

sharp intellect, and deep love for his family. He valued service, lifelong learning, and treating every person with dignity and respect.

His beloved wife of 72 years, Lydia, his children, and the entire Caponigro family are in our thoughts and prayers. Mr. Speaker, may God bless Carmine's memory and may his legacy continue to inspire generations to come.

HONORING BILL RITTER

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great New Yorker, Bill Ritter, whose decades of work in broadcast journalism have earned him the respect and admiration of viewers across our region. As he and his family face his recent diagnosis of early-stage Alzheimer's disease, I join countless New Yorkers in offering my prayers, support, and deep gratitude for all he has given to our communities.

For decades, Bill has been a trusted presence in New York homes. As the longtime anchor of WABC's Eyewitness News, he built a career defined by integrity, thoughtful storytelling, and an unwavering commitment to keeping the public informed.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have had the opportunity to join Bill on his program where every conversation reflected his fairness, professionalism, and respect for others. Even as he steps away from the anchor desk, Bill continues to lead with courage and purpose by raising awareness about Alzheimer's disease and helping families facing the same journey.

Mr. Speaker, Bill; his wife, Kathleen; his children; and his entire family are in our thoughts and prayers. We are deeply grateful for Bill's decades of service, his friendship, and his voice in our public life.

Mr. Speaker, may God bless Bill and his family, and may He grant him strength, peace, and comfort in the days ahead as he sets out to battle Alzheimer's.

RECOGNIZING WATSON PADOVANI

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a truly inspiring young New Yorker from Somers, 5-year-old Watson Padovani, who is showing all of us that you are never too young to make a difference in your community.

Earlier this June, Watson held his third annual lemonade stand outside of Bobo's Cafe in Somers, raising more than \$2,000 for Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, which supports children and families battling childhood cancer. What began as a simple act of kindness has now become a growing tradition of compassion and service.

The Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation was inspired by the legacy of young Alex Scott, who began raising money with a simple lemonade stand in her fight against childhood cancer.

Today, Watson is helping carry that mission forward, one that has raised millions for pediatric cancer research and brought hope to countless families across the country.

Mr. Speaker, to Watson and his family and the entire Somers community that came together to support this effort, I thank them for setting such a powerful example of kindness, generosity, and community spirit.

RECOGNIZING THE '76 HOUSE IN TAPPAN, NEW YORK

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of the Hudson Valley's most historic landmarks, the '76 House in Tappan, New York.

Established in 1686 and expanded in 1755, it is widely known as America's oldest tavern. Mr. Speaker, '76 House stood at the center of a growing community.

On July 4, 1774, local leaders gathered to draft and sign the resolutions of Orangetown, one of the first declarations of independence in American history, helping to lay the foundation for the freedoms we celebrate today.

During the Revolutionary War, '76 House welcomed some of the most important figures in our Nation's founding, including George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and the Marquis de Lafayette. It also played a role in a pivotal moment of the war, including the trial of Major John Andre, a turning point that reshaped the course of the Revolution.

Today, it remains a living piece of American history, offering a direct connection to the people and events that defined our independence and reflecting the enduring spirit of freedom in the Hudson Valley. As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, I am proud to recognize the Old '76 House's legacy and its role in preserving our Nation's story for generations to come.

HONORING MIKHAIL TORRANCE

(Mr. FIGURES of Alabama was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. FIGURES. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to pay honor and tribute to one of the best that my hometown has ever had to offer: Mikhail Torrance.

An incredible young man, who tragically and suddenly passed away last week at the age of just 37 years old. He was a young man whose passing has unleashed a tidal wave of shock and disbelief and raw grief and emotion back home.

I am from Mobile, Alabama. It is the same hometown as Mikhail. It is a place that has produced arguably the best historical collection of athletic talent of almost any city in this country. We have had a number one pick in an NBA draft, an NFL draft, dozens of professional ballplayers, dozens of NCAA champions, NBA, Super Bowl, World Series champions, and six pro sports Hall of Famers, and that number will grow. In fact, just last night, we further added to that legacy with the first round draft pick in the NBA of Labaron Philon, Jr.

