

revitalizing CHamoru dance, chant, and cultural traditions across Guam and the Mariana Islands. Through his leadership, teachings, and choreography, he has helped generations of CHamorus remain connected to their language, heritage, and identity. His work has strengthened cultural preservation efforts not only on Guam but throughout the CHamoru diaspora and across the Pacific region.

This recognition is a proud moment for our island and a testament to the importance of preserving indigenous traditions for future generations. I thank Mr. Frank Rabon for his lifelong dedication to the CHamoru people, and I congratulate him on this historic honor.

HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY MEDICARE ADVANTAGE DENIALS

(Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue to shed light on the egregious practices of our health insurance industry companies that continue to deny patients care and rip off the American taxpayers.

I have been practicing medicine now for 35 years and have dedicated my life to serving others, primarily those in rural and underserved areas. American medicine is sick. American medicine is unaffordable.

A few months ago, the House Ways and Means Committee hosted representatives from multiple insurance companies to deal with healthcare affordability. During that time, I exposed the unconscionable practices of these megacorporations that squeeze every penny out of patients and physicians for their own profit.

Today, I want to talk about the bad actors in Medicare Advantage, a program that seeks to prey upon the elderly and those who have health insurance issues as they get older, that rely on prior authorizations as a way to deny care.

These denials have been up in recent years, as have been, amazingly enough, insurance company profits. They have created barriers to lifesaving care for patients.

In fact, in 2024, Medicare Advantage insurers denied over 4 million prior authorization requests. Yet, when appealed, over 80 percent of those were overturned. This was only after patients and caregivers were forced to fight for the care that they deserve. Sadly, many give up, and they don't receive the care that they need and the care that they have paid for.

I am far from the only physician ringing the bell on this travesty. Recent surveys show that 93 percent of doctors say that prior authorization leads to care delays, and 82 percent say that it sometimes causes patient harm. Nearly one in three state that delays have contributed to a serious adverse safety event.

The current state of prior authorization allows insurance companies to deny care and pad their profits.

I commend the Trump administration for bringing insurance companies to the table and forcing them to improve their process. Sadly enough, I don't believe a word that these insurance companies say because they are ever increasingly putting profits above patients.

I understand that there are bad actors and those who overbill the system. I truly do. They overorder to drive up costs. The response cannot be a regime that continues delays and denies care for patients who deserve to be healthy.

Congress must be bold in its action to deliver meaningful and lasting solutions to make healthcare work for all Americans.

I am proud to have introduced the Medicare Advantage Improvement Act with my friend and colleague, Dr. JOHN JOYCE. As co-chairs of the GOP Doctors Caucus, our unique experience as physician-legislators gives us perspective on how the healthcare system delivers and finances care.

MAIA streamlines Medicare Advantage prior authorization by enabling real-time approvals for routine care, setting up clear decision guidelines and preventing repetitive reauthorization denials, denials, denials. It also strengthens network adequacy and access centers so that seniors can obtain the full spectrum of medically necessary care when they need it.

Healthcare is expensive. We are living longer because of wonderful innovations in healthcare. Yet, sadly enough, vertical integration and the middlemen are destroying the American healthcare system. We don't need to be padding the profits of middlemen, be they insurance companies, be they PBMs, or be they any individuals in the middle who are siphoning off profits away from patients and away from those who care for patients.

We need to get back to a system that is streamlined, and we need to stop paying those who deny patient care.

STILL WAITING IN CALIFORNIA

(Mr. KILEY of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, we had an election in California last Tuesday. It is now the following Monday, and the State still has millions of votes to count.

How can this be? Nothing like this happens in any other State in the country or, for that matter, any other democratic country in the world. California's absurdly slow, glacial vote counting has been the subject of broad, sweeping bipartisan criticism.

The Washington Post's editorial board called it a national embarrassment. The New York Times' editorial board said that California's elections are something out of the pre-telegraph era.

How does the State justify this process of taking a month to count votes? They generally offer two excuses.

