

a plane crash during her flight training. She served for decades as commander of the squadron that is now named after her. In 2011, she earned the rank of colonel.

Colonel Pantanelli passed away on January 14, 2023. She would have been 98 in March.

New York's 16th District and I thank her for her service and send our deepest condolences to everyone impacted by this monumental loss.

WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS DESERVE SUPPORT

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

Mr. ZINKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in defense of our Nation's wildland firefighters.

In my role as Secretary of the Interior, as Congressman, and as a Montanan, I have seen the devastation that mismanagement and overregulation has brought to our forests.

Every year, we bear witness to our forests and homes burning in catastrophic wildfires, wildfires that will be made worse by frivolous and potentially deadly litigation that seeks to prevent firefighters from doing their job.

Last year, I was at a fire camp in Elmo, Montana. While I watched scoopers from Bridger Aerospace do their work on the ridge, I also noticed the red stripe where retardant was dropped to protect homes, ranches, and lives.

In many ways, wildland firefighting is a lot like serving on the battlefield. The men and women are dropped behind enemy lines, surrounded on all fronts, and the only resources they have next to them are those men and women who fight fires and the air support above. If they call in air support, it is because they need it.

We would never think of denying our troops in battle the lifesaving air support they need, so why would anyone think that our firefighters doing their job deserve any less?

□ 1800

HOMES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

(Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the 33,000 veterans in this country experiencing homelessness and ask for your support for my bill, the Healthy Foundations for Homeless Veterans Act.

This bill would make permanent the temporary flexibilities granted to the Department of Veterans Affairs from section 4201(a).

Veterans make up 7 percent of the general population but represent 13 percent of adults who are suffering from homelessness. Nationally, the total number of veterans experiencing

homelessness has decreased by 11 percent since January 2020.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has placed over 40,000 veterans in permanent housing as a result of the temporary flexibilities granted to it to provide shelter. This is a great start; however, we can make more progress. This is just the beginning, as there are an estimated 267 homeless veterans in Broward County, where I represent.

This commonsense legislation would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide shelter, food, clothing, bedding, hygiene items, transportation, communication devices, and other necessary assistance to veterans who are homeless and are using rental vouchers.

Mr. Speaker, we will not stop until every veteran has a roof over their head.

HONORING THE NASSAU COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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

Mr. SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the brave men and women of the Nassau County Police Department.

Last week, the Nassau PD arrested eight men in New York's Third Congressional District who are said to be part of an organized theft group from South America.

While I am grateful to their ongoing commitment to preventing these acts of violence, but for suburban New Yorkers in New York's Third Congressional District, we are seeing a major uptick in crime.

In Nassau County alone, a reported 7,394 crimes have been recorded in 2022. This includes grand larceny, burglaries, and vehicle theft.

Recently, I spoke with the NYPD's commanding officer, Assistant Chief Kevin Williams of Queens, to discuss the potential protests in response to the unfortunate events that have taken place in Memphis.

I personally extend my support to Assistant Chief Williams and his team during this time of uncertainty. While peaceful protests may occur nationwide, we should also offer our support to the brave men and women of our local law enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, it is my commitment to support good policy that will provide both the training and resources that our local law enforcement requires to keep our communities safe.

IN MEMORY OF ALBERTO BHOGE

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

Mr. MILLS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a saddened occasion to talk about a son, a brother, a husband, father, soldier, agent, and friend, truly beloved by so many whose lives he touched.

Alberto Bhoge was born February 12, 1984, and honorably served in the U.S.

Army Reserves from February 2010 to September 2014.

During his time serving honorably in uniform, he deployed to Afghanistan in April 2010 until February 2011 with C Company 478th Civil Affairs Battalion.

If serving wasn't enough to dedicate your life and be willing to die for this Nation, he took his uniform off and continued his service in the Federal Bureau of Investigation where he protected our country through his civil service.

Alberto passed on January 17, 2023, and is survived by his wife, who also serves with the FBI, and their two children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that everyone here today join me in praying for his family, friends, and all those who cared for Berto. We love you. God bless. Airborne.

IMPROVING OUR GOVERNMENT THROUGH LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CASTEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to introduce three bills to make our government work a little better. Before I get to those, I would put a question to all of us in this Chamber, the thousands who are sitting here tonight in the gallery, folks watching, but those of us who have the privilege to have this job.

Why are we here?

What is the reason we decided to get into this line of work?

There is a small number of us who, I don't know, may go on to be President or some other office. There is a handful of us who get our viral clips on the local news. There is some larger number of us who actually get our name on a big bill that makes a difference, and we are remembered by our name: The Tafts and Hartleys and Sarbanes and Oxleys.

