

have suspended 400 licenses and really only heard back from 12, meaning that 12 were probably running legitimate businesses.

They identified, through good data analytics, investing in targeting the right areas where we anticipate there being significant fraud, and they are taking action. If somebody reaches out and says, "Wait, what is going on? Why did you cancel our license?" if they are a legitimate business doing legitimate work, they can show that. The overwhelming majority were actually pinpointed. They suspected some level of fraud, and it appears to be very accurate.

Another anecdote that I just got recently, just this week, from a meeting with members within this agency, CMS, is that they have sent letters to the Medicare patients. Patients in hospice care are signed up for treatment with a number to show they are in hospice care. They have an opportunity to send correspondence to these folks just confirming that they have initiated hospice care.

Mr. Speaker, 15 percent have come back from States—I think the exact States were in the Southwest, California, Nevada, and, I believe, Arizona. Those three States came back with 15 percent of the people whom they were sending letters to saying, no, they are not on hospice. The majority of that was focused in this area. For some reason, the Los Angeles area went rampant in this hospice world. Ninety companies were associated with one address.

I have worked in the durable medical equipment industry before. There is equipment, call centers, and a workforce. You can't run 90 companies out of one location, Mr. Speaker, but this is what these dedicated men and women within our organizations within this administration are going out trying to find.

These are real numbers. These are real examples. This is not made up.

When I get the chance to go back and share this at home, they are really frustrated. They are also proud that this type of fraud doesn't stem from Utah. It is a moment of some recognition that States have a huge responsibility to play with respect to how these programs are implemented, and the States need to do a good job.

I am proud to say that Utah has been deemed to be very strong in this case. I am really impressed with the professionalism of what I am seeing. They continue to go and identify this. They are using good data analytics to be able to figure out where the potential might be next and go after it.

It is something that I share tonight as we highlight these issues of deficits, that this is going on daily, and as part of that first year of success of \$360 billion, this is part of it. This is the type of stuff that Americans love to see because it is wasteful and fraudulent. People need to be held accountable. That is all taking place and happening.

Just this week, the Labor Department sent a strike team to New York to crack down on unemployment insurance fraud that is costing taxpayers an estimated \$2 million a day. New York recorded more than \$750 million in improper unemployment insurance payments and \$507 million in fraudulent payments just last year.

House Republicans are focused on making sure the services get to the people who actually need them and are not wasted or stolen.

In the Ways and Means Committee, we have worked to put new guardrails on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to mitigate improper payments and ensure States are paying their fair share for this critically important program.

Empowering agencies to investigate and root out fraud and making targeted investments into fraud prevention and recovery programs is a giant step forward.

For every dollar Medicare spends on monitoring programs, the government sees almost \$25 in savings. Mr. Speaker, you will see Dr. Oz communicate this, and you will see his team communicate this. They have team members under Dr. Oz's purview who have said: I will come back and work in this job again.

They worked in the first Trump administration. They said: I will come back if we can be even more laser focused and really go after the fraud.

That was Dr. Oz's mission, and that is what his team's mission is. They do an incredible job of explaining and sharing with us the proper information. It is not hyperbole; it is not rhetoric; it is literally data. They talk about these numbers with respect to spending a dollar on these efforts, site visits, sending out communication to find out if they are truly actual patients on hospice. That takes a little bit of resources, but we are getting back a strong yield from that, \$1 for \$25 in savings.

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For every dollar Medicare spends on monitoring programs, the government sees almost \$25 in savings. We need more programs like this to root out fraud and recover improper payments.

To that end, I am working on legislation that will allow more of the money recovered by the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program to be reinvested directly into the fraud prevention program. The areas that this money needs to be reinvested back into are the trust funds and also back into the programs that will help us continue to be strong in this regard.

Earlier this year, House Republicans passed the Fraud Prevention and Accountability Act, legislation that strengthened fraud prevention across the Federal Government and help protect taxpayer dollars from fraud, scams, and abuse.

Families are stretching every dollar right now. Fraudsters are cashing in on

taxpayer-funded programs like childcare, student aid, and safety-net programs. Americans play by the rules. Scammers should not get rewarded.

This is the right fight. Every dollar stolen through fraud is a dollar taken from workers, families, seniors, veterans, and small businesses that actually need the support.

