

□ 0915

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