

provision and to ask the courts to strike it down.

I even attempted to insert a repeal amendment into the National Defense Authorization Act. Yet, when we sent our funding bill to the Senate last week, we gave Senate leadership a taste of their own medicine and forced them to choose between the Senate payday or reopening the government.

Let me be very clear. I support real accountability. Last October, I signed onto a letter urging Attorney General Pam Bondi to launch a criminal investigation into the activities of Special Counsel Jack Smith and to consider possible Fourth Amendment violations during Operation Arctic Frost.

That deserved scrutiny. That deserves answers. It doesn't merit restitution paid for by hardworking waitresses, truck drivers, and small business owners. Hardworking taxpayers shouldn't be punished to put millions of dollars into the pockets of a select group of Senators.

The Tennesseans who I represent have suffered enough because of the many failed policies of the last administration, and they shouldn't be forced to pay more.

The House prevailed in putting a stop to this.

UPHOLDING RULE OF LAW FOR FEDERAL OFFICERS

(Ms. JOHNSON of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Qualified Immunity Accountability Act because no one is above the law or the Constitution.

Across this country, we are witnessing a dangerous pattern: Federal law enforcement officers—specifically, ICE agents—operating with near total impunity. We have seen constitutional rights violated, and we have seen communities terrorized. We have seen American citizens harmed and, tragically, killed without meaningful accountability and reform.

Time and again, the Department of Homeland Security has failed to act or rein in its agents. That is not how we uphold the rule of law in this country.

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Qualified immunity protects government officials, including police officers, from being held liable in civil lawsuits. Qualified immunity was meant to be a good faith protection to protect good faith officers from frivolous lawsuits, but that is not how it functions today. In practice, qualified immunity has become a get-out-of-jail-free card, a legal shield that blocks accountability even when an officer violates someone's constitutional rights or uses excessive force when none was needed. I know this because, as an attorney, I have tried these exact cases in court.

My bill changes that. The Qualified Immunity Accountability Act lowers

the standard for prosecution so Federal law enforcement officers can be held accountable when they violate an individual's civil rights. It makes clear that no Federal agent, ICE included, is above the Constitution, and when rights are violated, there will be real consequences.

This bill simply reaffirms what is in the Constitution. It protects law enforcement who act in good faith, while ensuring that those who abuse their power cannot hide behind a doctrine that was never intended to excuse misconduct.

Accountability strengthens public safety. It builds trust between communities and police. Proper accountability does not weaken this. There are so many brave law enforcement officers who do their jobs and serve their communities with honor and distinction. Unfortunately, we have had some bad apples who are spoiling the bunch, and in doing so, are actually making it unsafe for law enforcement to do their jobs.

Across the country, ICE agents have conducted raids without warrants, detained U.S. citizens, used excessive force, and torn families apart, often with little oversight and no consequences. Communities are left traumatized, afraid to report crimes, afraid to seek medical care, and afraid to leave their homes to live their daily lives. This is not public safety. This is government-sanctioned fear.

When an agency can violate the Constitution and face no accountability at all, that agency is not enforcing the law, it is undermining it. The Constitution guarantees due process. It guarantees equal protection. It guarantees freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures. Those rights are not optional, and they are not discretionary. They are not suggestions. They do not disappear because someone wears a badge.

This bill sends a simple message. If you violate someone's civil rights, you will be held accountable, no matter who you are.

I originally submitted this bill as an amendment to the ICE funding bill that was voted on yesterday, but Republicans in this House refused to have any amendments on this important issue even considered.

It is clear that they want to continue to give Kristi Noem and Donald Trump the green light to continue terrorizing our communities and have untrained ICE agents run rogue, killing American citizens.

This is not how trust is rebuilt. This is not how we restore faith in the rule of law. This is not how we honor the oath that every public servant takes to support and defend the Constitution.

Justice can never be conditional, and accountability can never be optional.

I urge my colleagues to support the Qualified Immunity Accountability Act, pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, and stand on the side of the Constitution, the rule of law, and

the basic principle that justice must apply equally to everyone.