Saying someone is among the best to come from my hometown in any sport is not something that can be said light-

ly at all, but it is something that can honestly be said about Mikhail.

I am a few years older than Mikhail, so I was already in college at the University of Alabama when he was coming up through Mary G. Montgomery High School, but I remember when I found out that the University of Florida was recruiting him. It really surprised me because I had not heard of him much before that point. This is at a time when Florida was in the midst of winning back-to-back national championships, and so I called his high school coach, John Davis, who happened to be one of my high school coaches at LeFlore, and I asked him was this kid really that good. Without hesitation, and with the grin that a coach has when he knows he has a workhorse on his team, he said: Yeah, he is. But he also said: But he is a really good kid.

Mikhail ended up coming out as a top recruit in the State of Alabama, ended up going to the University of Alabama where he did everything that was asked of him. He did it the right way. Every single year, he got better. He waited his turn, and by the time he came out, he was an all-conference player, excelled in the pre-draft process, and by all accounts was headed to the NBA.

But he had a heart condition that was discovered and it cost him his shot at playing in the league. Imagine that, being 21 years old and on the pathway to fulfilling a childhood dream and having done everything the right way. This kid didn't have so much as a rumor of a blemish on his character or his reputation, and then that dream was suddenly taken away because of a medical condition. It was tough for him, but he pivoted.

He was able to ultimately play pro ball overseas for a few years before returning home to Alabama to his wife, Jessica, and their two girls, Maci and McKenna, ages 11 and 7. He worked at the Army Corps of Engineers and in real estate, but he still stayed close to the game that he loved so much through coaching and training kids and hosting camps and refereeing local basketball games, even doing play-by-play announcing of televised college games and also doing motivational speaking, giving his testimony, sharing his pain, his struggle, his journey to inspire younger guys to continue to persevere and be better, even better than he was.

As we know, life isn't always fair, and horrible things happen. Now, we sit here in this seemingly unreal moment, and his wife and kids suddenly find themselves in a club that no one wants to be a part of. Unfortunately, I, too, am a member of that club. Coincidentally, just like his daughters, I was 11 when my father suddenly passed, and my younger brother was 7. Having been in those shoes, I can tell you that as much as it sucks being in that club, you ironically end up in another club that a lot of people actually aspire to be in, and that is the club of having a father or a husband whose life will be

remembered and talked about for years to come because he lived with such a passion and dedication and was truly loved and respected by many, many people.

One day, as kids in that club do, his girls will research their dad. They will look him up. They will see the articles about his games and his stats and the clips of his highlights and read about his accomplishments. They will see the articles about his career being cut short. They will see the articles and the news stories covering his untimely death.

However, buried in that research, it is my hope that they will find mention of his name in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, perhaps even see this speech, and know that their father lived a life that was worthy of tribute and honor on the House floor of the United States Capitol in the same room where Presidents speak, where heads of State speak, where we recently just hosted the King of England, because he deserved that.

To Mikhail's parents, you raised a hell of a young man. To Jessica and the girls, our hearts go out to you and know that thousands of people are here to support you all. To Mikhail, on behalf of a grateful city and from a fan, I thank him for the example that he set for the city of Mobile, for representing us well, and being amongst the best that Mobile has ever had to offer this world. You made us proud, boy. You really made us proud.

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

(Ms. MEJIA of New Jersey was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. MEJIA. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise with a complaint.

A few days ago, while my colleagues in the New Jersey delegation and I attempted to carry out our oversight responsibilities at Delaney Hall, we found ourselves blocked by ICE and its contractor, GEO Group.

While we can debate the abhorrent actions of this administration toward immigrants and Americans alike, what we should not debate is our right to carry out our duties on behalf of the American people.

The bottom line is, Members of this governing body have a duty to oversee all aspects of our government and its entities. We have a duty to ask hard questions and challenge injustice, even when it is carried out by our own government.

I have walked the halls of Delaney and Elizabeth Detention Centers. My account of medical abuse and neglect have been direct and truthful. Every American should be concerned about what Members of our delegation have relayed. They should be concerned of the persecution of one of our own Members, and they should demand that oversight continues.

