

right there with me defending Medicaid from Republicans' trillion-dollar cut.

When she saw the viral video of a woman being discharged from a hospital while in active labor and found out she was a constituent, Michelle got right to work. She diligently worked on the bill that would become the WELLS Act, named after my constituent Mercedes Wells, who gave birth in her truck on the side of the road. It was her idea to name the bill after Mercedes because her heart and compassion for people are at the center of everything she does.

Michelle also does great work recruiting and training health fellows, guiding them and setting them up for future success after they leave the office. I know she will do a fantastic job serving as the legislative director in the office of my colleague, Representative EMILY RANDALL.

I have been incredibly lucky to have such wonderful staff, especially Billy and Michelle. I thank both of them.

THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO A HASSLE-FREE YOSEMITE

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, a full-court press is being waged in the media to bring back Yosemite Valley's restrictive reservation system. Viral videos of crowds on Memorial Day now stoke this movement.

Those complaining of crowds during peak weekends, of course, envision that they should be able to enter the park, but not all those pesky other people.

Here is a helpful tip: If you don't like crowds, don't go to the beach on Memorial Day and don't go to Yosemite on Memorial Day.

In a series of articles in the San Francisco Chronicle, these critics have gone so far as to advocate resurrecting the radical Yosemite General Management Plan. It would have ultimately banned all traffic from the park and required visitors to stop nearly 50 miles away, pack up the kids, the binkies, the blankies, and the backpacks, and then take a government bus more than an hour in order just to set foot in Yosemite Valley.

They also favor the so-called Merced River Plan that tried and partially succeeded to eliminate many of the amenities available in the valley, including bicycle and raft rentals, horseback riding rentals, gift and snack shops, swimming pools, and iconic facilities, including the ice skating rink at Curry Village, the Art Center, and a historic stone bridge that dates back to the 1920s.

These elitists now press to restore the disastrous reservation system that greatly inconvenienced park visitors throughout 2024. To them, these restrictive measures are the cure to crowds. Yet, to the public, the reservation system meant that an average of 700 cars a day, filled with families that

had driven hours to enjoy a day at Yosemite, were turned away at the gates for lack of reservations.

Meanwhile, inside the park, parking lots sat half empty. Hotel reservations fell thousands short, and many tourists who booked a room outside the park were refused entry at the gates for want of a coveted registration. Frustrated would-be visitors reported continuing problems trying to obtain reservations on a glitchy website.

Now, this is not to say that crowding in the valley hasn't been a big problem, but the solution is better management and more capacity, not restricting access.

Before the 1997 flood, there were about twice as many parking places, rooms, and campsites as there are today. Although Congress appropriated funds to restore this capacity, it never was.

A succession of incompetent superintendents tolerated inefficient admissions and time-consuming transactions that often produced long lines at the gates. When gateway community representatives approached park managers for relief, their many suggestions and pleas were simply ignored.

Under Yosemite's new superintendent, Ray McPadden, these deficiencies are finally being addressed. He is instituting a large number of improvements that have been advocated by the gateway communities for a decade, and he is meeting regularly with local representatives, businesses, and residents.

To address gate delays, he has introduced digitized entry passes and installed WiFi to expedite admissions.

To decongest the valley, he is promoting and encouraging visitors to enjoy often overlooked features, like Tuolumne Meadows, Mariposa Grove, Glacier Point, and Tenaya Lake. He is adding long-overdue additional parking and will be using real-time data this summer to relieve traffic congestion.

Last weekend, the Secretary of the Interior and the superintendent met with local elected and business representatives. To a person, they opposed the reservations system and endorsed the measures now being undertaken to improve the visitor experience.

The Yosemite Grant of 1864 was the first time that Federal land was set aside for the enjoyment of the American people. In the original words of the act, that was done with the promise that lands would "be held for public use, resort, and recreation."

This led to the creation of the National Park Service with the express purpose "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historical objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment" of the same. Well, the environmental left would change "use, resort, and recreation" to: Look, but don't touch.

