

The famous California State Water Project constructed 21 dams and more than 700 miles of canals. The revenue bonds and self-liquidating general obligation bonds that financed it were paid back not by general taxpayers, but by the users of the water and power.

Fourth, restore the integrity of our highway trust fund. We built the modern interstate system with the Federal excise tax paid by highway users at the gas pump. The more you drove, the more you paid for the roads you were using. But over the decades, more and more of these funds were bled away to subsidize mass transit and other purposes unrelated to highway construction. Restoring highway taxes for highways would go a long way toward addressing the maintenance and construction backlog.

Fifth, repeal the outdated Davis-Bacon Act that requires Federal projects to pay grossly inflated wages. Think tanks like The Heritage Foundation and the Competitive Enterprise Institute estimate that Davis-Bacon alone inflates total construction costs by roughly 10 percent. That means that just repealing this single act would add one new project for every 10 existing ones at no additional cost.

These are just a few of the ways that massive infrastructure projects can be financed at zero cost to general taxpayers; and because these reforms are actually directed at projects for which there is a demonstrated economic need, political favoritism and corruption inherent in government-directed programs can be greatly reduced.

Mr. Speaker, freedom works; and it is time that we put it and America back to work.

RECOGNIZING LESLIE MCGOWAN, HEROINE OF THE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Leslie McGowan as November's Heroine of the Month.

The Hero or the Heroine of the Month is an individual in the community in the San Joaquin Valley in California who goes the extra mile to make a positive difference for the people whom I serve.

Leslie is the CEO of Livingston Community Health, a medical and dental provider with community health center locations throughout Merced County.

Leslie has been a part of the team at the Livingston health center for over 10 years, and she has been instrumental in the development of the success of the health center, which enables residents in Merced County to receive health services that would not be otherwise available.

One hundred percent of Merced County is a Health Professional Shortage Area—not enough health care. In other words, the county has a major shortage of primary care physicians.

The Livingston health center has an important role in working to fill that

gap so that no one goes untreated. Most recently, Leslie led the efforts for the opening of the Wolves Wellness Center at Livingston High School. It is the only school-based health center in Merced County. It provides medical care, counseling, and dental services to students, their families, and local residents at no or very low cost.

Additionally, Leslie has implemented programs like the Back to School Fair, Homeless Health Day, and an annual scholarship fundraiser to help ensure that people know that they have access to quality and affordable health services. This was all made available as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

Livingston Community Health and its doctors, nurses, and staff work to ensure that individuals who live in rural communities—many rural communities throughout this country, many that I represent—and throughout Merced County have access to quality, affordable health services.

As a strong supporter of community health centers, it is a pleasure to recognize and give a big thank-you to Leslie McGowan and her staff of doctors and nurses at Livingston Community Health.

WATER AND CALIFORNIA'S DROUGHT

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about water and California's ongoing drought. This week, the California Department of Water Resources announced that the 2017 initial allocation for the State Water Project is 20 percent—not good.

I join with drought-stricken communities like those in the San Joaquin Valley and California farmers, farm workers, and farm communities who are all praying that the initial water allocation of 20 percent improves when the Department of Water Resources issues a final allocation not just for the State water projects, but for the Federal water projects as well.

However, with the current operations of California's water system, it would take storms of Biblical proportions for these agencies that are served by the State and Federal Water Project to be able to increase those allocations to 100 percent.

That is why Congress must act now to pass a California water bill that will improve operations to fix our broken water system. We need legislation to provide funding to improve our water infrastructure and to move more water when larger storms make it available, as in last weekend.

California may soon face a sixth consecutive dry year. Therefore, as a result of the drought and the inadequate and broken water system, hundreds of thousands of acre-feet of water have been lost, and 600,000 acres of productive farmland has, unfortunately, been left unplanted.

Some families in my district do not have reliable water to drink, to cook, or to bathe in. The drought, together with the current water policies, are devastating to the San Joaquin Valley.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to work together in these last

few days as we try to assist the people in Flint, Michigan, and to bring together a package of legislation that will end the impasse that we have had and provide water if, in fact, the good Lord sees to bringing rain and snow to the mountains this winter in California.

□ 1030

5A STATE CHAMPIONS: ELK RIVER ELKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Elk River High School football team on their Class 5A State Championship victory. Entering the State title game undefeated, the Elks scored an impressive 42 points and rushed for a total of 446 yards over Spring Lake Park at U.S. Bank Stadium last Saturday.

The Elks had an incredible season, averaging 45 points and 449 rushing yards per game. Every Elk deserves mention, but two in particular played a special role in their success—Nick Rice and Sam Gibas.

Rice finished the season with 2,154 rushing yards and a total of 25 touchdowns, and Gibas finished with 1,330 rushing yards and 23 touchdowns.

The Elk River football team worked hard this season under the guidance of Coach Steve Hamilton, and their efforts paid off.

Congratulations for being the 2016 Minnesota State high school football champions.

REMEMBERING A TRUE PUBLIC SERVANT

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of St. Francis Police Chief Jake Rehling, who lost his battle with a rare form of cancer last month. What a life he lived. Jake Rehling spent his life working tirelessly to better the St. Francis community and the lives of those around him.

A native Minnesotan, Jake grew up in Onamia and attended Bethel University, where he studied criminal justice. Upon graduation, Jake joined the St. Francis Police Department where he served for 17 years. His passion for his work and the compassion he displayed to others ultimately led to his promotion to St. Francis police chief earlier this year.

Jake was committed to his family and his community. His life is the definition of public service. He will be missed.

I would like to express my sincere condolences to Jake's wife, Brooke, and son, Aiden. Please know the impact Jake had on this world will always be remembered.

REMEMBERING DR. WARREN WARWICK

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and work of Dr. Warren Warwick.