his role as executive director, which I think now has been just over 4 years.

He has served under at least three different chairmen of the House Freedom Caucus, one of whom is here, and I am sure I will hand over the mike in just a second, to my good friend, SCOTT PERRY from Pennsylvania.

Before that, he served as chief of staff, legislative director, and legislative assistant to my good friend and former Member of this body, Jody Hice, who is sitting behind me now.

We are all here to thank Tim for his service. He is a great American, a Georgian who worked for Paul Broun, a former Member of this body as well, before he worked for Jody Hice of Georgia. He is a graduate, I believe, of Georgia State University, but a big fan of the Georgia Bulldogs as well. In fact, he is so much a fan of the Georgia Bulldogs that he owns two bulldogs, Rocco and Rockette. He is married to his beautiful bride, Dawn-Marie, who works for the President in administration in the Office of Management and Budget and who herself was a staffer on Capitol Hill.

Now, as someone who served as a staffer himself, someone who worked over in the Senate as a staffer, I can tell you how much work goes into being an accomplished and a productive staffer.

Look, I have got a lot of staffer friends who are here in the leadership office, the whip office, my team, but I don't know anybody who has worked harder than Tim Reitz as a staffer, whether it was for Jody or in an individual office, whether it was for us, the Freedom Caucus in advance of his duties, but importantly in advance of the cause of freedom.

For those of us who come here—and I have got to be blunt here. I always offend people, but I might as well just stick with what works for me—we have got a tendency in this body to come up here to be part of a club. It is like people come here to be a part of something. It is like, look at me, I am a Member of Congress. There are a fewer number of people—and this includes staff, too—there are a fewer number of people who come up here to do, to do things, to fight for things, to take the

arrows in defense of something bigger than ourselves.

It is not enough to come here and just check the box. It is not enough to just come here and pass a bill because somebody tells you we have to. You come here, and you stand up, and you say: When the American people elected us—and when you have staffers who are sitting there working for us, knowing what they fought for and why they work for us, and they stand up and say: Yeah, but we didn't come here to do that.

Like let's take FISA. We didn't come here to rubberstamp what the intelligence community tells us to do. One of our House Freedom Caucus colleagues, MICHAEL CLOUD—I want to give him credit. MICHAEL said he is in Appropriations right now or he would be here to celebrate Tim. As MICHAEL said about 3 weeks ago in a Republican meeting: When does the intelligence community ever come forward and say: Hey, we have all this power to collect data and to do all this stuff, hey, we are going to give it back today. Here, we are going to give you some of that power back.

□ 1710

Has that ever happened in the history of mankind? Has that ever happened here? Of course not.

We came here to say we are going to do something about it. Tim came here to do something about it. Tim joined forces with the House Freedom Caucus to say we are going do something about it.

Two years ago, we did something about it. We worked legislation through the Judiciary Committee. We worked legislation in coordination with the Intelligence Committee and actually got some good reforms and a minimal 2-year reauthorization so we could come back and do it again.

Here we are and it is going to expire in another 10 days because we extended it 2 weeks last week. We actually have an obligation now to do the right thing, and I know Tim. He would say, look, I am going to stick around another 10 days if we can get it right because we ought to protect the American people.

The people who come here to effectuate change, those are the people that you, the American people who are watching this on C-SPAN, all 12 of you, should be thanking your lucky stars that you have someone like Tim Reitz here fighting for you as a staffer and being willing to work as the executive director of the Freedom Caucus, which I think is one of the most respected organizations among the American people and one of the most reviled organizations among the swamp creatures because they don't like having their BS called. Tim Reitz has been a faithful member of that.

Mr. Speaker, now that I have a quorum of my colleagues here, I will stop filibustering and turn it over to my good friend SCOTT PERRY, who is

the chairman of the Freedom Caucus when Tim was an executive director.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my good friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the good gentleman from Texas for organizing this.

Mr. Speaker, we sure appreciate our good friend Tim Reitz, and my good friend from Texas has laid out things about the Freedom Caucus that we have accomplished and the things that we stand for.