Today, the rights at risk are those on the margins, but ultimately injustice can and will come for us all.

COMMITMENT TO PROTECT OUR FREEDOMS

Ms. MEJIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in a moment in which our Nation both celebrates its first founding while simultaneously forces within it attack the essence of its second.

As we reflect on our Nation's 250th anniversary, I pause to recognize the democratic values hardwired into the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, amendments that defined the American freedoms we fight to preserve and restore today.

Ratified on July 9, 1868, and debated in this very Chamber, the 14th Amendment is one of the most transformative amendments in American history. It fundamentally expanded who counts in American democracy and established the principle that everyone born in these United States belongs here and deserves equal protection under the law.

The word "transformative," in fact, falls short. Because of the 14th Amendment, individuals who walked these hallowed Halls were able to fight for marriage equality, bodily autonomy, equal access to public education, public housing, the right to form a union, collectively bargain, and much, much more.

To put it simply, for more than 150 years, the 14th Amendment has undergirded much of what we fight to enact and strive to defend in this Hall.

Those protections have been under attack since their inception, but in recent years, these attacks have escalated, stripping some protections from the hands of our fellow Americans.

This is why I rise at this moment, to remind my colleagues and fellow Americans about what is truly at stake. Those privileged and blessed to represent our fellow Americans have a special charge in this moment. I take that charge seriously, with a commitment to protect our freedoms today and for those who will come after us, generations to come.

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CHOOSING PEACE, HUMAN DIGNITY, AND CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

(Ms. STANSBURY of New Mexico was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, as we sit here in the people's House, millions of children in the Middle East are living in fear, trauma, and danger. That fear has only intensified as the President has waged an illegal war in Iran, with hundreds of schoolchildren killed, thousands of civilians lost, and bombs still dropping in Lebanon as entire communities have been reduced to rubble.

The President is seemingly no closer to ending the war he unleashed and, instead, is obsessing about golden ballrooms, grand arches, and algae-infested pools while asking this body for an unprecedented \$1.5 billion for more weap-

ons and military spending to wage this war and a State Department and foreign affairs budget that continues devastating cuts to the lifesaving programs of USAID that have directly contributed to the loss of food, medicine, and critical lifesaving aid across the world, with completely preventable deaths for thousands of children.

This is a moral moment for America. Will we stand up and say stop this war and reinvest in our humanitarian missions? Will we speak up against injustice and suffering? Will we remain silent?

Last night, the Senate finally passed our War Powers Resolution to end the war in Iran, sending a clear message that it is time to end this illegal war.

Today, I stand here on the floor to offer amendments to the foreign affairs budget to restore funding for critical aid, food, and resources for the children of the Middle East, and particularly for Gaza. They have faced unimaginable suffering over the last several years.

Just yesterday, a U.N. commission reported on the deliberate targeting and killing of Palestinian children in Gaza and the West Bank as part of a deliberate strategy to destroy future Palestinian communities. We cannot turn a blind eye to these crimes.

We must stand up as the branch of government by the people and for the people. We must be a voice for right and wrong, a moral conscience for this country and for our people.

Back home, my constituents are calling my office daily to ask for an end to this conflict and the suffering, and to choose a different path for this country, a path that invests in our people in communities and the children of this planet; a path that ends the violence and the killing in the Middle East, Gaza, and the West Bank; and a path that ends the destruction of communities, schools, hospitals, roads, and water systems that have devastated millions.

Mr. Speaker, it has been catastrophic. Whether it is funding in this bill, another military spending bill from the White House, or the NDAA, Congress cannot remain silent. Congress cannot remain complicit. Congress cannot fund this violence, especially when the greatest burden has fallen on children.

Children have watched their parents, siblings, and classmates die and are waking up every day, wondering where their next meal will come from and whether they will survive the night. No child should inherit a future defined by violence and despair, and certainly not funded by the taxpayers of the American people.

If Americans are serious about building a safer and more stable world, we must invest in the people who have been impacted most by these conflicts abroad.

That is why I am offering these amendments to restore humanitarian aid to the children of Gaza, invest in schools and healthcare for moms and