

will fund research to increase our understanding of the causes, impacts, and possible treatments of alopecia areata.

I know that our work is far from over, and I will continue to fight. I will take my seat at the table. I will take up space, and I will create it, too; and with this space, we will make change.

Every single person deserves to show up in the world exactly as they are without fear or discrimination. To my fellow alopecians wherever you may be, today I bring our story to the floor of the people's House to say that we belong, our stories deserve to be heard, and we are absolutely beautiful and worthy.

□ 0915

THE REPUBLICAN COMMITMENT TO AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, maligned policies from Democrats that seek to defund, destroy, and dismantle our country are dangerous. Quite frankly, these policies pose a threat to the liberties and freedoms that define the American dream as we know it. Republicans understand this threat, and we refuse to sit idly on the sidelines.

That is why we have developed our Commitment to America. The message is simple. Restoring, renewing, and rebuilding America is a mandate that we must work every day to uphold. We are fighting for families, for generations of Americans to come, and for a country that has always served as a beacon of hope to the world.

In short, it is a blueprint that gets our country back on track. The American people deserve leaders who fight for freedom, the values that we hold dear, and the promise of the American Dream.

Mr. Speaker, at such a pivotal moment in the history of our country, we must work to advance policies that are pro-growth, pro-family, and pro-America. Anything less is unacceptable.

Time and time again Democrats have turned their backs on the American people with a "my way or the highway" approach to legislating.

This year alone, the House of Representatives has taken up a myriad of bipartisan messaging bills that do nothing to help our country. If anything, these bills send a concerning message about the Democrat vision for America.

Substantive legislation has been pushed to the back burner, the spirit of bipartisanship has been rendered virtually nonexistent, and political posturing has replaced meaningful conversations on pressing issues. We have had ample opportunities to work together, but Democrats have taken it upon themselves to prolong a partisan blockade that stifles progress.

Mr. Speaker, that is wrong and that is not leadership. Leadership is fighting for the American people at every turn. Leadership is defending the promises of the American Dream. Leadership is advancing policies that raise America to new heights.

I am proud to stand alongside Leader MCCARTHY and my Republican colleagues as we chart a meaningful pathway forward. The road ahead may seem uncertain, or even arduous, but we are confident that with steadfast leadership and commonsense policies, America will flourish.

BIRTH OF THE HERO ACT

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

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the passage of my bipartisan measure, H.R. 1646, the Helping Emergency Responders Overcome Act, or the HERO Act.

The HERO Act is the best of what we do in this people's House, which is accessible to our constituents and others, and that is why we love the House of Representatives.

Over 2½ years ago, two of my fire chiefs, Mike McLaughlin and Maurice Johnson, visited my office here in Washington to talk about some issues. In passing, they also talked about the number of firefighters and first responders that succumb to suicide, and the stresses of the job.

We talked about it and we started to do a little bit of research. We realized we didn't have good statistics on the actual incidence of firefighters or first responders that were succumbing to suicide.

We started to talk to others, the International Association of Firefighters, and we talked to law enforcement. We realized the stresses that these individuals, men and women, who are out there protecting our communities every day, face. They see untold challenges that normal human beings don't see. So we started talking about this.

We looked for those statistics, talked to the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance founder, Jeff Dill, and again, realized we ought to challenge the CDC to collect these statistics, and we ought to do something about it. We ought to help relieve the suffering of these first responders, firefighters, law enforcement individuals.

So we went about writing a bill and working with our partners. That was before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. What we have seen since the pandemic is untold pressures on our frontline healthcare workers, our nurses, the folks in the hospitals. And I want to applaud a fellow doctor, a Republican Member, MIKE BURGESS, who is the ranking member on the Energy and Commerce Healthcare Subcommittee, he realized this fact. And working together with our staff, we amended the HERO Act to include and recognize the

unique stresses that these frontline healthcare workers are facing.

We talked about how they don't need to suffer by themselves, how we could put in place peer-to-peer contacts where folks could reach out, create a space for some of these individuals that might be suffering alone to talk about what was going on.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank Chairman PALLONE and Ranking Member WALDEN on the Energy and Commerce Committee, as well as the chairwoman of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, Ms. ESHOO, for helping get this bill to the floor and getting it passed yesterday evening.

Again, the HERO Act demonstrates what we can do when we come together as Democrats and Republicans, when we listen to our constituents, and we work with those folks that are out there.

I, again, want to applaud the frontline healthcare workers, the firefighters, the law enforcement individuals, and emergency responders that are out there keeping us safe every day. You have got our back, we have got your back. So thank you to all of them.

RECOGNIZING THE SCHEDULER

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a group of courageous Federal employees: Matt Nordquist; Janet Hartman, now Schmautz; Jake Gibson; Carren Crossley; Virginia Mueller, now Partridge; Jordan Haverly; Joy Henrichs; Perry Ford Stamp; and Molly Mackenzie Harris.

There is no more difficult job in Washington than that of a congressional scheduler. My thanks and apologies go to those who served in my office these past 24 years.

For me, being away from home was the worst part of the job. Who booked the flight and told me I had to get back to D.C.? The scheduler did. Who would meet me in the office at 7:30 a.m. to get me to a breakfast meeting at 8 a.m.? Who would hang around to pick me up at 9 a.m., just to race me to the Hill for a 9 a.m. meeting? The scheduler did. Who received an irate call from me wondering why no one was at the meeting in HC-5, only to be told that if I had looked at my schedule, I would have seen that the meeting location had changed to the Capitol Hill Club? The scheduler did.

Who took the frustrating call asking how I can be in a meeting in the Capitol from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., and then in my office in the Rayburn Building for an 11 a.m. meeting? The scheduler did. Who took the blame when I finally cried out that I needed a bathroom break after consecutive 30-minute meetings? The scheduler did. Who picked me up after votes at 6:30 p.m. to hit a reception at 6:45 p.m., another