

The father of our Constitution, James Madison, wrote: "A popular government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy; or, perhaps both."

Yet, today, it feels as if we are in the middle acts of Madison's feared drama.

Sadly, only 26 percent of Americans can name all three branches of government, and 37 percent cannot name a single right guaranteed under the First Amendment. Meanwhile, public trust in government and voter participation is low, and foreign adversaries have taken advantage of this to sow discord among us.

Madam Speaker, I was proud to include a program in the House-passed National Defense Authorization Act to fund further development and evaluation of civics education programs, but this is just a first step. We must ensure that every child has access to evidence-based civics programs. The future of our democracy depends on it.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FAMILY MEALS MONTH

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize September as National Family Meals Month.

Between work, school, and extracurricular activities, it can be hard to find time to share a meal as a family, but the benefits that come from carving out time to eat together are rewarded tenfold.

Family meals are great for the mind, body, and spirit. Regular meals provide children and their parents with great nutritional value, helping them to meet the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables. It also expands the variety of food children will eat, making them less picky about what is on the table.

For young, developing children, conversation heard at the dinner table involves vocabulary and reading comprehension. Adolescents also benefit, often being more likely to achieve higher grades in school.

Meals bring families closer and provide a setting for parents and children to engage in meaningful dialogue that can reduce stress and negative behavior and improve communications skills.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all families to prioritize time for family meals and strengthen their ties to one another.

TRANSFORM STUDENT DEBT TO HOME EQUITY

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today in response to two crises facing

America's young adults: the student debt crisis and the homeownership crisis.

Since World War II, America's middle class experienced unprecedented growth in homeownership and wealth accumulation. Tragically, today, due to exploding levels of student debt, which, cumulatively, total over \$1.5 trillion, the option of homeownership for far too many young, aspiring Americans remains out of reach.

The homeownership rate for those under 35 is just 36 percent, 10 percentage points lower than 2006. These dismal numbers have exacerbated the racial wealth gap as well.

During the financial crash of 2008, African Americans lost half of their accumulated wealth since the founding of the Republic. In 2017, African American homeownership fell to 43 percent, effectively negating any progress since the Fair Housing Act.

That is why I have introduced H.R. 3511, the Transform Student Debt to Home Equity Act. My bill directs HUD and the Federal Housing Finance Agency to establish a pilot program to renegotiate creditworthy Federal student debt holders with eligible homes.

I thank the Financial Services Committee for considering it this week, and I ask my colleagues to consider cosponsoring this important legislation.

HONORING THE MUSSER FAMILY

(Mr. BERGMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the Musser family of Michigan for nearly nine decades of outstanding tradition and service at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island in Michigan's beautiful First District.

The famous "world's largest front porch" has welcomed five sitting U.S. Presidents, thousands of dignitaries, business leaders, movie stars, and over 150,000 guests each season.

The rich traditions of the Grand Hotel are world-renowned and have set the standards in the tourism industry for almost a century.

I personally congratulate my friend Dan Musser on 30 years of exceptional service as the president of the Grand and wish him and his wife, Marlee, and his sister, Mimi Cunningham, all the best as they pass the torch and set out on new adventures.

HONORING NICK BUONICONTI

(Ms. SHALALA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SHALALA. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of my friend Nick Buoniconti, the humanitarian and football legend. He passed away on July 30, 2019, at the age of 78.

Nick's career with the Miami Dolphins began in 1969. With his help, the

Dolphins went undefeated in 1972, culminating with a Super Bowl victory. The team won the Super Bowl the next year as well and remains the only team in the National Football League to go an entire season undefeated.

After Nick retired from professional football, his son Marc sustained a spinal cord injury in a college football game, leaving him paralyzed from the neck down.

After this, Nick dedicated himself to focusing on his son's health and supporting the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, of which Marc currently serves as president.

In addition, Nick and his family founded the Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis, which has raised over \$500 million in support of the Miami Project's research objectives.

Nick Buoniconti's influence will be felt in Miami for years to come. We will remember him with love and pride.

□ 1945

HONORING THE LIFETIME OF SERVICE OF TERRY OTTINGER

(Mr. SPANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SPANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Terry Ottinger, who has retired after 14 years of faithful service on staff with the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce and, 17 years before that, as a business owner. Few have done more to advance the cause of the local entrepreneur than Terry.

Since 1921, the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce has served as an advocate for business and, today, is the largest chamber in Polk County, with over 1,400 investor businesses.

During Terry's tenure as chamber vice president, Lakeland has risen to the fourth fastest growing metropolitan area in the Nation. His leadership has been instrumental in expanding training workshops, promoting small business development, and providing opportunities for investors and visionaries to network.

The city of Lakeland is a stronger regional partner and a more desirable location for prospective businesses because of Terry's professionalism, strategic outlook, team building talents, and honest friendship.

Thank you, Terry. Thank you for a lifetime of service. You are not done, though, and we look forward to keeping you engaged in our community for years to come.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ANTHONY MARTINEZ, SR.

(Mr. COX of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COX of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Anthony Martinez, Sr., a true leader in Delano, California, and the