

caught playing political games on multiple occasions. Every day, Democrats echo those same fatigued talking points, and you can't help but wonder if they realize that, in fact, they are the ones who have been wasting time all along.

Denial is a powerful thing, Mr. Speaker. At a time when the American people demand leadership and accountability from Congress, Democrats have leaned on their political playbook for answers.

At this point, are we really surprised? Let's recap what the Democrats have done to date.

They have passed the so-called HEROES Act, a \$3 trillion socialist wish list that was crafted behind closed doors without bipartisan collaboration.

They have undermined 200 years of precedent by implementing proxy voting.

They have held virtual hearings where their Members are not physically present in the Capitol, and even one of their Members decided to phone in his vote to the committee while he was on his boat.

Now, juxtapose that with the work we have taken up.

Republicans have fought for schools to reopen safely. We have placed a high priority on strengthening our Nation's economic recovery, and we have worked tirelessly to support frontline workers.

Let President Trump and the administration be an example as well.

Secretary Scalia of the Department of Labor recently came to my district to meet with frontline workers, educators, and members of the private sector to learn about North Carolina's progress.

Deputy Secretary Hargan of HHS visited Wake Forest Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem to see the work being done by medical professionals to treat and protect North Carolinians.

This week, President Trump traveled to North Carolina to meet with representatives of a biotechnology company that is currently manufacturing a promising coronavirus vaccine.

Mr. Speaker, the differences between the Republican approach and the Democrat approach are night and day. I have said this before, and I will say it again: Democrats are choosing posturing over progress. They have ample opportunities to work with us, but they are more interested in creating the newest media sound bite, further inflating the Federal bureaucracy and appeasing their far-left base.

This isn't an observation. This is a fact. When you think of progress, you think of frontline workers; you think of private-sector innovation; you think about the millions of children around the country safely returning to school; and you think of businesses reopening their doors to the public.

When Republicans think of progress, that is what we envision. Sadly, Democrats have become so entrenched in their own political narrative that they

have failed to recognize the true priorities of the American people. Republicans will continue to work on the pressing needs of our Nation without delay. We can only hope that our Democrat colleagues will come to their senses eventually.

THANKING CRAIG ROBERTS FOR HIS SERVICE AS CHIEF OF STAFF

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I have heard it said that being a chief of staff to a Member of Congress is one of the best jobs on the Hill.

It takes a special person to keep the staff performing at the high level required of them. Burnout could easily occur because of long hours, high stress, and low pay.

That is why I come to the floor to thank my chief of staff, Craig Roberts, for his 24 years of service to me, the people of Illinois, and the people of this country. Yes, you heard me right, Craig has been with me for 24 straight years. It really has to be some kind of record.

Craig was born and raised in the Alton-Godfrey area of Madison County. He was one of those kids who was drawn to politics as a young kid, volunteering for campaigns in high school.

While attending Western Illinois University, he continued his studies and political activities. He graduated with a degree in political science and was an active member of the College Republicans.

Craig easily was hired by the Republican House staff in Illinois. I may have met him then, but my first direct and consistent contact with Craig was back in 1991 when he worked for the secretary of state. He volunteered to take on the task of running my first congressional campaign against an entrenched incumbent.

Running for Congress is difficult. Running against an incumbent is even more difficult. Running against a powerful, well-entrenched incumbent is crazy. Well, I was a little crazy, and I am glad Craig was, too, as he started the task to win the race.

The district consisted of 19 counties. Neither of us had personal money, but we put a little bit of our own in. I paid for gas and my food. He ate the last month of his salary cost.

We lost in the Clinton landslide in Illinois, but Craig's involvement helped provide immediate legitimacy to the campaign and made it competitive.

In 1996, I ran again, and this time, Craig was involved as an unpaid adviser. This race, I won narrowly. Once I won, I knew I had to ask Craig to join me in D.C. and run my office.

I made many local Republicans mad by taking Craig away from Springfield. In his time there, he had become highly respected. That respect would be easily duplicated in D.C.