Everybody comes to Washington—I don't care what side of the aisle you are on or what district you are from—you want to make a difference. You want to make your country better. That is what I believe, but Washington has a way of capturing everybody that comes here that maybe has a little bit of a shaky foundation, not really sure about how devoted to that cause they are.

The Freedom Caucus, in my experience, are the individuals that came to save the Republic. That is what they came for and that is all they came for. They want to do the right thing even if it is at their own peril.

As the gentleman from Texas said, we are respected and lauded by many people across the country like at airports or in different cities, even in my own hometown with thanks for the things that we engage on and in for the American people.

We are not doing it for ourselves. We are doing it for the people that we represent. We are trying to make their lives better and save the Republic for them and their children and grandchildren.

With that comes the ire of many of the people that live and work and count on Washington, D.C., to keep on doing the same thing, which is take money from all the people in the rest of the country and spend it on the priorities of the people in Washington, D.C., instead of the priorities of the people in the rest of the country that are paying their taxes.

To be a member of this organization, you have to decide: Do I want to have zero friends in Washington, D.C., right? Oftentimes it is said that you can choose to have your friends in Washington, D.C., or you can choose to have your friends in your district.

Well, a lot of folks don't like that decision and who can blame them. Nobody really likes confrontation, generally speaking. I remember when Tim came to the Freedom Caucus because he wanted to be part of that fight. We had a lot of good candidates as I recall, but Tim stood head and shoulders above all the rest. I found out some years later that Tim is an Eagle Scout and his organizational skills and the way he carries himself, his professionalism is indicative of that kind of person. I probably should have known that kind of coming into the job.

Just like any other organization, we had our challenges. Not everything was perfect, but Tim dug right into those

problems, those challenges that we had and made them right. Why that is important is because the organization has to continue, but the Members of Congress that are here, we didn't come to run an organization. We came to save the Republic, to fight for the things that need to be fought for. It is always easy to fight the other side, but it is hard to fight your own side.

Mr. Speaker, I am a proud Republican. I have been since first grade, but we don't always get it right, which is why people like me and some of my other colleagues are here to make sure that we get it right, to make sure that the things we do here are the same things that we told the people at home who elected us they are the same things we told them we were going to do.

Tim joined that effort. Of course, almost immediately upon joining that effort, getting some things right that needed to be dealt with in the organization, we found ourselves embroiled in this battle over the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

It shouldn't be personal. It wasn't personal for us, but we just knew that if we kept doing the same things the same way with the same people, we were going to get the same outcome. We just knew that.

Of course, we also knew that picking on your own team is frowned on by other Members of your team. Even though many of them wanted to see things change, they didn't want to go through the problems and the challenges of meeting that head-on.

Tim was right there in the dark hours of that whole thing. He had faith in us, and our Members had faith in him. He kept the notes. He kept us on track. This is what was said. This is what was going to be done. This is what was agreed upon. This is still hanging out there. Tim, in his own right, became respected in this body among other staff members and other leaders as a person that they could count on for his work who knew the issues, who knew the process, and wasn't going to take a bunch of crap that, quite honestly, gets shoveled around here where they just expect you to take it because that is the way it has always been done.

This organization and our successes are due in great part to Tim Reitz, which is why we are here because we want to honor him on his departure. We wish him well.

This is not easy. This takes a toll on you personally, professionally, and it is a sacrifice every single day. The long nights, the time away from home, the extended heartache and trouble, the ire, unfortunately, sometimes of the people around you.

They will be happy that it got done, but they won't like what they had to go through to get there. Somebody has to do that hard work. Somebody has to be willing to stand up and say, we are not going to keep doing the same old tired things, especially during the challenge for selecting a Speaker round

after round after round in the public. Everybody was watching. Somebody had to make sure that we maintained the direction and the course, the little details along the way. That person was Tim.

Since that time through the many, many battles all for the right reasons, all for the right things, there has been one person who has been at the epicenter of that unsung, behind the scenes, making sure that the details were recorded, making sure that we stayed on track, making sure that what was possible could be achieved, and that was our friend and our colleague Tim Reitz.