We have got enough excuses, loopholes, and taxpayer money disappearing into fraud and abuse. Our government programs have a problem, and our taxpayers are the ones paying the price. These are the loopholes we are closing. We are cracking down on this and holding negligent State leaders accountable. We cannot lower our deficit without addressing the fraudulent spending throughout our country.

For a year and a half, Republicans have shone a light on the amount of fraud, abuse, and the sheer waste. We are reducing the deficit by cutting this spending, and it is happening on daily basis.

As I mentioned earlier, the data that I have here, I was told several months ago that they had canceled 400 licenses and only heard back from 12. That is obviously a green light to then reach out and identify more. If you cancel a license and you don't hear from that company or those stakeholders, you have definitely nailed that right aspect of finding that fraudulent activity.

It is a point that I hope that every American can really understand. This is not a partisan issue. Everything back here becomes partisan, but if you look at it and just actually take the data, this is a sensational thing that is going on, and it is going to continue to go on for the duration of this administration.

We must continue to courageously work to solve this crisis, and we cannot let it get too late.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to bring Utah's sound fiscal policies to Washington on the House Budget Committee, and I will continue to fight for the American family as we seek to give our children a better economic future.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING THE 158TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 14TH AMENDMENT

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Ms. MEJIA of New Jersey was recognized for 30 minutes.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MEJIA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Ms. MEJIA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the proud co-chair of the House Democratic Caucus' Defend the 14th Amendment Task Force.

This month, we mark the 158th anniversary of one of the most important amendments ever added to our Constitution.

Forged in the aftermath of the Civil War and paid for by the blood, sweat, and tears of Black freedom fighters and their allies, the 14th Amendment declared that every person born in these United States is anointed with inalienable rights and responsibilities, never to be infringed upon by the actions of any State or entity.

Together, with the 13th and 15th amendments, it marked what historians call: The second founding of our Nation, an effort to build a democracy that truly includes everyone.

History reminds us that writing rights into our Constitution is only the beginning.

For decades after Reconstruction, millions of Black Americans were denied those very rights through segregation, voter suppression, and racial violence.

The Constitution had not changed. What changed was whether or not our country chose to enforce it. It took generations of organizing and sacrifice before Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and began making good on the promise that existed for nearly a century.

That history matters because it teaches us an important lesson: Constitutional rights do not appear or disappear overnight. They are built or weakened piece by piece, action by action. Court decisions, legislation, political rhetoric, actions that slowly erode the institutions designed to protect our democracy.

Viewed in isolation, the current challenges to birthright citizenship, due process, equal protection, and the freedom to vote may seem like isolated political actions, but viewed together it becomes crystal clear that our Constitution and the promise of our second founding is under attack.

What is more? It is clear that it is our duty as true patriots to combat it. That is why House Democrats created the Defend the 14th Amendment Task Force.

Our mission is simple: Defend the constitutional rights that generations of Americans fought to secure. Our rights are not guaranteed simply because they are written down. They endure because people defend them.

The generations before us marched, organized, and sacrificed to make the promises of the 14th Amendment real. They understood that democracy requires participation, accountability, and constant vigilance.

Now, that responsibility belongs to us. Every generation faces a defining test. For generations that ratified the 14th Amendment, it was whether America would finally recognize citizenship and the humanity of those who had been enslaved.

For the generations that marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, it was whether every American would have an equal voice at the ballot box.

Our generation faces a different question: Will we preserve those constitutional guarantees for the generations that follow? As long as I have the privilege of serving in this House, I will continue fighting to protect that promise for every family, community, and generation to come.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution is only as strong as our willingness to defend it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER).

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the proud co-chair of the Defend the 14th Amendment Task Force because I believe in one simple truth: The 14th Amendment is now under siege.

For more than 150 years this amendment has stood as one of the greatest promises our Nation has ever made: That every person born in this country is entitled to equal protection under the law and that no government may deny anyone due process simply because of who they are or where they were an immigrant from.

It was born from one of the darkest chapters in American history. After slavery ended, our Nation faced a choice: We could preserve injustice under a different name, or we could expand the promise of freedom.

The 14th Amendment was our answer. It declared boldly that citizenship could not be rationed, equality could not be optional, and liberty belonged to all of us.

Today, that promise is being tested. This administration has made no secret of its willingness to chip away at the constitutional protections generations of Americans have fought, marched, bled, and even died to secure.

They are using every tool at their disposal to weaken the very rights that safeguard us all. For me, this fight is deeply personal.

