

DANGERS OF NITROUS OXIDE

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

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about nitrous oxide—a deadly inhalant that is being sold to consumers online and in stores across the U.S.

Put yourself in the shoes of a parent who just received the worst news of their life: your child has suddenly become unable to walk. They have blood clots around their lungs, or, tragically, they have lost their life, and it is all because they got addicted to inhaling nitrous oxide they bought legally off the shelf from their corner store or online in bulk.

While grieving the unimaginable, you are left asking: How did this happen?

That is what Julia Charleston was thinking when her 34-year-old son, Robert, a military veteran, died after becoming addicted to nitrous oxide.

Often called laughing gas, nitrous is probably something you have heard about at the dentist, but it is extremely dangerous to inhale without medical supervision. Even a single use can cause debilitating side effects, like neurological damage or even death.

This is a growing problem. Mr. Speaker, 14 million Americans say they have misused nitrous oxide, and fatalities from nitrous oxide misuse have increased by 578 percent in the past decade.

Despite these risks, nitrous oxide is being marketed as a carefree party drug, with names like “galaxy gas” or “baking bad,” in giant, brightly-colored canisters and flavors. This is clearly targeting both kids and adults for recreational use.

Meanwhile, the smaller canisters, like this one, are pervasive at music concerts, college campuses, parks, and beaches.

Social media videos of people using nitrous have glamorized and fueled this deadly trend, and DUI nitrous cases are putting everyone in harm’s way.

Right now, it is incredibly easy to buy nitrous oxide at smoke shops, gas stations, and online. I was even able to purchase nitrous oxide canisters and have them shipped directly to the U.S. Capitol, no questions asked.

Congress must act to protect people from this dangerous and deadly inhalant. That is why I introduced the bipartisan Nitrous Oxide Safety Act to ban the sale of nitrous oxide to consumers and close the loophole that is being exploited.

While there are legitimate reasons for doctors, dentists, businesses, and industry to use this chemical, it has no business being sold in stores or online. That is what my bill would prevent, regardless of whether it has a warning label.

It has been reassuring to see some States start to act, but we need Federal legislation to address this truly interstate problem.

No more parents should have to experience the devastation of losing a child to nitrous oxide.

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RECOGNIZING STEVE KEOWN

(Mr. BAIRD of Indiana was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Steve Keown, a retiring agriculture teacher and FFA adviser who dedicated 42 years to Carroll County Junior-Senior High School.

Mr. Keown received his bachelor’s degree from Murray State University and a master’s degree from Purdue University in curriculum and instruction.

Mr. Keown mentored countless future educators through the MI-BAT program. Mr. Keown also served the Indiana Association of Agricultural Educators for numerous years.

During Mr. Keown’s tenure, the Carroll County FFA chapter earned national recognition for over 20 consecutive years, produced over 200 recipients of State FFA degrees and nearly 60 American FFA degrees, over 50 proficiency champions, and more than 25 national finalists and winners.

Mr. Keown’s commitment to student leadership and hands-on learning has shaped success for FFA chapters in Indiana. His passion for agriculture education and mentoring others will leave a lasting impact on our community.

HONORING TIPPECANOE SCHOOL CORPORATION

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Tippecanoe School Corporation’s Extra Mile Award winner, Deb Liggett.

Deb Liggett is an extremely dedicated caretaker of students who drives 170 miles every day, taking students to McCutcheon High School, Southwestern Middle School, and Klondike Schools for over 40 years. She has been a dependable source of kindness and joy for Hoosier students.

Our students need role models who are examples of reliability, compassion, and good citizenship.

One kindhearted person can make a difference in the lives of so many young people. Deb Liggett has been that role model in the Tippecanoe area.

I am proud to congratulate her on receiving this well-known and well-earned award, and I am glad our students have Ms. Liggett on their way to and from school.

CONGRATULATING IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ivy Tech Community College, which recently won three third-place awards in the U.S. Department of Energy’s Battery Workforce Challenge.

This challenge is a 3-year collegiate engineering competition where teams build an advanced battery pack for the commercial Ram ProMaster EV program.

