

VISAS FOR SHRIMPERS

(Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of an issue threatening the Texas Gulf Coast shrimping and fishing industry, an industry that has thrived for generations but is now under threat to unfair competition from foreign countries and foreign import seafood.

This is an issue that this administration said they would address under America First policies, but they forgot the Texas fishing industry, and now labor shortages exacerbate the H-2B visa caps that are preventing small, family-owned businesses from securing the necessary workforce.

To make matters worse, our shrimpers must now catch three times the load to make up for the high fuel costs of \$80,000 per vessel.

In response to this crisis, I co-led the House-passed Save Our Shrimpers Act to block taxpayer-funded projects from financing foreign shrimp industries.

The administration must provide immediate relief by giving our shrimpers and fishermen the ability to hire the workforce they need to survive the season.

I strongly urge President Trump and this administration to release more H-2B or H-2A visas so we can bring certainty to the coastal communities and ensure the American shrimping and fishing industry can survive.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

(Mr. IVEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in observance of National Police Week.

Over 300 names were added to the wall in memoriam this week. One of those names was my cousin, Earl Ivey, Jr.

He served as an officer for the Mount Rainier Police Department, the Office of the Sheriff, the Seat Pleasant Police Department, and he did double duty as chief and chaplain of the Fairmount Heights Police Department.

He was an excellent man, an excellent father and husband, and a great neighbor and friend.

I commend him and all of the others who were added to the wall this week.

I had one comment I wanted to make to my colleagues. During this week that should be celebratory, there was an amendment to a resolution that was offered that was political and partisan instead of being straightforward and honoring those who were added to the wall.

Their names don't have Ds or Rs listed after them. They didn't serve based on their party affiliation. We should set the party affiliations to the side for this week and this purpose and just celebrate them and the great work that they do.

IRAN WAR

(Mr. DESAULNIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, in 75 days, Trump's war has caused the deaths of over 2,000 innocent civilians, including 413 children and 15 American servicemembers.

Initially, President Trump called his actions in Iran a "little excursion" that would last a couple of weeks. Now he has acknowledged it is a war.

Last month, the President threatened a whole civilization to die.

This war has cost almost \$30 billion to American taxpayers. It has caused the American inflation rate to rise to almost 4 percent. It has raised gas prices for hardworking Americans across this country.

President Trump does not have the power to declare war. This is a war, not an excursion. Only Congress can declare war.

We cannot continue to cede congressional authority to a President who acts like this.

I call on my Republican colleagues and leaders in Congress to stand up and push back against this reckless and corrupt President before any more lives are lost.

Pope Leo, a great American moral authority says: "The future belongs to men and women of peace." I stand with the great American Pope Leo XIV.

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

□ 1110

RECOGNIZING SMITH COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL OWLS

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Smith County High School Owls of Carthage, Tennessee, Class 2A semifinalists in the 2025 TSSAA State basketball championships, and to honor their remarkable journey representing Smith County and Tennessee's Sixth Congressional District.

These young men embodied everything we admire in our communities: grit, teamwork, and unshakable belief in one another.

From the hills of Smith County, they competed on the biggest stage in Tennessee high school basketball, and they did it with pride, dedication, and heart.

To Head Coach Layne Bussell, the coaching staff, the families, and the entire Carthage community, this team made you proud. A semifinal finish in Class 2A is no small feat, and these Owls proved that Smith County competes with anyone in the great State of Tennessee.

HONORING UPPERMAN HIGH SCHOOL BEES

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable achievement

from the young men of Upperman High School in Baxter, Tennessee, right in the heart of Putnam County in Tennessee's Sixth District.

The Upperman Bees have made their community proud, competing as semifinalists in the 2026 TSSAA Class 3A boys' basketball State championship. These student athletes displayed the grit, discipline, and teamwork that define the character of our communities in middle Tennessee.

From the opening tip to the final buzzer, the Baxter Bees represented Putnam County with class and heart. Their coaches, including Head Coach Bobby McWilliams, families, and the entire Upperman community have every reason to stand tall today.

Mr. Speaker, we celebrate these young men, not just for the games they won, but for the example they set.

CELEBRATING WHITE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL SPARTA WARRIORS

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a remarkable achievement by the Sparta Warrior girls' basketball team from White County High School in Tennessee's Sixth Congressional District.

This season, the Warriors advanced all the way to the 2026 TSSAA Class 3A girls' basketball State championship game, finishing as proud runner-up.

In doing so, they earned their second consecutive trip to the State tournament, a feat that speaks volumes about their talent, discipline, and unrelenting work ethic.

From the opening tip to the final buzzer, these young women represented White County with discipline and dedication. Their coaches and families poured countless hours into developing not just great athletes but great leaders.

In a district that values hard work and perseverance, the Sparta Warriors have given us all something to celebrate and a standard of excellence to follow.

I congratulate every player, coach, and supporter of this outstanding season. Tennessee's Sixth District is stronger because of these young women.

CONGRATULATING YORK INSTITUTE DRAGONS

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary achievement by the York Institute Dragons of Jamestown, Tennessee, in Fentress County.

This year, the Dragons captured the hearts of their community with a remarkable run to the TSSAA Class 2A girls' basketball State championship, finishing as runner-up.

This marks their fifth consecutive State tournament appearance, a testament to their discipline, hard work, and unwavering commitment to excellence.

In a county of modest means and mighty pride, their journey to the State championship game reflects what is possible when a community rallies behind its young people.

The banner that will hang in the gym at Alvin C. York Institute stands as a symbol of that shared effort and belief.

The legacy of Sergeant Alvin C. York, a man who embodied grit, humility, and perseverance himself, lives on in every player who wore the Dragons' colors this season.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the York Institute Dragons on an outstanding season.