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I was born in the Jim Crow South, little place called Waxahachie, Texas. I came of age in a nation where equal protection existed only on paper long before it existed in practice.

I marched with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference starting when I was 15 years old. The SCLC was led by a young preacher by the name of Martin Luther King, Jr. I marched because I believed America could become what it claimed to be. I believed that the Constitution should protect every citizen equally. I witnessed firsthand what happens when governments decide some people deserve fewer rights than others.

The progress we celebrate today did not happen by accident. It happened because brave Americans demanded that the 14th Amendment finally be honored. It was the Equal Protection Clause that became the constitutional

foundation for *Brown v. Board of Education*, ending legally sanctioned segregation in our public schools.

It was the 14th Amendment that strengthened the fight against discriminatory voting laws, housing discrimination, and unequal treatment in employment.

It was the 14th Amendment that has protected interracial marriage, expanded equality for women, safeguarded the rights of people with disabilities, and affirmed the dignity of LGBTQ Americans.

Time and time again, when our Nation has taken a step toward justice, it has done so because someone stood up and insisted that the words of the 14th Amendment actually meant what they say. That is why attack of any kind on equal protection and due process are not isolated legal disputes. They are attacks on the very foundation of modern civil rights.

They are attacks on the constitutional principle that tell every child they matter before the law. They are the attacks on the guarantees that protect workers from exploitation, families from discrimination, religious liberty, voting rights, and the simple expectation that government must treat people fairly.

When government weakens these protections for one group, it weakens them for everyone.

History teaches us that constitutional rights are rarely lost all at once. They are chipped away slowly, one exception, one excuse, one precedent at a time until Americans wake up and discover that what once seemed guaranteed has quietly disappeared.

We cannot allow this to happen.

Our constituents know what is at stake. They understand that the promise of America has been bigger than politics. They know that the Constitution belongs to every American, not just those in power.

As the co-chair of the 14th Amendment Task Force, I stand with my colleagues in defense of one of the most important guarantees ever written into our Constitution. We will defend equal protection. We will defend due process. We will defend, yes, birthright citizenship. We will continue fighting until the promise of the 14th Amendment is not merely something we celebrate in history books, but something that every American can experience in their daily lives.

The struggle to perfect our Union has never been easy, but every generation is called to protect the freedoms it inherited. Now, it is our turn.

Ms. MEJIA. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. RANDALL), my fellow co-chair.

Ms. RANDALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman MEJIA for her leadership.

Mr. Speaker, the 14th Amendment means what it says: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States. . . ." Those are the words on paper.

Donald Trump and Stephen Miller attempted to rewrite the Constitution through an executive order banning birthright citizenship for the children of undocumented immigrants. It is the same legal arguments that were first used when a white supremacist wanted to deny U.S. citizenship to Chinese Americans.

Four Supreme Court Justices dissented in the ruling to protect the 14th Amendment. That tells us that we are not safe from these continuous attacks from Donald Trump and his administration on our Constitution, on our freedom, and on our neighbors.

We know that the White House is currently scheming to have Trump's activist Supreme Court rehear the case that upheld the 14th Amendment, that upheld birthright citizenship.

This is all part of a larger agenda to dehumanize Black and Brown people in this country, to strip away their rights, and to normalize questioning who belongs here. Who is American enough?

It is why Republicans have funded Donald Trump's immigration agenda by \$200 billion and why on the 158th anniversary of the 14th Amendment, my colleagues and I launched the Defend the 14th Amendment Task Force.

Our goal is simple: to defend the Constitution, to coordinate oversight and public education efforts, and to respond strongly to the Trump administration's attacks on our rights, on our freedom, on our Constitution, our country, and our communities.

We will stand up to these attacks on civil liberties. We must continue this fight to ensure that the citizens of the United States are protected and that nothing erodes these constitutional protections. It is our duty. It is our responsibility, and it is the oath we swore when we took this public office.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to be a co-chair of this task force and so proud to stand here in defense of our Constitution.

Ms. MEJIA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chair AGUILAR and my fellow co-chairs, Representatives Cleaver, Randall, Simon, and Subramanyam, for their leadership in launching the Defend the 14th Amendment Task Force.

This work is about protecting the Constitution's promise that every person deserves equal protection, due process, and the full rights of citizenship.