While we are celebrating him and his future because this place has a way of grinding you down and using you up. We are also very sad for the loss of someone that is so skillful, so professional, so respected, and achieves results. That cannot be found just anywhere.

We made the right selection then. He remains the right selection now. We are honored to have had him working side by side, shoulder to shoulder with us in these endeavors.

We wish him well. We know he is not out of the fight, but he is going to change his battle position a little bit. We are here to say Godspeed Tim Reitz. God bless you.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to say this, too, while Jody Hice is sitting here. We stole him from Jody. He was working for Jody and we stole him for a greater cause. Jody, of course, part of that cause, as well so he was gracious about it.

It is painful when you lose somebody as competent as Tim. The accolades all around and the well wishes all around. It has been my honor and privilege to serve with you, sir.

□ 1720

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Pennsylvania, who ably, as I said, served as the chairman of the House Freedom Caucus. He knows all too well the service that Tim provided to not just the House Freedom Caucus, not just the House of Representatives, but to this great country, in service, obviously, alongside our colleague, Jody Hice.

As my friend from Pennsylvania said, we are growing the movement. That is what is happening here, and Tim is going to be part of the movement in a different position, just as our friend Mr. Hice is from another position. God has a place for us at a certain time, and that place has been here with the House Freedom Caucus these last 4 years. Now, it is going to be somewhere else, and we are going to miss him.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON), so that he can share a few of his thoughts.

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to honor my good friend Tim.

William F. Buckley, Jr., once said that a conservative is someone who

“stands athwart history, yelling ‘stop,’ at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it.”

Tim has been the executive director during my entire time here in the Freedom Caucus. His hard work and dedication have left a lasting mark on this body.

Just think about the changes to the rules that occurred just 3½ short years ago, those rules that every Member of this Congress benefits from today. It was an effort that was monumental, but shepherded and strategized by Tim, to give back power, which is normally inclined to consolidate to one or a small group. For once in recent history, we have seen an effort to actually disseminate power from leadership back to the individual Members. We couldn't have done it without the work and strategy that Tim provided during those difficult times.

Tim is the kind of guy who you don't always see, but his impact is felt with every victory that we have had. Behind the scenes, he has been instrumental in advancing our mission to fight for freedom and to serve the American people.

Mr. Speaker, there are few people who come to Congress, who enter this crazy circus, and give up and sacrifice so many other opportunities because they are driven to actually save this country. Tim is one of those. The members of the Freedom Caucus are those.

It is a group, a band of brothers and sisters, that I am extremely proud to be a part of. They are people who pray. When everyone else in this town is going out to fancy dinners on fly-in nights, having steak or lobster or whatever, this is a group of men and women who sit and eat Chick-fil-A in a boardroom with a whiteboard and strategize about how we can continue to make this country better and how we can stop the steady decay of this great Nation.

Whether it is having negotiations at 3 o'clock in the morning or strategy sessions on weekends ahead of critical votes, Tim has always been there, putting in the hours, fighting in the arena with us to save this Nation, but not taking the spotlight.

Tim, your tireless work and your unwavering dedication have made you an invaluable part of this team and a game changer in the Halls of Congress. You will be deeply missed on this team, no doubt. Yet, you will continue to fight for conservative principles, I am certain.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Missouri, and his quote of William F. Buckley about standing athwart history yelling “stop” is one of the, I think, seminal moments of the modern conservative movement that Buckley launched and that Ronald Reagan then carried forward. People don't realize that that was literally the first edition, the first version, of the National Review.

It was a seminal moment of the conservative movement, and I think it en-

capsulates very well what we try to do in the House Freedom Caucus in standing athwart the institutional largesse of this town, this body, Congress, and the swamp in general, and yell “stop” and say “enough.”

We came here to do something different. We came up here not to rack up debt. We came here to change things, to stand up for the people, to stand up for freedom, and to stand up for limited government.

Tim has been at the center of that, and so has my good friend JOSH BRECHEEN from the great State of Oklahoma. I know we have to move through, and we have several other colleagues. He has what he is going to say, a little extemporaneous point. My good friend worked for Senator Tom Coburn, another great advocate and someone who served in this Chamber, served in the United States Senate, and understood that point of yelling “stop” and standing athwart history.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BRECHEEN).