First, they say that California is a really big State. The problem with that argument is that this doesn't come as a surprise every election that we have a lot of people. Maybe you should prepare for that. There are other big States in the United States that manage to count their votes on election night, and there are other, much larger countries around the world, like India, that manage to count their votes a lot more quickly than California does.

The second excuse you get is that California is just trying to make sure that every vote is counted and that the people have every possible means of participating. Throughout my time in office, I have supported measures to make voting as accessible to folks as possible, but that has nothing to do with taking a month to count votes.

As a matter of fact, if you look at the nonpartisan Elections Performance Index, California ranks 41 out of 50. This measures things like the share of voter turnout, voter registration, transparency, and so forth. California not only has the slowest elections. It actually tends to perform worse across every metric than the rest of the country does.

Make no mistake, this is an attempt to cloak administrative incompetence under a disguise of false civic virtue. The consequences for our democracy should not be understated. When we take weeks and weeks to count votes, with the results often changing based upon what they were on election night, it fosters distrust in the entire process.

It also creates great instability, as people don't know and the representatives themselves don't know who will be their school board member, county supervisor, city councilor, State legislator, or Member of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I have introduced, along with my colleagues from California here in the House, the Election Results Accountability Act, which says, very simply, that California needs to get its act together. California needs to count votes in a timely manner and give folks results in a timely manner and in a way that should be expected of a well-functioning democratic society.

RECOGNIZING SONBOL ALIABADI

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Sonbol Aliabadi, the longtime executive director for the Sierra College Foundation, on her retirement at the end of May 2026.

Throughout her 22-year tenure, Sonbol aided the foundation in expanding access and opportunity for Sierra College students by mobilizing more than \$22 million in community support funds and awarding nearly \$7 million in scholarships, as well as by delivering on many other major initiatives.

Sonbol's contributions reduced barriers, enabling more students to enroll and continue their education, and strengthened the Sierra College community.

Under Sonbol's leadership, the foundation has helped launch a variety of student support programs, such as the Veterans Success Center, the Student Assistance Fund Endowment, the Basic Needs Center, the Guardian Scholars Program, and more. Earlier this year, the program Endow-a-Bed launched under Sonbol's leadership, providing free room and board for 10 students in the school's new student housing.

The foundation has also worked to fund educational and extracurricular opportunities for students, such as the Sierra College Athletics Program and career and technical education programs. Moreover, they have helped provide services to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and have supported programs that embrace a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the school.

Valued by so many, Sonbol is known for her leadership and guidance in the foundation. Her passion for supporting students on their educational journey encourages those around her to put students first, as she does. Her devoted efforts have made a lasting difference in the lives of countless Sierra College students and have contributed to the growth and success of the school.

As a former educator, I have appreciated the opportunity to work with Sonbol since my time in elected office. It is a true honor to represent such inspirational and effective community leaders like Sonbol.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to join the community in celebrating Sonbol Aliabadi's successful career and service to the Sierra College community over the past two decades, and I wish her the very best in her next chapter.

SELF-ENRICHMENT REWARDED, OVERSIGHT BLINDFOLDED

(Mr. IVEY of Maryland was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a deeply troubling pattern of behavior that strikes at the very heart of the American justice system. It is a pattern where self-enrichment is rewarded, oversight is blindfolded, and rule of law is bent to serve the powerful.

I sit on the Appropriations Committee, and we had a chance last week to hear the testimony of the Acting Attorney General, Mr. Blanche. I asked him about what I thought was a blatant pay-for-pardon scheme, and this involves the Binance Corporation.

Let me walk through some of the facts of what happened there, as I did there with the Attorney General.

In late 2023, Binance agreed to pay a penalty of \$4.36 billion. A U.S. judge approved the guilty plea and settlement for the anti-money laundering and sanctions in February 2024. In other words, the chairman of Binance and the company itself pled guilty to crimes that involved money laun-

dering. This involved money laundering that was helping groups like ISIS and al-Qaida, enemies of the United States, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.