The truth is that most of us are going to be about as well-known to our successors as our predecessors are to us.

We are here. We are doing a job. We will be known for the office that we held. We will be remembered for the dignity with which we held that office but not for who we are as individuals. And that is okay, right?

One of my favorite pieces of advice I got when I got into this line of work was from President Obama, who said, This is not a sprint, this is a relay. And your job is to pass the baton to the next person in a little bit of a better position than you had it when you picked it up on the last leg.

Now everybody in this body has different policy views, different ideas of what a better position in that relay might look like. But I submit that we do have some universal goals that we all agree on or else we wouldn't be in this line of work.

We all want a government that delivers the greatest good for the greatest number. We all want a government that upholds our founding promise of freedom and equality.

We all, I think, believe Abraham Lincoln's admonition to us that a government of, by, and for the people should not perish from this Earth. We all, also, I think agree that on those really hard questions, the beauty of the government that our Founders created, it is on the hard ones where we disagree the single best way to resolve those disputes is through a democratic process.

It ain't always the best way, but we decided not to have kings. We have agreed not to resolve those through wars. We have agreed to resolve them through a democratic process.

I agree with Winston Churchill when he said that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the other ones that have been tried, but it is the best one that we have.

I put those goals out there because I think they are universal. But if we are honest with ourselves, I'm not sure we are doing such a good job. When we have record wealth inequality, when we have record numbers of mass shootings, when we have surging levels of deaths of despair from the opioid crisis to suicide, it is hard to say that we are doing the greatest good for the greatest number.

When we have persistent male-female wage gaps, racial wealth gaps, steady numbers of Black men getting killed for minor traffic violations, it is hard to say we are doing a really good job of upholding a promise to freedom and equality.

When we look at what we do in this building, not just on our end here but the north and the south end of the building, do we do what the people ask us to do, things that are overwhelmingly popular?

Campaign finance reform, getting rid of gerrymandering, holding ourselves to the same legal and ethical standards that we ask all American citizens to be held to.

We can't get those bills sent to the President's desk. Those things are rejected. We don't even get them out of this building. That is a question of whether we really are making sure that we have a government that is of, by, and for the people.

I know that you all face the same questions I get when I go home. People ask: Why is it that people in this institution are failing to do things that are overwhelmingly popular?

When we see those little polls that say Congress has a 20 percent approval rating, that should be a red light that we have to fix things.

And, of course, the refusal of substantially all of one political party, the party of Lincoln, to condemn an attack on the U.S. Capitol that sought to overturn a free and fair election is not a commitment to preserve and abide by the wisdom of the majority.

Now, I can get depressing, and I am not trying to depress anyone. It can be a cause for hopelessness, but not for us, right? I mean, we got into this job to fix things.

Mr. Speaker, I know you got into this job to fix things, to make things better, right? Seeing something that is broke is an opportunity to make it better. Maybe it is an opportunity for us to build something better and maybe people will remember our names.

We have to get to work and move the baton forward to do that. If we are going to do that, we have to first acknowledge some unpleasant, if self-evident, truths.

First of all, we don't like to say it around here often, but we should. Our Founders actually weren't perfect. They weren't Moses. They weren't Jesus. They were fallible people just like us.

One of my favorite descriptions of the Constitutional Convention was Benjamin Franklin when he was asked about the process. And he said, When you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom—he should have said “and women” but it's with the times—when you assemble them to get their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble all of their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views.

He was talking about the Constitutional Convention.

It sounds an awful lot like he is talking about all the people we work with every day, right? We all have our errors of opinion and our selfish views, and that is okay. Trust our Founders that they were not perfect and they were just as flawed as we all are.

The second thing we have to acknowledge is that our Founders didn't actually think the Constitution was perfect. It is not this immutable stones' path on the mountain.

This is Thomas Jefferson in September 1789, after the Constitution was ratified. He wrote to James Madison: Every Constitution—this is a little crazy, I'll warn you.

Every Constitution, every law should naturally expire at the end of 19 years. It might be that every form of government is so perfectly contrived that the will of the majority—will of the majority—could always be obtained fairly, but this is true of no form.

I am not suggesting that all our laws expire in 19 years, but these are the people who wrote the Constitution saying, I'm not sure this thing is really good for more than 19 years or so, that if we are going to make sure that we fulfill the will of the majority, we might have to prune it.

Okay. That is fine.

The third thing, and this is the one that I think is most important for us here today, is that our Founders did not understand democracy nearly as well as we do.