All the students who competed progressed through technical milestones

that reflect the same trials that the energy industry faces. Throughout the program, the students met demanding engineering standards without compromising safety.

I am so proud of these students at Ivy Tech who succeeded throughout the competition and provided real results from their work.

Our Nation needs innovative minds. The challenges we face are difficult and complicated, and I am glad we have young Hoosiers who are ready to tackle these issues head-on and showcase the incredible talent we have in Indiana.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Ivy Tech on these well-deserved awards.

CELEBRATING AMERICA’S 250TH ANNIVERSARY: CONTRADICTION AND HOPE

(Mr. JACKSON of Illinois was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, my reflections on the Nation’s 250th anniversary:

Happy birthday, America.

Mr. Speaker, 250 years ago, a remarkable experiment was launched upon this continent. It announced to the world that liberty was a universal birthright, that governments derived their authority from the consent of the governed, and that human dignity deserved political expression. It was a dream of uncommon brilliance.

Yet on that very same day, another story marched beside it—a nightmare of uncommon cruelty. Freedom and slavery entered history together in an unholy matrimony.

The Declaration proclaimed equality while hundreds of thousands remained in chains. The promise was magnificent. The practice was monstrous. The vision soared toward Heaven while the reality remained anchored in human bondage.

This is not merely the paradox of America’s founding. It is the permanent tension within the American story.

Our Republic has always contained both contradiction and conviction, hypocrisy and hope, exclusion and expansion, injustice and aspiration.

Yet history teaches us something very profound. The greatness of America has never been that it was born perfect. Its greatness has rested upon its capacity to become better. Every generation has been asked a single question: Will you enlarge the promise, or will you shrink it?

That question confronts us today, for what a nation chooses to remember becomes its operating system. What it chooses to forget becomes its character. Memory is not nostalgia. Memory is infrastructure. It determines how a people think, how they govern, how they educate their children, and how they understand their obligations to one another.

When a nation tells the whole truth about itself, it becomes stronger. When

it edits its past for comfort, it weakens its future. History is not an accusation. History is instructional. History is not about assigning perpetual guilt. History is about cultivating perpetual wisdom. That is why institutions devoted to preserving our collective memory matter so profoundly.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture is not merely a building of bronze and stone. It is one of America's greatest classrooms. It reminds us that the story of African Americans is not a chapter added to America's history. It is one of the central texts from which American history is written. African Americans in history make American history whole.

The labor of enslaved people helped build this Nation's wealth. They built this building. The courage of abolitionists challenged its conscience. The sacrifices of Black soldiers defended its flag. The determination of teachers, entrepreneurs, artists, scientists, clergy, laborers, and ordinary citizens expanded the meaning of democracy itself. To diminish those stories is not simply to diminish African Americans. It is to diminish America itself.

Throughout our history, there have been recurring efforts to narrow the Nation's memory. Certain voices have always argued that some stories are too uncomfortable, some documents too inconvenient, and some truths too disruptive.

That pattern is not new. It appeared after Reconstruction. It appeared during the long struggle against segregation. It also has appeared whenever honest history threatened comfortable myths.

When debates arise over museums, classrooms, archives, monuments, historical interpretations, and books that are being banned in schools, we should recognize them as part of a much longer American conversation about who belongs within the Nation's narrative.

The stakes extend far beyond any single institution. They concern whether future generations inherit a history expansive enough to include all who helped build this Republic. The answer should never be fewer stories. The answer should always be fuller stories to tell the whole truth, for memory is not a scarce resource. Truth is not diminished by inclusion.

Indeed, the opposite is true. Every time America has widened its understanding of itself, it has become more faithful to its founding ideals.

Consider the long procession of those who enlarged the American promise: those who challenged slavery, those who defended the Union, those who fought for women's right to vote, those who demanded women's suffrage, those who organized workers, those who secured civil rights, those who expanded voting rights, those who insisted that democracy belongs to every citizen rather than a privileged few.

Each generation inherited an imperfect Nation. Each generation left be-

hind a better one. That is the true American tradition: not perfection but progress, not complacency but correction, not silence but an honest conversation, not fear but an abiding faith.