NOT JUST ABOUT DOLLARS AND CENTS

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about money or, more specifically, cash.

As many of you know, I, alongside my Democrat colleague Congressman DONALD NORCROSS, have introduced the bipartisan Payment Choice Act of 2025, H.R. 1138.

The bill is straightforward in its intent: to protect the right of Americans to use cash for retail purchases up to \$500.

This legislation is not just about dollars and cents. It is about preserving the freedoms, privacy, and practicalities that cash affords every American.

I hold in my hand a \$20 bill. As probably most of you who have looked closely at our American currency know, inscribed on the face of this bill, alongside the portrait of Andrew Jackson, is the inscription that "this note is legal tender for all debts"—for all debts—"public and private."

Late Congressman Donald Payne, Jr., who was deeply passionate about this issue, captured it best when he said: "Cash is the only option available for millions of Americans to pay for food, housing, and other essentials. In addition, there are major security concerns with digital payments that do not occur with cash payments. Companies cannot misuse your data after a cash payment. Besides, there are few things more American than cash."

Cash should continue to be the one form of payment that is truly universal, accepted everywhere by everyone, regardless of age, income, or background. Yet, an alarming number of businesses, large and small, around the Nation are refusing to accept cash, despite its status as legal tender for all debts, public and private.

Many of our national parks are also taking part in this unfortunate trend. Imagine being denied access to a Federal park as an American taxpayer who has cash in hand. It is unreasonable, and we cannot let this continue.

The shift toward a cashless society may be convenient for all of us, but it will leave behind millions of Americans. Nearly one in five U.S. households relies exclusively on cash or has no access to alternative means of payment beyond the physical dollars.

Cash isn't just a preference to many folks; it is a necessity. That includes seniors, the unbanked, those on fixed incomes, and privacy-conscious American citizens.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell testified before the House Financial Services Committee, which I serve on, that cash is "absolutely critical be-

cause there are people who don't have credit cards," and that "when stores are not dealing with people who don't have cash, it is a serious problem." He is right.

Not only are digital payments not accessible to everybody, but they also come with real concerns about privacy, data security, and the risk of identity theft.

The Payment Choice Act is rooted in fundamental American values: the freedom to choose, fairness, and privacy.

By giving consumers the right to pay with cash, we uphold their ability to participate fully in our economy, while also safeguarding their personal privacy.

Paying with cash means you leave no digital bread crumbs, and your personal information belongs to you.

At the same time, America is embracing new financial innovations, and I understand that. Last July, I joined President Trump at the White House for the signing of the GENIUS Act into law. The law reinforces the United States' leadership in digital currencies by securing dollar-pegged stablecoins as the dominant digital currency in the world.

□ 1120

This is an important step forward, but even as we welcome these advances, we must never lose sight of a simple truth: Cash remains vital to our Nation's economic stability, our individual freedoms, and national security. In times of crisis, whether it is a natural disaster or a cyberattack, digital payment systems can fail.

Just look around the world, Mr. Speaker, and the case for cash is clear. Sweden, for example, is now backpedaling on its decades-long push to go cashless. Sweden's cashless U-turn was driven by security concerns after witnessing attacks on energy grids and communications networks in Ukraine.

Back home, we have seen a disturbing rise in the number of cyberattacks targeting our grid and our telecommunications networks, and if that grid goes down and if those networks are compromised, then you will be glad that you have cash, Mr. Speaker, and not just a cash app.

I want to address the "let the market decide" argument.

Some say we should let the market decide whether a business accepts cash, but the reality is far more complicated. Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, San Francisco, and other States have passed their own State or local regulations. That is not letting the market decide, and with no Federal law requiring cash acceptance, this inconsistent patchwork of regulations creates headaches for retailers and consumers alike.

That is not truly a market decision but rather a fragmented regulation. Establishing a national standard would not only streamline operations for businesses but also ensure that every

American retains the freedom to use cash, a public good and legal tender.

The case of Toby Stover v. United States National Park Service recently underscored the importance of this fight. The case involves a woman who attempted to pay her entrance fee at the historic home of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in Hyde Park, New York, using U.S. currency clearly marked as legal tender.

Park officials refused, turning her away despite Federal law stating that U.S. coins and currency are, again, legal tender for all debts, public charges, taxes, and dues.

Think about that: A Federal agency declined to accept the very currency issued by the U.S. Treasury, at the home of the President who, in 1935, ordered the Great Seal of the United States printed on every dollar bill to instill public confidence during the Great Depression.

That is not just an ironic, hypothetical scenario. It is a glaring contradiction in our payment systems.

Our legislation is carefully crafted. It requires brick-and-mortar businesses that accept in-person payments to accept cash for purchases up to \$500. It prohibits charging cash customers more than those paying by credit card, and it includes reasonable exceptions for temporary cash shortages or system failures. We have also built in consumer protections and clear enforcement mechanisms so that the right to pay with cash is not just theoretical but real and enforceable.

As I have said before, cash is and always will be king. As a growing number of businesses across the country refuse to accept cash, it is important for Congress to publicly recognize its importance.

Mr. Speaker, I call on Americans to encourage their Representatives and Senators in Congress to support the Payment Choice Act, and I call on all my colleagues in the House and Senate to join me in affirming that cash should be universally accepted across this great country.

Together we can ensure that payment choice remains a cornerstone of American commerce.

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

AND STILL I RISE: THE DANGERS OF UNREGULATED CRYPTOCURRENCY

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise.

And still I rise, unbought, unbossed, unafraid: a liberated Democrat.

I rise as an unbought, liberated, and unafraid Democrat. I am unbought by crypto cash, unbought by the millions of dollars that the crypto industry spends to elect people to Congress so that they can have influence over legislation, and unbossed by the