They were an amazing group of people. They did an amazing thing, but we

have 233 years of wisdom that they did not have. We learned something with that time over the course. Think about the fact that our Founders designed the Constitution with the idea that they would not be political parties. They called them factions but they couldn't contemplate of a world where you could have a functioning democracy and political parties.

Well, I think we have proved you can do that.

They didn't have standing armies. They didn't have income taxes. They couldn't contemplate of a country where women had the right to vote. They couldn't contemplate a country where they didn't have the ability to hold slaves and not only not allow them to vote but do a whole bunch of other things to suppress their freedom and their equality. They kicked that problem down the road.

Again, these things sound familiar, right? We have been there.

Now, they were wise enough to plan for those surprises—they made the Constitution amendable—but we know things they didn't know. We are governing in a different environment still under those tools. If we acknowledge they were no perfect than we are, we acknowledge that we have a responsibility to move this baton forward, then I think we can be honest about what we can do and not be constrained by our own ambition.

Because what is clear, the answer to that question, “why is it that we can't do things that the majority of the American people want?” is in large part because while our Founders paid lipservice to democracy, they said in that letter that Jefferson wrote to Madison, that it is important that a government do the will of the majority.

At core, they didn't really trust the will of the majority. They created the electoral college because they didn't trust that people could be trusted with the vote. The direct elections of Presidents were going to be a problem.

You go and you read the stuff they wrote. They said some populous could just stir up the passions of some uninformed rube in the rural areas.

These are almost direct quotes.

They didn't trust that people in a fully democratic society could elect a President so they created the electoral college. They created the Senate expressly to frustrate the will of the majority.

Now, I say “they,” it wasn't a universal view, but there was no way that we were going to have these United States, to get all those colonies to agree unless there was some way to prevent the will of the majority from causing laws to go forward.

So we created the Senate. You could argue that we created the Senate to preserve slavery, and it did that for, I don't know, a couple dozen years. But it massively overrepresented the low population States in order to make sure that we could actually get people

to agree to join in these United States. That is what they did.

□ 1815

Today, or when it was founded, the biggest State had 10 times the population of the smallest State. Today, it is up to almost 100. So, we have massively disenfranchised huge numbers of American people because of a structure that was designed to disenfranchise large but not as big numbers of American people.

We kick a bill out of here and can get 50 votes in the Senate with people representing 17 percent of the United States population.

When our voters ask us why we can't get things done that are supported by the will of the majority, it is built into our system.

Finally, our Founders created the Supreme Court with largely no checks and balances on the Supreme Court—lifetime appointments, no ethics obligations. Goodness knows, we have seen a fair amount of what is going on there right now.

Remember, *Marbury v. Madison* that significantly expanded the power of the Court relative to the legislative branch came after the Constitution was signed. This is a different structure than what they contemplated, and that effectively gave the Supreme Court not the ability to write laws but darn close to it because you get one Supreme Court Justice that flips the majority, and all of a sudden, you can say that our work here, all the good work we put in, is unconstitutional and turn it over with the whim of one vote. That is not majoritarianism.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to consider for a moment what our country would look like just over maybe three decades if the will of the majority had prevailed, if we actually lived in a country where we only did what the majority of Americans want us to do.

First off, I would like to introduce you to President Gore, followed not too long after by President Hillary Clinton. We would have elected our first female President because that was the will of the majority, right?

That would have had a dramatically different Supreme Court, whole numbers of decisions. How do we think about the Second Amendment in the wake of *Heller*? It would have been a heck of a lot different with different Justices on that Court.

How we think about campaign finance in the wake of *Citizens United* would have been quite a bit different with different folks on the Supreme Court.

The *Dobbs* decision—do we believe that women are truly equal in this society? That might have been a different decision if we had expressed the will of the people.

By the way, campaign finance reform, a woman's right to choose, wanting to not get shot, these are very popular things with the majority of the American people, yet we can't deliver that because of what happened.

I am going to give an exception that proves the rule, and this one we don't talk about enough here, but as House Members, this one should make us furious.

Last year, this body passed, on a bipartisan basis, the Emmett Till Antilynching Act. It made lynching a Federal crime—long overdue.

It went to the Senate. The Senate passed it, and the President signed it. It is a law now. It is now a Federal crime to lynch in America. Good for the Senate.

Do you know when that bill first passed this body? 1922. It took a hundred years, a century, for the Senate to acknowledge what the House had acknowledged for a hundred years, that lynching is bad. We have to fix this place, folks.