RETIREMENT OF JUDGE RONNIE FENDER

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the retirement of Mr. Ronnie Fender after 44 years of extraordinary judicial service to Cook County, Georgia.

For more than four decades, Judge Fender has served with integrity, with patience, and an unwavering commitment to justice as a justice of the peace and as a magistrate judge. His courtroom has been a place not only of law but of fairness and respect for all who appeared before him.

Beyond the bench, Judge Fender was an educator who shaped minds with the same care and wisdom he brought to the law. His influence extends far beyond written rulings. It lives on in the countless people he taught, mentored, and served.

Though retiring from full-time service, Judge Fender will continue contributing as a senior magistrate judge on an as-needed basis and as a court bailiff. We are grateful for that continued dedication.

HONORING PHARMACISTS AS KEY RESOURCES

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the invaluable role of pharmacists in supporting older adults as they navigate the difficulties of medication management.

This expertise is especially vital as we age when new prescriptions, changing doses, and potential drug interactions become more common, influenced by slower metabolism, reduced kidney function, and heightened drug sensitivity.

Pharmacists, after six to eight years of rigorous training, including a Doctor of Pharmacy degree, serve as trusted experts in how medications work, interact, and affect aging bodies.

Through services like medication therapy management, they review entire regimens, including prescriptions, over-the-counter products, vitamins, and supplements to identify duplicates, unnecessary drugs, or risky combinations that could lead to dizziness, falls, or confusion.

Pharmacists ensure medications are effective and taken correctly, while offering simplified routines, clear explanations of benefits and side effects, adherence tools such as pill organizers and synchronized refills, and convenient delivery options.

Pharmacists provide accessible guidance anytime, empowering informed decisions that promote safety, independence, and healthy aging.

RECOGNIZING SCOTTISH RITE MONUMENTS IN SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise here today to recognize the monuments being dedicated to the ancient Scottish Rite Valley of Savannah, Georgia.

The birth of the Scottish Rite dates back to 1801 when the Supreme Court of the 33rd Degree for the United States of America and the first Supreme Council in the world was established.

The Scottish Rite of Freemasonry seeks to better its members and strengthen their communities by teaching and promoting brotherly love, tolerance, and truth. The Rite embraces strong social, moral, and spiritual values that include compassion and dedication to God, family, and country.

These monuments serve as symbols of all the values the Scottish Rite stands for.

I thank the generous donors: Illustrious Brother Albert Nelson, Jr., and Lady Nellie; Dr. and Sir Knight James Arnold and Lady Barbara; Illustrious Brother Charles White and Lady Nordene; and Brother Morgan Derst and Lady Pam for their kind contributions.

HONORING SCIENCE TEACHER BILL ESWINE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize science teacher Bill Eswine, who has decided to retire at the end of the school year after 54 years of service to Savannah Country Day School.

Mr. Eswine was originally hired in 1972, and through his enthusiasm, adaptability, and love for teaching has taught science to generations of children. His impact is visible across the school's campus in the Savannah community, serving as director of the Coastal Ecology Camp and caretaker to various campus educational gardens.

Beyond Country Day, Mr. Eswine has been recognized as Teacher of the Year and honored by organizations such as Garden Club of America, the Georgia Independent School Association, and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. His commitment to education and fondness for learning has made a lasting difference in Savannah.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Mr. Eswine on a well-earned retirement.

HONORING EXCEPTIONAL WORK OF STAFF

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the dedicated work of the staff that I get to work with and who work for me.

Mr. Speaker, I have served my community in the Bay Area as a city council member, a mayor, a county supervisor, State assembly member, a State senator, and now as a Member of the House of Representatives. In all of those years, one of the keys to our success and our engagement has been the dedicated public servants who have worked for me in all of those capacities. They are the people I will talk about today.

At community centers, healthcare clinics, schools, small businesses,

townhalls, and more, our staff and I have encountered tens of thousands of Californians.