Craig's leadership style is uplifting and empowering. He softened my big-

hammer style and calmed the seas when storm Shimkus was billowing.

He is a mentor and a friend to all who come through his door. Team Shimkus staff members can be found all over D.C., from the executive branch to the Senate and the chief of staff of offices. They all stay in touch and reach out to Craig for advice.

I left the D.C. hiring decisions to Craig. My theory is, if you hire someone and it doesn't work out, you have to be the one to fire that person.

My office staff is known for being open, accessible, friendly—most of the time—hardworking, and knowledgeable. This is a tribute to Craig. Our limited turnover is also a tribute to him.

Craig is a father figure to a bipartisan group of chiefs of staff. Active in the Chief of Staff Association, he has helped Congress and Members work together. In the heat of Member battles, chiefs talking to chiefs can help work things out.

He is also a proud and active Republican. He is known for his knowledge, organization, and planning. He volunteers and is an active member of the Capitol Hill Club, which is a Republican club up here on the Hill.

But a good chief of staff has to be a confidential adviser to the Member. Members of Congress live in the governmental and the political worlds simultaneously. So does the chief of staff.

The chief of staff has to ensure that the ethical boundaries are known and obeyed. Action people take action and, many times, cross the line. Chiefs, and particularly Craig, pulls a Member—and that would be me—aside and keeps me away from the brink of doing something really stupid.

Craig was and is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Maybe upon my retirement, he can get some rest, but I doubt he will.

We both carry the political and governmental scars of 24 years of service. Some can be seen while others cannot be seen. It is those scars that will forever bind us together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Craig for joining me in D.C., thank him for staying with me, and thank him for being the best chief of staff on the Hill.

DO NOT LET DEATH OF ENRIQUE ROMAN-MARTINEZ GO UNSOLVED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TORRES of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to decry a tragedy that has pierced the heart of my community, a tragedy that continues to cut deeper with each passing day because we still don't know what happened. We still have no answers.

All we know is that one of our very best, one of our brightest, is dead. Our hearts are broken, and we demand answers. Army specialist Enrique Roman-Martinez was a Chino native who makes the whole Inland Empire proud.

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He joined the Army before he was even old enough to vote. He begged his mother to sign the release forms. That is how committed he was to our country and to others.

He was stationed at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and went camping in the Outer Banks over Memorial Day weekend with seven other soldiers. We don't know what happened that night on May 22, but what we do know is it cost Enrique his life, and the seven people who would seemingly have a lot of explaining to do, remarkably, had nothing to say.

When a police officer walked up to their campsite the next day and asked those seven soldiers to move their illegally parked vehicles, not a single one thought it was important enough to mention that someone who had been camping with them, their friend and their fellow soldier, was missing from the night before. It took a full 17 hours before they spoke out and reported Enrique gone. When they did so, they said they were worried that Enrique was suicidal.

It is hard for me to imagine why anyone would hesitate to tell a police officer that their fellow camper, their friend, and their fellow soldier was missing if they thought he was suicidal.

A week later, Specialist Roman-Martinez's remains were found washed ashore not far away. The question of whether or not he was suicidal was settled by the simple fact that they only found a severed head—his head. That is it.

He was just 21 years old. He had just started out in life. He had dedicated his few short years as an adult to a cause much greater than himself. He was only 3 months away from completing his duty and coming home as a veteran. Someone like that deserves better than this. His family deserves better for the son and brother that they have loved and lost.

I would like to take a moment to talk about Enrique's family, his mother, Maria, and sister, Griselda, because one of the most solemn and sacred duties our military has is their commitment to leave no one behind on the battlefield. It is their duty to inform the family when something goes wrong.

Mr. Speaker, as the mother of an Air Force veteran, I can tell you the fear of receiving a notice like that was with me every single day my son served. It is an ongoing unease in the back of your mind that never goes away. It is something I can still feel today.