If we don't want to answer that question anymore, when people say, "Why can't you do what we want?" We all know what they tell us, right? "It is because you are corrupt. It is because your donors won't let you do this. It is because you are just in it for your ego."

Look, there are some of us who suffer from those problems, but if the institution needs fixing, we can fix it on our own.

If any of what I am saying sounds partisan, I mean, I get it. I am talking about women's right to choose. I am talking about sensible gun control legislation. I am talking about who would have won President. All of those things sound kind of partisan. That is only because, in this structure, we have gotten to a point where one party in America is representing the views of the majority of the American people, and the other party derives its power solely from those minoritarian institutions.

In a healthy democracy, we should all be competing for that mythical center of the electorate. We shouldn't be sitting there and saying: I have a 20-year plan to stack the Court with Justices who will agree with me to overturn the will of the American people.

We shouldn't be sitting there saying: Well, I can control the Senate if I just find a couple of Senate seats in a couple of low-population States with cheap TV markets.

We all know it happens, right?

We will be healthier, both of our parties, if we commit ourselves to the idea, as Jefferson said, that if we are not representing the will of the majority because no form of government ever consistently does, let's fix it so that we do, which brings me to the three bills we introduced today.

The first bill is a constitutional amendment to add 12 national at-large Senators. It doesn't do anything else to change the Senate. It doesn't do anything to frustrate Article V. You can't in any way diminish the relative power of the Senate. But imagine what would happen if 10 percent of the Senate had an interest in representing the will of the American people.

We would then sit there in this House, the people's House, where we

represent the will of the American people, with confidence that we had people fighting for us over there.

It would make it that much harder for them to filibuster a good bill that comes out of here because why would they filibuster something that is supported by the majority of the American people?

It would also, by adding 12 senators, add 12 more electors representing the popular vote. That would reduce the number of scenarios where we could have the popular vote winner lose an election to the electoral vote winner. That is the first bill.

The second one is to expand this House, and in the next Census, 2030, say let's go out and look at the smallest State in the Union and say the size of that State is going to set the size of a congressional district because if we are the House of Representatives, we should make sure that all of us represent as close as we can the same number of people.

The House hasn't grown since 1911. The population of the United States has grown three and a half times since 1911.

All of us in this room, on average—your mileage may vary—represent 737,000, 740,000 people. In 1911, we represented 200,000 people.

Imagine how much different our jobs would be if we had 200,000 constituents to represent, to go talk to, to understand, to make sure that we reflected their views. We would be better. We would be more representative.

There are only two countries in the world with parliamentary democracies that represent more people than we do: India and Afghanistan. We are the crazy outlier, right?

Let's expand the House and make us more representative. If we did that based on the last Census, that would add something like 130 seats to this House.

Again, it would add further electors. It would make us more diverse. It would bring in a new group of people. It would make us better, make us more representative.

The third, because I know there are a lot of constitutional originalists in the room, is to restore the Supreme Court to its Article III responsibilities.

If my colleagues haven't read it in a while, I encourage them to go read Article III of the Constitution that lays out the scope of the Supreme Court. It says that they are responsible for matters of admiralty law, maritime law, matters relating to ambassadors, disputes between the States, and in such appellate jurisdictions the Congress may see fit to provide from time to time.

If we have a Court that is consistently not fulfilling the will of the American people, if we have a Court that is consistently encroaching on our power here in this Chamber, overturning our judgments and what we do, it is in our power to perhaps see fit from time to time to reduce their appellate jurisdiction.

So, what we have said is: Let's reduce their appellate jurisdiction to the circuit courts, and let's depoliticize judge selection processes. If the courts are going to say that a law that we passed is unconstitutional, we will select from a pool of circuit court judges, appellate court judges, at random, and it will take at least 70 percent of them to overturn a bill that we pass out of here.

It takes two-thirds for us to overturn a veto, right? Let's hold them to the same standard. Let's not make this political. Let's get enough people involved in the pool that you can't politicize this. Do it for the good of making this place work.

Also, it would eliminate the shadow docket. Why do we allow ourselves to continue to live in a world where the Supreme Court can just decide to rule on something and not even explain it? How do you work as a lawyer if you don't know that? Let's get rid of the shadow docket.

I am not perfect. You aren't perfect, Mr. Speaker. None of us in this room are perfect. Our Founders weren't perfect, but we are perfectible, and we have a job that affords us the opportunity and the responsibility to make our government a little bit better, a little bit more responsive, a little bit more democratic to move the baton forward.

I would submit that that is just an amazing privilege. I am grateful to have it. I am grateful to serve with all of my colleagues.