At these stops, I heard from families across California 10 about the urgent need to lower the cost of living and make everyday essentials more affordable. I heard from healthcare providers and patients about the looming harm of cuts from the big, ugly bill to Medicaid, called Medi-Cal in California, and the Affordable Care Act. I heard from students and teachers about the growing need for Federal support for education and specifically for special education.

I heard from seniors worried about threats to their Social Security and Medicare. Overwhelmingly, I heard from constituents about the deep concerns of the actions of the current administration, both here in our communities, in our country, and abroad.

Day in and day out, our team and I answered phones and read constituent emails and letters. Over the past year, we registered and responded to more than 170,000 constituent opinions in our district. When constituents call our offices here in Washington, in Walnut Creek, California, and Antioch, California, they speak to real people. We answer the phone. Sometimes that person is even me, which has led to some interesting conversations. Every single constituent receives a written response quickly.

One of the statistics that I am most proud of this year is that we hosted 23 townhalls. Under the lawlessness and the chaos of the current administration, townhalls and community meetings are more crucial than ever. Since coming to Congress, I have hosted almost 300 community townhalls. In 2025, we hosted more townhalls than in any prior year and connected with thousands of constituents across our community at these events.

Outside of townhalls, our team is still crisscrossing our district. They attended more than 370 community events in 2025 alone.

Sometimes, the only time people ever interact with their congressional Member's offices is because they need help desperately with a Federal agency. We are the last people they call desperately for help. Thanks to our casework team's compassion and persistence, we helped nearly 1,500 constituents in 2025, assisting with everything from immigration to Social Security.

Here in Washington, D.C., our legislative team was also hard at work. Last year, I authored 11 pieces of legislation and sponsored more than 200 bills. We used all of the tools at our disposal to hold the administration accountable in sending a voice for our constituents from 3,000 miles away here to this Chamber, sending dozens of oversight inquiries, joining amicus briefs, and more to protect our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, Tip O'Neill famously once said: "All politics is local." I thank my staff for living that admonition from Speaker O'Neill.

Altogether, I hope this work helps people back home see that this House, Congress, even in the minority with this administration, can work hard for you. I look forward to continuing to serve you this coming year.

ICE'S TERRORIZATION ACROSS AMERICA

(Mrs. MCCLAIN DELANEY of Maryland was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. MCCLAIN DELANEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as tensions across this country and in this very Chamber have reached a boiling point.

Yesterday, many of us, freshmen Members like myself and those Members with decades in this Chamber, faced one of the hardest votes any of us will ever take. We were forced to decide on a vote on a bill that bundled funding for ICE and DHS with the remainder of our government appropriations.

This is because we all know, Republicans and Democrats alike, that this administration is using ICE as a taxpayer-funded paramilitary force that is holding itself above the law with no transparency, accountability, or guardrails.

We see the carnage every day and the consequences everywhere. Federal immigration agents are terrorizing our communities, including last month in Minnesota, where two 37-year-olds, both Renee Good and Alex Pretti, were killed in separate shootings during the 9-week siege and occupation of Minnesota.

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Now, 2 weeks ago, I traveled with 27 other House Members to Minnesota to a field hearing to hear firsthand the accounts from the victims and the advocates about ICE's abuses. I was jarred, and I am still troubled by their testimonies, including vans set up to stop all passersby for their papers; the dragging of a pregnant woman through the streets; the seizure of an elderly grandmother with asylum, pulled from her car and leaving two grandchildren in a running car, in ice cold temperatures, in the back seat; the shackling and detention of observers who merely honked their horn or blew whistles or took pictures; and detention holding pens of up to 50 people without adequate food, water, or bathroom breaks.

Now, I stand with Minnesota because what is happening in Minnesota has cruel consequences everywhere, including in my home State of Maryland. In my district, Maryland's Sixth, the administration covertly just acquired a \$2 million warehouse in Williamsport to build a 1,500-bed processing center with no public or congressional input.

ICE Acting Director Todd Lyons likens these warehouses in Williamsport and nationwide to Amazon Prime facilities but for living human beings.

Let me be clear: People are not packages. Let me say it again. People are