Now, imagine if Enrique were your son. The only thing worse than a conversation like that is if that conversation never happens—never. That is what happened to Maria and Griselda. The Army was so slow to inform the family that they learned through media reports their son had been mutilated—through media reports.

The medical examiner ruled Enrique's death a homicide on that

Monday, and it took the Army until Friday to reach out to the family. The lack of notice was bad enough, but the lack of answers is still far worse. It is time to hear more from the seven individuals. Their silence isn't acceptable. It is time to hear from the community in North Carolina. If they know something, say something.

As a mother, I plead with them, if it were their son, if they are the mother of one of those seven young soldiers, male or female, say something. They need to talk to their son or daughter and demand that they speak out.

Lawyering up is not enough. Lawyering up is not enough. They deserve to bury their son and brother.

NATIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize July as National Park and Recreation Month.

Our Nation is blessed with a robust park system across the country on the Federal, State, and local levels. Summer is a popular time to take advantage of all that our parks have to offer.

The coronavirus pandemic and the shelter-in-place orders that have followed have left many of us desperate for fresh air, and as many parks begin to reopen, there are plenty of beautiful landscapes and outdoor activities to enjoy at parks across the country.

As a lifelong resident of rural Pennsylvania, an avid outdoorsman, and someone who was a former recreational therapist at one point, I know firsthand the positive impact that our Nation's parks system can have on communities, and I am proud to be a strong supporter.

My district, Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District, is home to countless parks and outdoor recreational facilities, including the Oil Region National Heritage Area and the Allegheny National Forest, just to name a few.

This month is an opportunity to underscore the role that parks play in our everyday lives and in the fabric of American culture. It is also an opportunity to recognize the hard work and contributions of our park employees. Our parks give us all an opportunity to connect with the nature around us. They create a sense of community, stimulate local economies by attracting businesses, jobs, and tourism, and increase the quality of life for all residents.

Mr. Speaker, public parks and recreational facilities foster a variety of activities that contribute to a healthier society. There is an undeniable connection between parks and public health. Studies show that Americans who live within a 10-minute walk of a park see increased physical activity and lower obesity rates.

Recreational programs at public parks provide children with a safe place to play, access to healthy foods, opportunities to be physically active, and enrichment activities that help prevent at-risk behavior such as drug use and gang involvement.

Just last week, the House passed the Great American Outdoors Act, legislation that will ensure our national parks are around for future generations to enjoy.

As summer continues, it is my hope that families across the country will find an opportunity to take advantage of our Nation's parks and recreation facilities. If considering a visit to one of our national parks, visit the National Park Service website at [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov) to find an open park in your community.

APPROPRIATIONS

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stress the importance of investing in programs that expand opportunities for every person in every corner of our Nation, including my district in California's San Joaquin Valley.

Just last week, we passed a spending bill that will benefit our farmers, help repair aging water infrastructure, help food-insecure residents from going hungry, support revitalization efforts on our public lands, and combat the climate crisis by cleaning our air.

This week, we have an opportunity to make further investments in the future sustainability of our Nation.

Face it, Mr. Speaker, we are living off the investments our parents and grandparents made a generation ago.

The availability of a reliable supply of water is the foundation of the San Joaquin Valley's economy and, I might add, California and much of the West, which grows food that feeds the world. As we say, where water flows, food grows.

We also must ensure access to clean drinking water so our communities can thrive. No one should have to worry in the richest nation in the world of having access to clean water in their homes.

These bills will provide more than \$100 billion to help repair the aging valley canals, such as the Delta-Mendota Canal, the Friant-Kern Canal, and the California Aqueduct, which are critical to delivering water to not only our farmers but to our valley communities.

These bills would also make small, disadvantaged communities safer and healthier by providing nearly \$1 billion for infrastructure repairs, communities like Dos Palos, Livingston, Fairmead, and Los Banos in the San Joaquin Valley to name but a few. It also provides more than \$10 billion for clean water and drinking water State revolving funds, which are important. It matches funds and is the best use of money.

We have been living off these investments, as I said, for way too long. The