I hope I can get the support of this body and my colleagues to redouble our commitments to make our government better, to make sure that we honor Jefferson's promise to tune it and tweak it if it is not carrying out the majority will, and to pass that baton forward to whoever follows us up to be in a little better position than we had ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THREATS FACING CONSERVATIVE SPEECH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the threats facing conservative speech in this country. When members of government take it upon themselves to declare certain speech illegal or undesir-

able, they effectively silence opposition. This isn't the American way.

We have seen this kind of censorship in Saudi Arabia, Communist China, and Soviet Russia. We never want to see it in America.

Tonight, we are gathered to call attention to a shocking, coordinated attempt by progressives in business and government to suppress dissent, stifle debate, and threaten free speech.

Last week, one of the largest satellite TV providers, DIRECTV, chose to deplatform Newsmax from their lineup.

Newsmax is the fourth highest-rated cable news channel and is watched by more than 25 million Americans. This decision means that more than 13 million homes will lose access to Newsmax programming.

Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, Democratic members of the Energy and Commerce Committee wrote to AT&T and DIRECTV encouraging the censorship of One America News, FOX News, and Newsmax. Two years later, two out of three of those networks are now deplatformed.

One year ago, after pressure from Democrats, AT&T and DIRECTV removed the One America News Network from its programming, and now DIRECTV has removed Newsmax.

The Energy and Commerce Committee has immediate jurisdiction over the business interests of DIRECTV. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand why AT&T and DIRECTV felt pressured to comply with committee demands.

Simply put, Democrats in that committee disagreed with the content coming out of One America News Network and Newsmax and decided they wanted them canceled.

This is a clear case of free speech infringement and viewpoint discrimination. Government colluding with telecommunications giants should chill us all.

We are facing a concerted, unabashed effort to shrink the limits of debate by corporations in an unholy alliance with political activists and their government avatars. These companies have become willing prosecutors of dissent.

Woke corporations are actively interposing themselves between Americans and the conversations they need to have. Why? Because they are afraid, afraid that the lessons they learned in progressive universities won't stand up to objective scrutiny; afraid that vigorous debate breeds societies of citizens, not sheep; above all, afraid that if they cannot anoint themselves enlightened arbiters, their ideas will just have to stand on their own merits like the rest of us.

I urge my colleagues across the aisle to rethink their desire to silence opposition. The people who want to silence opponents are people who can't win debates.

I urge American businesses to stiffen their spines and stand up in favor of free speech and open speech.

We acknowledge that we may never know the exact mindset of the deci-

sionmakers who decided to join hand in glove with progressives' drive to silence their opposition, but what we know is more than enough.

Democrats asked, and DIRECTV delivered. Progressives spoke up, and One America News was silenced. Newsmax is now on the chopping block.

Where does that leave us? Under the lengthening shadow of censorship or at the beginning of a new era when freedom fights back.

I know what side I will be on. Which one will you join?

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BISHOP), my colleague from the Tar Heel State.

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Colorado and my colleagues will show in this hour that censorship of conservative voices proliferates among social media and other tech companies, banks and other commercial service providers, and massive public companies and capital markets pursuing ESG policies.

As Mr. BUCK suggested, it is worse than that because the leading and most insidious censors, whose predominant selection of conservatives to victimize, by the way, as only an aside, are the powerful and secretive agencies of Federal law enforcement and the so-called intelligence community.

□ 1830

In only the most recent example of this egregious wrongdoing, and solely due to the commendable voluntary disclosure by a social media company of the Twitter files, we now know that not only the FBI but also the ODNI, NSA, and CIA audaciously abused their power to coordinate Big Tech and Big Media to suppress from circulation information that was highly significant to the 2020 Presidential election; namely, the New York Post's Hunter Biden laptop story.

But even this jaw-dropping disclosure focusing on an isolated document brings home just how insidious, how brazen the conduct of these massive and unaccountable agencies has become.

Here is one. Twitter files Number 7, Tweet 15, by one of the reporters with integrity, Michael Shellenberger: My colleagues at the Fort had a query for you. This is from Elvis Chan at the FBI to Yoel Roth at Twitter.

My colleagues at the Fort is a reference to Fort Meade, the headquarters of the National Security Agency. He says that Twitter no longer provides their data feed, as they had in earlier years apparently, and asked if they would be willing to change it.

Their data feed; comments, postings of 77 million Americans and more than 330 million people worldwide.

My colleagues, Mr. Chan says, are currently contracting with a vendor for an analytic tool for open-source intelligence. The commercial version of this tool includes the Twitter data feed. However, the feed was disabled because