

That is why America became the most prosperous and free Nation the world has ever known. One of the reasons we remain free is because we have never had to rely on another nation to feed us.

Food security is national security. A nation that cannot feed itself cannot long remain independent. For 250 years, American farmers and ranchers have helped secure our freedoms while our brave servicemen and -women defended them on the front lines. Farmers have kept grocery store shelves stocked, strengthened rural communities, supported our economy, and ensured that America never had to turn to our adversaries to sustain us.

In Kansas, we understand that well. The Big First is the most productive agriculture district in the country, ranking first in cattle, wheat, and sorghum production. We help feed, fuel, and clothe the world. We know when agriculture is strong, America is strong.

Our State has always had an outsized role in the American story. We are home to Abilene, where President Dwight D. Eisenhower learned the values that helped him lead the Allied Forces to victory in World War II and later to lead this Nation as our President. We are home to leaders like Senator Bob Dole, who carried the values of faith, service, sacrifice, and duty from the plains of Kansas to the battlefields of Europe and the Halls of Congress.

I like to think that the Big First District is the pilot light of America because the values that make our country great are still alive and well in my hometown and across Kansas. Folks where I am from live by faith, family, hard work, personal responsibility, and service to their neighbors. As long as those values continue to burn bright in America, our brightest days are yet to come. However, preserving those values requires us to be clear-eyed about the threats we have to freedom.

History scholars know there is an inverse relationship between the size of government and the freedom of the people. The larger and more intrusive government becomes, the smaller the space becomes for families, churches, businesses, farms, and individuals to flourish. That truth is just as important today as it was in 1776.

Yes, America was blessed with fertile land, mighty rivers, abundant resources, and a people willing to work, but it was freedom that allowed those blessings to become prosperity. It was faith that gave our Nation its moral foundation, and it was family that carried our values from one generation to the next.

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, let us do more than look back. Let us recommit ourselves to the principles that made our Nation possible: faith, family, freedom, limited government, private property, strong communities, gratitude, and faith in God.

We must protect this inheritance, strengthen it in our time, and pass it on to our children and grandchildren so that 250 years from now, America remains prosperous, secure, free, and rooted in the truth that our rights are derived from God, not from a king.

Mr. Speaker, may God bless Kansas and may God bless the United States of America. Happy birthday, America.

HONORING BEATRICE LUMPKIN

(Mrs. RAMIREZ of Illinois was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and legacy of Beatrice Lumpkin, who passed away June 14, 2026, at the age of 107 years. Bea was the living, marching, fighting embodiment of solidarity forever.

Many of us know Bea because of her unwavering commitment to worker power, civil rights, and educational justice. A Chicago Public Schools educator and leader with the Chicago Teachers Union, Bea was a fixture at marches, rallies, and picket lines across our city.

She started her activism early. At the age of 9, she marched with striking textile workers. Across her century of activism, Bea was on the front lines of the struggle for justice and equity. From marching alongside Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Marquette Park, to being instrumental in Harold Washington's campaign for mayor 43 years ago, to supporting the recent unionization of Starbucks employees, Bea showed up for her neighbors, for Chicago, and for our movement.

In 2018, my colleague, Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY, took to the floor to celebrate Bea's 100 years of fighting for justice and inspiring generations of activism.

Today, I rise to thank Bea for reminding us that there is joy in the struggle, in solidarity, and on the front lines of the fight for justice because joy, in fact, is an act of resistance.

On behalf of Chicago's Third Congressional District, I honor the memory and the life's work of Beatrice Lumpkin, a true champion for the working class and a giant in our movement.

HONORING JAE JIN PAK AND TIMOTHEUS GORDON, JR.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jae Jin Pak and Timotheus Gordon, Jr., two leaders who co-founded the Chicagoland Disabled People of Color Coalition and who serve as research associates at the Institute on Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois Chicago.

Throughout their careers, they have dedicated themselves to unifying disabled, autistic, deaf, and neurodivergent people of color, fostering collective pride, strengthening advocacy skills across our communities, and building intersectional solidarity.

Through the arts, culture, and relentless advocacy, they champion disability justice, advancing the principles of accessibility and radical inclusion within communities of color.