Mr. BRECHEEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman ROY for yielding.

Tim Reitz has led our little merry band behind the scenes for 4 years, the Freedom Caucus. Most people do not realize that when you have the type of intellect that Tim has, the type of principle that Tim has, that is a rare commodity because in Washington, D.C., just typical of anyplace in our culture, you are going to utilize that brain trust that you have been handed to make the most money when you have workable years. Tim could have gone a number of different places, but he chose to be an oak.

For those who would wonder why I would say that, it is because an oak tree, if you ever look at an oak tree, you have to realize that, once upon a time, it was just a crazy little nut that decided to stand its ground.

Thanks for standing your ground. Thanks for being someone who actually knows what the enumerated powers of the Constitution are and someone who didn't take what you could have, the treats of the moment that all of us are offered. Instead of holding out the dream of tomorrow, which is for our country, you can take the treats of the moment, you can get a better job, you could go work on K Street, but you knew in your conscience that your conscience was calling out to put your Nation and your principles first and to go back to look at the wisdom of our Founders and try to move the needle, to give this grand experiment of liberty another breath to gulp in, in the hope that this thing would endure long past us.

I am so grateful to ERIC BURLISON, who recited all the rule changes. ERIC and I weren't even sworn in to Congress and were fighting.

ELI CRANE, I see him sitting over here. We weren't even sworn in to Congress, and you were signing us up for a fight. We weren't even true Members of Congress when that standoff was happening and you tried to get rule

changes. You were the brain trust. Making sure that all the knowledge of how we could move us back to a more transparent, open process to empower the regular Member, you helped us do that.

To all of our friends—to CHIP's point, maybe it is just 12 on C-SPAN who are actually watching, but for any of our colleagues who are watching, going, "Oh, the Freedom Caucus," you have to love us. We are kind of like the weight room, right? You have to realize that through the weight that you hate, resistance builds strength.

This little group, when you know that you benefit because of the strength of this group, you have to know it is great staffers like Tim Reitz who helped to create the backbone.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Oklahoma for his remarks.

I am now going to turn to the gentleman from Louisiana. I know he shares our sentiment about our friend from Georgia, Tim Reitz.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS).

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am so honored just to stand in this august body in support of my friend and brother, Tim Reitz. It is bittersweet because we are going to miss him. We are going to miss him within the heart of the Freedom Caucus. His counsel, his wisdom, his humor, his guidance, and his skill set are rarely matched, I think, in the history of this body.

Tim became senior counsel and staffer at the Freedom Caucus at a time years ago when the Freedom Caucus was struggling to become the relevant and powerful faction within this body that we knew it could be.

Yet, history required a man named Tim Reitz to be the deep rudder of our intentions at the Freedom Caucus, which was to steer this body that we love, for this Nation that we would shed our last life's blood for, to steer it deeper into the conservative spectrum and principles that made our country great, that drive us each day. We rise from bended knee and ask our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to help us to be worthy of service to we the people.

□ 1730

Yet, we struggle to understand the details of how to make that happen. Tim Reitz has informed our caucus in such a manner that I don't believe it would be possible, Mr. Speaker, for us to stand before you as members of the Freedom Caucus and unwaveringly know that we are one of the most powerful factions within this body standing upon conservative principles. Tim helped make that happen.

I am just going to say that sometimes we have contentious and complex meetings. Mr. Speaker, Tim was the guy, especially for a regular man like me, that I could call after a meeting or

send him a text and say: "Tim, when you get a minute, will you call me and let me know what the hell just happened?" He would do that at any time of the night or on the weekend. He would say: "Yes, sir, Mr. Higgins. This is what just happened."

We are going to miss you, brother, but you are going to a great spot, right around the corner. We are certainly well aligned, and God bless you in your endeavors. We have been honored to serve with you, sir.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana, a gentleman who knows law enforcement and the United States military.