John Muir once wrote: The valley is filled with people, yet they do not annoy me. Not so the green left, which has tried for many years to reduce vis-

itor services and restrict public access. The 750,000-acre national park can welcome many more visitors than it does today. All that has been lacking is a visitor-friendly attitude by Yosemite Park management and a willingness to be a good neighbor to the gateway communities and businesses that depend on tourism. With Yosemite's new management, that day has finally come.

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CELEBRATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BUFFALO JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL

(Mr. KENNEDY of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Buffalo Juneteenth Festival, one of the great cultural traditions in western New York and one of the largest Juneteenth celebrations in the United States of America.

Since 1976, countless participants have marched in Buffalo to celebrate the day in American history when word finally reached Galveston, Texas, in 1865 that President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation more than 2 years prior.

For those who were forced to wait, every day carried a profound human cost, but alongside injustice, Juneteenth is a story of what formerly enslaved men and women built with their freedom. Despite extraordinary obstacles and oppression, these Americans fought to claim their place in our democracy. In the process, they expanded the promise of America itself.

Generations of Black Americans confronted and overcame barriers that were designed to exclude them, including Jim Crow's literacy tests, poll taxes, and racial violence, refusing to surrender the belief that America could become more faithful to its founding ideals.

The struggle for Black America did not end in 1865 with the passage of the 13th Amendment, 14th Amendment, and 15th Amendment; with the civil rights movement; or with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It continues right now, as we bear witness to the concerted, intentional campaign to take our Nation backward.

The dismantling of the Voting Rights Act is allowing States across the South to enact racist gerrymanders and dilute Black political power.

Moments like these remind us of the significance of Juneteenth and that our democracy is not self-sustaining. It requires constant vigilance.

That is why Buffalo's Juneteenth Festival is so important. For 50 years, this gathering has continued the unfinished work of building a more just and inclusive nation.

I extend my deepest gratitude to President Carrone Evon Crump, the

festival committee, the volunteers, and the community leaders, whose dedication has sustained this extraordinary Buffalo institution for 50 years.

As we commemorate this golden anniversary, may we all remember Juneteenth's call to protect freedom.

CELEBRATING 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF WESTMINSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Immigrant Heritage Month, I rise today to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Westminister Economic Development Initiative, better known across Buffalo and western New York as WEDI.

For two decades, this extraordinary organization has been a driving force for opportunity and empowerment in the City of Good Neighbors. Through its work in education and economic development, WEDI has helped thousands of western New Yorkers of all ZIP Codes, backgrounds, and languages build stronger futures.

From literacy programs that prepare young people for success in school to small business initiatives, like the West Side Bazaar, that provide entrepreneurs with mentorship and access to capital, WEDI opens doors and expands opportunities across our community.

What makes WEDI so special is that it recognizes the talent and potential already present in our communities and provides people with the tools they need to thrive.

In neighborhoods too often overlooked, WEDI has created pathways to economic mobility, empowered working families, and helped build a more inclusive and equitable Buffalo.

Today, we celebrate 20 years of impact, leadership, and service. I thank everyone at WEDI for their unwavering commitment to western New York and for helping to ensure that the American Dream remains within reach for every member of our community.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate WEDI on this anniversary. Onward to even more.

RECOGNIZING TONY MATTIVI

(Mr. MANN of Kansas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tony Mattivi and celebrate his confirmation by the United States Senate to serve as United States District Judge for the District of Kansas.

Mr. Mattivi has spent his career working to uphold the rule of law, protect Kansans, and keep our communities safe.

Before serving as the 13th director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, he spent more than two decades as a Federal prosecutor. In that role, he handled some of the toughest cases imaginable related to drug trafficking, violent crime, racketeering, organized crime, gangs, money laundering, and terrorism.

He served as the antiterrorism and national security coordinator for the district of Kansas, prosecuted cases in-

volving threats tied to al-Qaida and ISIS, and helped bring justice in cases that directly affected Kansas communities, including an attempted attack at the Wichita Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport.