At 250 years, America does not celebrate because every promise has been fulfilled. America celebrates because generation after generation refused to surrender those promises. The American story has always advanced because citizens possessed enough patriotism to criticize injustice and enough hope to repair it.

Love of country has never required blindness. It has required courage. It has required the truth to confront those things that are uncomfortable, the courage to confess, the courage to correct, and the courage to continue.

Mr. Speaker, a happy 250th anniversary to our country. May God bless the United States.

HONORING THE LIVES OF JACOB HULL AND ROBERT JOHNSON

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

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to two of my constituents who tragically lost their lives in a senseless act of gun violence at a public library in Chico, in the heart of my district.

Libraries are places of learning and community, spaces where families, children, and neighbors come together. Last week, that sense of safety was shattered by unimaginable violence.

I take this time to honor Jacob Hull and Robert Johnson and offer my deepest condolences to the families, friends, and community who are devastated and forever changed by this tragedy.

Jacob, or "Cody" as he was known, had taken someone he cared for deeply, a close friend's 8-year-old daughter, with him for a visit to the library. He gave his life that day to protect hers by shielding her from the attacker in an act of extraordinary courage and selflessness. Because of his actions, she was able to escape, flee to safety, and reunite with her family.

Jacob Hull is a hero.

Robert spent 30 years as a resident of Orland, California, where he spent a career in the ag industry before retiring. He was beloved by his family, who fondly referred to him as Uncle Robert.

Robert found great joy in spending time at that Chico library, which his family described as his favorite place in the world. It was a place of comfort, of learning, and peace, where he could indulge in his passion for reading. Reading was the passion that remained with him throughout his life.

Robert was a quiet strength.

Both Robert and Jacob were beloved members of the greater Chico and Butte County community, whose absence will be deeply felt, and it leaves a void that cannot be replaced.

Members of the Chico community have already banded together to raise

money in support of the devastated families of both victims. Two memorial funds for Cody and Robert have been started by the North Valley Community Foundation, and donations can be made on the North Valley Community Foundation's website at www.nvcf.org.

I also extend my gratitude to the librarians, the bystanders, and the first responders who selflessly rushed to the scene to provide aid during this horrific crime.

I commend Chief Aldridge and his amazing officers of the Chico Police Department, who responded to this incident within 4 minutes. Their excellent training was on full display, and they quickly apprehended the suspect. Their heroism undoubtedly saved lives that day. We are grateful to them, and we salute them, the thin blue line that protects our community each and every day.

No words will ease the deep pain and suffering our community is feeling, but I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring the memories of Jacob Hull and Robert Johnson and in praying for justice and healing for their families and our community in the difficult weeks and months ahead.

CALIFORNIA'S FISCAL BUST

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, a new fiscal year starts off in California, and we have a fiscal bust that could cost us vital wildfire funding.

The cap-and-tax system doesn't raise enough money this year. Under a terrible deal struck between Gavin Newsom and a select group of politicians, money meant for wildfire prevention may be lost because it was put into last place under this deal; and the high-speed rail, a project that hasn't built a single mile of track, was put in first place, along with legislative projects for a select group of legislators: \$125 million for transit passes, \$25 million for a UC Climate Research Center.

One curious one: \$85 million of our taxpayer funding to go to some entity chosen by the legislature to explore climate innovation and solutions for the future—where is it going? No one really knows, but what we do know is that wildfire funding could very well be slashed under this terrible deal.

Even worse, our CAL FIRE firefighters' budget could be slashed if we do not reach a deal that comes to putting wildfire prevention and wildfire suppression first in our State.

I rise to call out this terrible and atrocious deal, and I demand that my former colleagues in the State legislature put wildfire first. I demand that they put victims first after they have been through so much horror over these many years in California, wildfire after wildfire. Put them first by making sure that that funding is there.

We can do our jobs here in the U.S. Congress, as well, by passing our Fix Our Forests Act, which is now on the Senate side. We need to make sure that we get that through so that we can increase the pace and scale of removing dangerous fuels.