I would note that, in the House Freedom Caucus, as a Representative of the House, we have a diverse group of individuals, numerous men who have worn the uniform, including my friend from Pennsylvania, SCOTT PERRY, who spoke earlier, and, notably, the gentleman I am about to yield to who served faithfully in service to this country and put his life on the line in defense of freedom. He knows why we are here.

I echo what my friend from Louisiana was just talking about and why I tell people that as proud as I am to be in the United States House of Representatives representing the district in Texas, the 21st Congressional District that I represent and 750,000 Texans, I am proud to be serving in this body. It is an honor. It is the honor of a lifetime. I am even prouder to associate with the men and women of the House Freedom Caucus who lay it on the line every day, in the political sense, in trying to fight for the things we said we would do and to mean it, and to take the arrows and to wear the scars of trying to actually move this body, to move this country so that we can save it for our kids and grandkids.

I say that on purpose here because Tim has been at the center of that. I know that this man, my dear friend from Arizona, a great patriot, ELI CRANE, shares the sentiment of what I just tried to share rather ineloquently.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE).

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ROY for yielding.

I usually don't like speaking on the floor very much. It is not one of my favorite things to do, but I will tell you right now, this was something I wasn't going to miss.

Tim Reitz has been a friend to me in many ways. He has been a mentor and counselor to me. As a matter of fact, I called him this morning because I missed a meeting last night, and Tim gave me a recap and helped explain to me what went on last night.

If you really want to know how valuable and important Tim Reitz is to the House Freedom Caucus, the conservative movement, for saving and protecting this country, all you have to do is look around. It is about 5:30 p.m. right now. We are done for the day, most of us. We don't have to be here, but I counted eight Members of Con-

gress who came to speak on behalf of Tim Reitz. You don't see that very often. You are probably never going to see eight Members of Congress coming to speak when a valuable staffer like Tim Reitz is moving on.

Tim, I hope that is not lost on you, brother. There are a lot of places we could be right now, but all of us are down here because of what you mean to this group and what you mean to the country.

I am a little bummed that you are moving on. I know you are not going to be far. I think the role that you are taking is going to be instrumental for the country. I am just grateful that men like Tim, with all of his wisdom, his knowledge, his intelligence—like my friend from Oklahoma said, he could be off making money somewhere. He could be doing some amazing things. Instead, he has been in the trenches with us, fighting for this country, fighting for our families, fighting for our communities, and fighting to preserve what has made this country so great in the first place.

Thank you, brother. We are going to miss you. We are proud of you, and it is an honor to speak on your behalf.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Arizona (Mr. CRANE). I thank him for his service to this Nation in the military. I thank him for his service here in Congress, as I do all of my colleagues here.

As I get ready to recognize my friend from North Carolina, I would like to note that, as my friend from Oklahoma (Mr. BRECHEEN) said earlier, the House Freedom Caucus opens all of our meetings and tries to close all of our meetings in prayer. People don't realize that when we had the big debate over the Speaker 3 years ago, and it was heavily a good number of the Freedom Caucus who were a part of that debate, we met or spoke on the phone I would say literally every day, or all but a couple, from election day in November all the way through early January and through the resolution of that debate.

Every single one of those meetings and every single one of those calls we opened in prayer and closed in prayer, with the humility of knowing that we don't always know the right thing to do. We try to follow God. We try to follow the Constitution. We try to follow our hearts and to honor the constituents who sent us here in making tough decisions. Nobody has all the right answers. Through our prayer and deliberation at our weekly engagement, our brotherhood and sisterhood and camaraderie and faith in each other, and the support of people like Tim Reitz, we try to come to a conclusion to try to shape this body and to shape this country.

That is what we are called to do. We are not called to come here to punch the clock. We are not called to come here to just do the same old thing because the same old thing has resulted in \$39 trillion in debt. The same old thing has resulted in expansive government at the expense of liberty.

Tim knows that. That is why he has sacrificed. That is why he has been here, working in the trenches, as has my good friend from North Carolina, MARK HARRIS. I know he feels the same way about Tim. I know he feels the same way about prayer. I know he feels the same way about this brotherhood and sisterhood that is the House Freedom Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HARRIS).

Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, today, we pause to recognize a man whose work has made an incredible difference in the fight to preserve the values that made this Nation great, Tim Reitz.

Tim has served the House Freedom Caucus with conviction, discipline, and a clear sense of purpose. In a town where it is awfully easy to lose sight of first principles, he has remained grounded in them. He understood that our responsibility is not to expand government, but to restrain it, not to chase headlines, but to deliver results for the American people.

Behind the scenes, where much of the real work gets done in this city, Tim brought steady leadership and sound judgment. He helped advance policies that defend our Constitution, protect taxpayer dollars, and uphold the freedoms entrusted to us by our Founders.

More than that, Tim has served with integrity. Tim has built trust. Tim has earned respect. He reminded all of us that public service is, at its core, about serving something greater than ourselves.

I say to you this evening, Tim, that we are grateful for your dedication to the House Freedom Caucus and to the cause of liberty. Your work has left a mark, and the principles you championed will continue to guide us forward. May God bless you in the next chapter, and may God continue to bless these United States of America.

□ 1740

Mr. ROY. I thank my friend from North Carolina (Mr. HARRIS) for his remarks, and I thank my colleagues who have come down to the floor to speak.

We have got a little time remaining in this Special Order, and I am going to do what I want to do, which is filibuster a little bit in case any of our colleagues are trying to get here from other parts of the campus.

I will note that we had other colleagues that wanted to come, one of those, my friend KEITH SELF from Texas who replied back to the thread that he was down reading the Bible at the Museum of the Bible. And I said: Well, where are your priorities, Mr. SELF? And I joke only because we can say that as a group because of how much this group reveres the Word of God and tries to honor the Word of God. My friend from Georgia, Tim Reitz, does so as well.

I would note that there are other Members who are stuck working hard

in the Appropriations Committee. I think our chairman, ANDY HARRIS, is in the Appropriations Committee as we speak. MICHAEL CLOUD wanted to come down here, and he is stuck in the Appropriations Committee. I would say that it is arguably in part because of Mr. Reitz' great work that we have got those guys on the Appropriations Committee in the first place so that they were able to be otherwise occupied. It is not a committee that was often known for Freedom Caucus members participating.

I will say a couple things here before we break loose just to see if a few other people can get to the floor. I will focus on policy for a minute and then bring it back to Tim, which is this: None of us came here, nobody in this body came here campaigning on spending more money that we don't have, nobody; but yet we do. I am proud that the Freedom Caucus has stood up to say enough, and as a result, for 3 straight years, discretionary spending has been flat. That is a big deal. That is a big deal.

Nobody came to Congress saying they wanted to expand the power of the Federal Government to engage in warrantless surveillance of the American people and spy on them. That was happening. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago we made massive reforms as a direct result of the work of the people in the House Freedom Caucus and Tim Reitz. Now the people are safer and more secure. By the way, we should build upon that.

Nobody ever runs on saying that we should have open borders allowing anybody in the world to come into the United States.

Nobody runs on saying we should allow criminals to stay in the United States, and yet, often we adopt the very policies that allow those things and encourage those things to occur, but not the House Freedom Caucus and not Tim Reitz.

We stood up and we said: Enough. We need to change things. We need to fight for policies that will secure the border, and we laid the groundwork for many of the things the President is doing. We sent a loud message to the American people that we believed in that when we passed H.R. 2 because we worked hard as a body to develop past that, and that is no small thing.

One of my other staffer friends was reduced to tears on this very floor sitting right here because she has spent 20 years of her life fighting to try to secure the border of the United States knowing how bad it was, and finally, finally, we had advanced legislation that would accomplish the task.

We couldn't have done that or held spending flat or fought to stop spying on the American people without the work of Tim Reitz. We couldn't have fought for any of the reforms that we got in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. We couldn't have stood on the wall, four of us in this body, my friend Mr. KEAN, my friend Mr. CLYDE, myself,

and my friend Mr. NORMAN from South Carolina. We couldn't have stood up and repealed green new scam subsidies destroying our grid and undermining the security of the American people but for the work of Tim Reitz working through the weekend alongside us making sure that we got that done.