By cultivating brave spaces that center the lived experiences of disabled people of color, they dismantle systemic barriers to inclusion and empower individuals to forge their own path to reclaim their identities and their dignity.

They are the architects of a more inclusive, equitable Chicago.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, it is my proud honor to be able to commend Jae Jin Pak and Timotheus Gordon, Jr., for their dedication to disability justice, radical inclusion, and the innate dignity of all people.

□ 1030

RECOGNIZING SOVEREIGNTY FOR PUERTO RICO

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the Chicago Young Lords and their protests of 1969, the first marches for Puerto Rican self-determination in Chicago's history.

It is fitting that I honor a revolutionary organization fighting for Puerto Rican liberation and the rights of all oppressed people on the eve of our 250th anniversary of the United States of America. While America will declare its commitment to no kings, we also must demand no colonies.

That is because 57 years after the summer of 1969, 57 years after Jose Jimenez traveled to Puerto Rico to visit the shrine of its nationalist leader, Don Pedro Albizu Campos, 57 years after the Chicago Young Lords mobilized 10,000 people to march carrying Don Pedro Albizu Campos signs from Lincoln Park to Humboldt Park in support of independence in Chicago's Puerto Rican parade, Puerto Rico is still a United States colony.

We cannot celebrate 250 years of freedom while ruling a colony for 128 of them. We cannot celebrate our independence while denying the Puerto Rican people the dignity of self-determination.

That is why, here on behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I publicly commend the Young Lords for teaching us that when we support Puerto Rico's self-determination, we are supporting, in fact, the right of sovereignty for people everywhere.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF CHIEF STEPHEN C. IGNACIO

(Mr. MOYLAN of Guam was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a heavy heart to honor the life and legacy of Chief Stephen C. Ignacio, a son of Guam who dedicated his life to serving and protecting our island.

His passing is not only a profound loss for the Guam Police Department, but for the entire island of Guam.

There are few professions that demand more sacrifice than law enforcement. Police officers willingly place themselves in harm's way so others may live in safety. They miss holidays, birthdays, and precious moments with their families because the call to serve never stops. Chief Ignacio understood that sacrifice because he lived it every day.

Throughout his distinguished career with the Guam Police Department, Chief Ignacio earned the respect of his fellow officers, government leaders, and the community he faithfully served. Rising through the ranks to become chief of police, he led with professionalism, accountability, and a steadfast commitment to protecting the people of Guam.

Under his leadership, the department continued efforts to modernize its operations, strengthen officer training, and build trust with the community. Beyond policies and programs, those who knew Chief Ignacio will remember the person behind the title, a leader who cared deeply about his officers and understood that effective policing begins with service, compassion, and integrity.

The work of a police chief is often thankless. When communities are safe, the long hours and difficult decisions often go unnoticed. Yet when tragedy strikes, it is the chief who bears the weight of responsibility. Chief Ignacio accepted that responsibility with humility and unwavering dedication.

His leadership extended beyond the walls of police headquarters. He understood that public safety is built through partnerships with families, schools, neighborhood organizations, and community leaders. He believed that trust is earned, not demanded, and he worked to strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the people they serve.

Today we remember more than a police chief. We remember a husband, a father, a family member, a colleague, a mentor, and a friend. We remember a public servant who devoted his life's work to making Guam a safer place for future generations.

To the men and women of the Guam Police Department: We grieve alongside you. Your department has lost a leader, but the example he set will continue to guide those who wear the badge.

To Chief Ignacio's family: Please know that the people of Guam share in your sorrow. We are grateful that you shared him with our island for so many years. His commitment to public service came with countless sacrifices, and we recognize that your family made those sacrifices alongside him.

As we reflect on his life, may we also remember the values he embodied: duty before self, integrity in leadership, and service to others.

Chief Ignacio answered the call to serve his community for decades. He did so with honor, courage, and a deep sense of responsibility.

His watch has ended, but his legacy will live on in every officer he

mentored, every life he helped protect, and every member of our community who is safer because of his service. I extend my deepest condolences to Chief Ignacio's loved ones and the entire Guam Police Department.