Those principles have shaped generations of progress in our country, and they are worth defending today just as they were 158 years ago. We owe it to those who came before us and those who will follow us to ensure that that promise endures.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1840

OUR BORROWING IS TERRIFYING

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. SCHWEIKERT

of Arizona was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, and to the room, I apologize. I was doing a tour for a former firefighter, who actually was paralyzed in the scope of his duties, but we were close.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to take 1 or 2 seconds here to try to straighten this out just a little bit.

The presentation tonight is going to be a little bit technical. Sorry about that. If you don't like math, if you don't like demographics, if you don't actually want to deal with the math I am going to give you, now would be a good time to go find something on Netflix.

I have been trying to make a point over and over around here that our borrowing is terrifying, and it is much worse than almost anyone is willing to talk about.

We actually had some of the Joint Economic economists meet with some of the Penn Wharton modelers over the last couple of days. When they used their population statistics, some of the coming years are even uglier than we get from CBO, what we get from OMB, and actually what we get from some of the other scorers.

Let's actually just sort of start this and put this in perspective and then understand there are solutions. You don't pay off the debt, but you can stabilize it.

What is the number one driver of U.S. sovereign debt? It is shocking how many of even our brothers and sisters here in this building get the math wrong. It is demographics, and it is the one thing we are really not supposed to tell the truth about.

Next year, there is a model that says we will have fewer under 18 than we had 20 years ago, but we will have almost double 65 and up than we had 20-plus years ago. It is baby boomers, and we have gone decade and decade without enough children. It is just math. Is that Republican or Democrat? It is just math.

Once again, all right, let's do this. For those of you who have actually paid attention over the years, you have noticed that over the time we talked about discretionary outlays. Today, it is down to about 25 percent. What is blue here is what you remember that Congress actually gets to vote on. What is red here is almost all formulaic, and that is part of the problem.

As Members of Congress today, we could all hold hands, sing kumbaya, love each other, get rid of every dime that is discretionary—now, that is non-defense and defense, but it is what we vote on—and you still couldn't balance the budget.

Remember, last year, for every dollar we took in, we spent \$1.43. So far this year—and, look, I am hoping it bends back down, but this year, the number is even worse.

Interest this year, our model—just interest, total interest, so the interest

we have to pay back the trust funds, the interest we have to pay the people who are willing to buy U.S. bonds, it is the second biggest expense in the Federal Government, so Social Security, interest, Medicare, Medicaid and ObamaCare subsidies, defense—once again, remember, defense, the thing that is in the Constitution, is actually number five.

That interest may come in close to \$1.3 trillion this year. That is about 20 percent. One of my charts is going to say 19, but my math is closer to 20 percent of all tax receipts go just to pay interest.

I am going to say this two or three times in different ways. In 9 budget years, we have a model that says 30 to 33 percent of all the tax receipts will go just to interest. So you pay a dollar. In 9 years, what happens if a third of that money's function is just covering the interest on the debt pileup?

It is important to understand this chart and why I show it. I start with it all the time.

All right. Let's keep doing this.

Net interest as a percentage of total revenues would approach 30 percent, and understand, we have a model that actually is over 30. It is actually as high as 33 percent.

Here we are. Right now, we are in this slot here, so 19 to 20 percent of all of our tax receipts is going to interest in 9 budget years.

This should terrify you. How many bridges, how much helping people get healthy, how many benefits is the interest paying? No. I mean, it does benefit those who buy the bonds, and there is the Ray Dalio theory that it is still money circulating back into the economy, but it is money that does not go to meet the mission of the Federal Government. It is basically paying for past spending.

The ethical question here is: Is borrowing a tax hike? Now, for some of the antitax groups—I love them. I would cut spending dramatically. I voted that way, and I am in a tough district.

Let's be honest, what is the running joke here, Mr. Speaker? No one ever got unelected by spending too much money.

It is sort of perverse, but the bond market will basically be running the Federal Government in the next few years because of the influence it will have and the damage it can do to us.

That is a percentage to understand.

Let's actually dig in a little bit more. The boards, because I started late, are all upside down. So forgive me, I am going to be bouncing these around.

The rising national debt will lower wages. This is something we have been looking at over and over. We keep talking about affordability. Two weeks ago, I brought an academic paper and showed some charts that basically said if mortgage rates—a 30-year home loan rate today is what? Today, it is running 6.5, 6.7. If we weren't borrowing as much money as we are today, it would