Now I have million-dollar ads being run against me by some Marxist in California. Thanks, Tim.

Look, fighting is hard for the reasons that my colleagues have talked about. Tim has done it, and he has done it knowing that the scorn of the town, the scorn of the swamp would be directed towards him. He has done it as a staffer, not as somebody who stands up—and I don't know if you call this the limelight or not, I don't know what this is, but not like those of us who are Members who run and carry the election certificates. He has done it, as my friend from Louisiana said, behind the scenes as counselor, as a staffer—and by the way, Tim is emblematic of a number of staff that I am not going to name here because I will leave people out. But there are people on this very floor and in this body right now that we rely upon who are great patriots and serve their country every single day.

We often give a shout-out to staff, but there are some who rise to the top, and Tim is one of those. He is one of those who gets it, who understands it, understands what is at stake, he who stood up when it mattered and figured out how to take a win. You can't be afraid to win. You can't be afraid to figure out a way to fight and then deliver.

The country depends on people who are willing to do that. I know that, as my friend from Arizona said, he is a little bummed. I share that sentiment. I know my friend from Georgia, Mr. HICE, who is still a very active part of the movement, as I said earlier, I know he was bummed when he lost Tim to the Freedom Caucus. We are going to be bummed to lose Tim down the road, but he is joining friends of ours in continuation of the fight.

For those of us who want to fight for the country, the fight never ends. We are called by Paul and Timothy to finish the race. I am proud to say that we are in this race, and we are going to finish this race.

I often will say on the campaign trail that when I went through cancer 15 years ago and had Hodgkin lymphoma and had a less than a 50 percent shot, they told me—although my doctor was great. He said: Your shot is either 0 or 100 percent. You should choose 100 percent. I think that is great advice. Choose 100 percent. When I got through to the other side of that, my daughter at that time was 3 months old. My son was 2 months old. And God gave me another shot at this. He gave me a little bonus time on this Earth. I decided to not care, and as I will say on the campaign trail: "Leave it all on the field." Leave every single thing out on the

field. Don't walk off the field without knowing that you are bloodied, you are beat up, you are muddy, you are dirty, you are exhausted, knowing you did every single thing you could to leave this great country in stronger shape for our kids and our grandkids so that flag, so that this Chamber, so that those words "in God we trust," so that the heroes at Arlington National Cemetery that I was walking around this morning giving a tour that we can stand up and be proud that we put everything on the line.

Speaking of that, as I was getting ready to wind down to a rousing conclusion, I am proud to hand over the microphone to another veteran, another man that has put it all on the line both in service to his country in the military and now in Congress, a dear friend who was the gentleman that I earlier said was reading the Bible down at the Museum of the Bible. I think he sprinted here from the Museum of the Bible.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF) to celebrate our good friend Tim Reitz.

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make an analogy. When I was first assigned to a Special Forces team as a young lieutenant, I had already been in the 82nd Airborne Division for a couple years. When I got to the A-Team the team sergeant was an old, grizzled, experienced NCO.

My team sergeant had been in Vietnam. He had run the patrols. He had been behind the lines. He had seen his soldiers wounded and killed. That was the man that actually did my training. That is the kind of man you need.

To put it in context, if you have seen the movie "We Were Soldiers," the command sergeant major, that is Tim Reitz for me and for the Freedom Caucus. Tim Reitz is the one that knows the rules, but he knows more than the rules. He knows what we need to do to get things done.

So my analogy for Tim Reitz is one of utmost respect because just as the NCO corps is the backbone of the United States Army, Tim Reitz was the backbone of the House Freedom Caucus to me.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF) for his comments, and we are about to wrap up and wind down here. I just want to say a couple more quick things. I am giving a heads up to those that are coming in that we have a couple more minutes.

I would note that we have got to recognize those who have served before my friend Tim Reitz: Justin Ouimette and Steve Chartan. We have had great patriots who are still very active in the conservative movement who were a part of this organization that Tim worked with and learned from. I know he wants to give credit where it is due. I would just tell you that I had a friend of mine who was a former member of the House Freedom Caucus who texted me watching this on the floor who said:

Tim is a hero and a patriot that never throws in the towel and deserves to be honored.