To his family: No words can fully ease the pain of losing someone so deeply loved, but I hope you find comfort in knowing that the countless hours he devoted to protecting our community made a lasting difference, and the legacy he leaves behind will continue to inspire generations of law enforcement officers who follow in his footsteps.

May God grant his loved ones strength and comfort during this difficult time. May we never forget Chief Stephen Ignacio's years of faithful service, and may he rest in eternal peace.

MEDICARE GUARANTEE IS UNDER THREAT

(Mr. DOGGETT of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, approaching the 61st anniversary of Medicare, a true lifeline for retirees and individuals with disabilities, I am filing the Saving MEDICARE Act to ensure a solvent, better Medicare that reaches more Americans.

Medicare represents a valued Federal guarantee that workers will age with dignity and have access to quality, affordable healthcare. That guarantee is now under threat from giant, private insurance companies that profiteer off Medicare.

This landmark proposal comprehensively addresses the many ways that Medicare Advantage insurers are overpaid. My goal is to level the playing field so that traditional Medicare is no longer at a disadvantage to these private insurers.

Twenty-three years ago, in this very room, Republicans arm-twisted their own members and others all night long into the wee hours of the morning to ensure approval of a terrible bill that has hurt Americans and cost them hundreds of billions of dollars.

Its landmark provision was one to limit Medicare from negotiating prescription drug prices, ensuring that we continue to pay the most outrageous pharmaceutical prices anywhere on Earth. At the same time, they also included this new program with the great misnomer Medicare Advantage, a private insurance alternative to Medicare.

Though the supporters claimed that they would save us so much money, it would cost less than traditional Medicare, MA private insurers have never saved us a dime. Indeed, MA actually costs taxpayers tens of billions of dollars more every year.

This year, the nonpartisan, independent Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, or MedPAC, estimates that MA costs taxpayers \$2,660 more for each person who goes into their plans rather than traditional Medicare.

Insurers claim that this great bonus that they are receiving provides so many extra benefits to consumers, from pest control, to rent, to a trip to get groceries, all these various things from one advertised insurer, except a Joe Namath autographed football.

Hidden in the fine print are caveats, and consumers often find they aren't eligible for any of those advertised benefits, and skimpy coverage and high cost-sharing when they need help the most. Difficulty in accessing the doctor of their choice and getting treatment approved create long delays, often outright denials, and many MA enrollees are struggling to receive quality healthcare.

In short, the only advantage in Medicare Advantage is to the monopoly and oligopoly private insurers.

The Saving MEDICARE Act will stop this waste, fraud, and abuse. It is about delivering to Americans the care that they deserve at a reasonable price. These funds will extend Medicare solvency and improve Medicare with dental, vision, and hearing benefits—another piece of legislation I have offered. We can achieve an out-of-pocket cap, lower premiums, and more.

We can achieve this by simply saying to MA that you should not cost more than traditional Medicare.

My bill reins in upcoding, a practice insurers use to make it appear that patients are sicker than they really are. It will also stop plans from profiteering when the Veterans Administration is providing most of the healthcare, but they have recruited veterans to join their plans for whom they provide little or no care.

It addresses insurance practices of steering sicker patients into traditional Medicare and trying to get healthier consumers who cost less into their plans. It phases out the failed county quartile system and the Quality Bonus Program which have only delivered more money to private insurers.

Finally, it enhances Federal oversight and involves State partners in this also. Medicare Advantage is putting Medicare on long-term life support. The Saving MEDICARE Act is a roadmap for accountable, and reasonable spending and improving the healthcare for many Americans.

In this totally ineffective and substantial Congress, chances of getting Republicans to stand up to any special interest are pretty slim, but this bill is designed to encourage colleagues in the future with specific guidelines on how to deal with Medicare and make it better for more Americans, and to urge more of our colleagues to have the courage to stand up to these insurance giants by preventing them from using Medicare as a piggy bank.

AMERICANS LEAVE A TREMENDOUS LEGACY

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

Mr. KENNEDY of Utah. Mr. Speaker, this week America turns 250 years old.