As director of the KBI, he continued that work with a clear focus on public safety. Under his leadership, the KBI helped form the Joint Fentanyl Impact Team, expanded child victims units in western and southeast Kansas, and completed a major upgrade to Kansas' biometric identification system.

Tony Mattivi understands the law. He understands law enforcement. He understands Kansas. I congratulate him on his confirmation and thank him for his years of service to our State and our country. I am confident he will serve the people of Kansas well on the Federal bench.

RECOGNIZING UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS BASEBALL TEAM

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the University of Kansas baseball team for a historic and record-breaking season. The Jayhawks brought incredible pride to Lawrence, the Big First District, and the entire State of Kansas.

This season, KU won the Big 12 regular season title outright and then captured the Big 12 tournament championship for the first time in 20 years. They finished the year with 45 wins, tying the school record, and hosted the first-ever Lawrence Regional and Lawrence Super Regional.

Along the way, the Jayhawks set school records in conference wins, road and neutral site wins, home runs, and batters struck out. They also earned a spot in the NCAA tournament for the second consecutive year, something the program has done only one other time in school history.

I congratulate Coach Fitzgerald, the players, staff, families, and all Jayhawk fans on an outstanding season. They made Lawrence proud, made Kansas proud, and showed the country that Kansas baseball belongs on the national stage.

RECOGNIZING CO-OP CITY

(Mr. LATIMER of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LATIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the men and women who lead the essential grassroots organizations of Co-op City in the Bronx, the many building association presidents who are elected by and represent the many shareholders in each of the 35 buildings that comprise the complex, which is the largest housing cooperative in the United States. Each building rises as high as 33 stories with up to 500 units in those complexes.

The building association boards organize annual activities and advocate on behalf of the residents. They organize around holidays and special events, such as back to school, Halloween, and Christmas. They conduct fundraisers to

provide money to enhance common areas. They form a group to lobby for overall improvements in the complex, as well as their buildings.

The civic life of Co-op City begins with these volunteers. Let me mention just a few of the most active individuals who head their respective buildings:

Building 13, Leslie Peterson;
Building 6, Lauren Lassiter;
Building 28, Idalia Reyes;
Building 27, Aaron Carnegie;
Building 26, Tanya Cruz-Cooke;
Building 2, Al Quattlebaum;
Building 8, Tremaine O'Garro;
Building 9, Linda Collins;
Building 35, Carol Arthur; and
Building 33, Tobias Garcia.

There are many more to celebrate.

From the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, we salute all the Co-op City building association presidents for their commitment of time and effort on behalf of their neighbors.

HONORING RUTH HINERFELD

Mr. LATIMER. Mr. Speaker, our home area lost an impressive woman last month, Ruth Hinerfeld of Mamaroneck, at age 95.

Ruth, a Massachusetts native, made her life and legacy in Westchester with her husband, Norman. A Vassar graduate with three children and two grandchildren, Ruth was a pillar of the local League of Women Voters and rose to national prominence as the national League of Women Voters president in 1978.

Ruth had direct involvement with the national Presidential debates in 1980 with Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. She was appointed to various national boards, such as the U.S. Advisory Committee for Trade Negotiations and the Overseas Development Council. She maintained voluntary involvement with Common Cause, UNICEF, the Municipal League, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Ruth was always gracious and warm to the people she dealt with, both locally and nationally. Ruth Hinerfeld had a life well-lived.

From the floor of the House of Representatives, we salute the life and times of Ruth Hinerfeld.

RECOGNIZING VILLAGE OF IRVINGTON

Mr. LATIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding programs provided by the village of Irvington that benefit the senior citizens of that community.

Under the able leadership of senior coordinator Joan Armstrong, in the senior center on Bridge Street, the Irvington seniors serve hundreds of seniors annually with a daily nutrition program at lunchtime weekdays each week, and activities and programs to engage seniors of all ages.

There are fitness classes, from tai chi to chair yoga; mental fitness programs; and a variety of board games, mah-jongg, bridge, along with the classic senior staple, bingo.

Joan and her talented crew host annual events for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Halloween, and a host of celebrations. There are day trips planned