□ 1750

I have gotten lots of messages like that from staff, from current Members, and from former Members who recognize what Tim has meant, again, not just to the House Freedom Caucus, but to the House of Representatives and, importantly, to the United States of America in service to a greater cause than just being here. They are in service of the Constitution, of God, of freedom, and all those who have given the last full measure of devotion to defend this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for coming down. I thank my good friend, Tim Rice. I want to wish him well in his next endeavors. I thank him for his service to the United States of America. I wish him the best of success, luck, health, and happiness with his beautiful bride.

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

#### HONORING PRIVATE BENNETT WATERS

(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 Private Bennett Waters, a serviceman who tragically died as a prisoner of war during World War II.

Private Waters was a southeast Georgia serviceman whose remains were recently identified by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. A member of the Army Air Force 17th Bombardment Squadron, 27th Bombardment Group, Private Waters was stationed in the Philippines.

He was taken prisoner during the Japanese invasion of the Philippines in April of 1942 and remained a POW until his death in 1944.

He is forever memorialized on the Walls of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial. His remains will now be transferred from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu to his final resting place among family in Georgia.

We thank Private Waters for his bravery, service, and sacrifice to our Nation 82 years ago.

#### ST. MARYS SUBMARINE MUSEUM

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize 30th anniversary of St. Marys Submarine Museum in St. Marys, Georgia. The museum is the largest of its kind in the South and the fifth largest in the country, with nearly 5,000 square feet of exhibit.

After being converted from an old movie theater, St. Marys opened its doors on March 30, 1996, receiving thousands of visitors since. It is here visitors get the opportunity to see, enjoy, and learn about submarines and their artifacts. Thousands of these artifacts, some older than 100 years, are on display,

including patrol reports, uniforms, and battle flags. Mr. Speaker, you can even operate a real submarine periscope to view the beautiful St. Marys River.

Former submariner and current executive director, Keith Forest Post, has been dedicated to preserving submarine history and artifacts at the museum since 2010. The historical importance of this museum cannot be understated.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate St. Marys Submarine Museum on this fantastic accomplishment and wish them 30 more years of success.

#### HONORING THOMAS "TOM" DRAFFIN

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Tom Draffin for his work as the president and CEO of the McIntosh County Industrial Development Authority. Tom is retiring after several years dedicated to the growth and development of McIntosh County.

During his tenure, he has led a number of major initiatives promoting the county's hospitality, tourism, and seafood industries. He is also a founding member of the Tri-95 Georgia Joint Development Authority, where he also serves on the board of directors.

Tom's work on the Tri-95 and McIntosh County Development Authorities is critical to the development of southeast Georgia.

I thank him for all the work he has done over the years to grow our region. He has been a close friend to me over the years, and his retirement will be a significant loss for the community.

#### HONORING CECILY HILL

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Cecily A. Hill of St. Marys, Georgia, who passed away on March 30, 2026, at the age of 83.

Cecily was born in Woodbine, Georgia, in 1942, where she learned to embody true southern grace and strength. With a heart rooted in deep faith in Jesus Christ, she made every person feel seen, valued, and genuinely loved.

A true trailblazer, Cecily became the first female and first Republican State representative from Camden County. Serving District 108 in the Georgia House from 2003 to 2011, she chaired the subcommittees on ports and on tourism and film. She also served with distinction on appropriations, transportation, and economic development committees, earning respect across party lines.

A respected businesswoman, she co-owned Prudential Magnolia Realty for over 30 years and earlier operated Hill's Drug Store and Gift Shop with her late husband, Meredith Langley Hill, Jr.

A devoted mother, she cherished her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who carry forward her spirit of hospitality and love. Her legacy of faith, service, and kindness endures along the Georgia coast she called home.

#### RECOGNIZING MACY JOHNSON

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a true young hero from Richmond Hill, Georgia, 12-year-old Macy Johnson.