In December 2024, Mr. Zhao and Mr. Witkoff met in Abu Dhabi at the Bitcoin MENA 2024 Conference. Mr. Witkoff is the special envoy for the Trump administration who negotiates agreements with respect to the Middle East and does this on behalf of the Trump administration. They discussed the violations of anti-money laundering laws while Mr. Zhao was serving at Binance.

In October 2025, Mr. Trump granted a full pardon to Mr. Zhao. That meant that they did not have to pay back the money that was part of the fine, and it wiped away the conviction and the related elements of that.

According to The Wall Street Journal, part of what happened between the pardon and the meeting was that there was a payment that was made. That was money that was paid, according to The Wall Street Journal, from Binance, which took steps that catapulted the Trump family venture's new stablecoin product. The Trump family venture was WLF, and it dealt with cryptocurrency. Members of Trump's family, two of his sons, and Mr. Witkoff all had vested interests in that company.

While they put the money into the WLF transaction, that enhanced the credibility and pushed up the market value of the WLF company from \$127 million to over \$2.1 billion.

I asked Mr. Blanche, given that he had this meeting, then the money, and then the pardon, did he think it would be important to appoint a special prosecutor to review the transaction just to make sure that there was no misconduct that took place, whether it was on behalf of the President or any of the other factors or players who were involved, and he said no.

A special prosecutor would be someone who the Attorney General could appoint in order to have a full and independent investigation done, but he refused to do that.

It is important to put this into context, too. Just in the first 3 months of this year, Mr. Trump has engaged in 3,700 stock transactions personally, and his net worth has grown from \$2.3 billion to \$6.5 billion since 2024. That is a \$4.2 billion increase in his personal wealth since he returned to the White House.

There are other issues that we should raise. In fact, the sentences to my right were taken from a New York Times article that chronicles many of these types of issues. Nvidia stock is another one where there was a potential benefit of \$5 million to WLF and the Trump family.

I am not saying that there was or was not misconduct by Mr. Trump. We don't know that yet, but it is important to make sure that somebody who is independent, objective, and knowl-

edgeable would conduct that kind of investigation.

So far, the Trump administration has refused to do that, so I am going to be introducing legislation that I think will help to facilitate that. If you have a President who doesn't want to have his Attorney General conduct any investigations into what his administration is doing, we should have other avenues to move that forward. We have in the past, like the Independent Counsel Act. We also could beef up the inspector general law which was put in place after Watergate took place and was put in place specifically because of the Nixon administration misconduct and the failure to have anybody in the Nixon administration investigate that.

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You might recall that John Mitchell was the Attorney General. He ended up going to jail because he participated in that misconduct. We need to make sure we don't find ourselves in this situation again where we have got the fox guarding the henhouse.

We will offer this legislation soon, but I think it is critical to make sure we understand a couple of things in the wake of this. We need to keep an eye on the Trump administration, and we need to remember, too, that after the testimony he gave, he was promoted to Attorney General by the President.

RECOGNIZING LIVES LOST AND SURVIVORS OF 1967 ISRAELI AT- TACK ON U.S. OBSERVATION SHIP

(Mr. MASSIE of Kentucky was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MASSIE. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor, maybe one of the biggest honors of my lifetime, to stand here on the floor and do something that is 59 years overdue, to recognize the survivors and those who gave their lives on the USS *Liberty* 59 years ago today, when they were viciously attacked by IDF jets and also after that by torpedo boats.

I am going to tell you a little bit of their story. By the way, there are at least a dozen of them here today with us. I just met with them in my office, and they related this story to me.

It was a clear day. The USS *Liberty* was one of the most technologically sophisticated ships in the Navy, but it was virtually unarmed. It was sent to observe the Six-Day War going on in the Middle East between Israel and its neighbors.

It arrived on June 7, and the weather was clear. Planes came out to meet them, to investigate. Then on the next day, on June 8, when they started the day, the visibility was unlimited and the American flag was flying proudly on the USS *Liberty*. More planes came from Israel to surveil the ship. They thought they were in good shape, but what happened next surprised them all.

French Mirage jets showed up, and for 25 minutes, strafed and attacked