RECOGNIZING SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT K9 THOR

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

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of a beloved member of the Springfield Police Department who recently passed, K9 Thor.

Thor worked second watch for 8 years as a dual-purpose police K9 until his retirement in 2019. Trained in apprehending criminals and searching for evidence and narcotics, he played an important role in keeping our community safe.

During his career, Thor won numerous awards at the United States Police Canine Association region 16 trials, including four perfect scores in suspect search and evidence search, distinctions that my little, 20-pound Lulu just might not have cut it.

When Thor wasn't fighting crime, his favorite activity was chasing tennis balls at home and spending time with his family.

As we reflect on Thor's service to the Springfield community, we are reminded of the sacrifices that our law enforcement officers and their K9 partners make every day to keep us safe.

Thank you, Thor, and thank you to all of the first responders in the Illinois 13th Congressional District for your dedication to service.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF JARED LLOYD

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

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a fallen hero from Rockland County.

Two years ago yesterday, Jared Lloyd went to the Columbian Engine Company No. 1 firehouse, like he had hundreds of times before, to help keep our community safe.

He did not know that it would be his last call when he and his company were called to the Evergreen Court Adult Home in Spring Valley to combat a fire that started, putting the lives of hundreds of elderly residents at risk.

He, along with hundreds of other first responders, descended on the scene, running headlong into the building that was becoming engulfed with flames. Together, they saved over 100 lives that day, a heroic feat.

Tragically, Jared lost his life in this effort, which serves as a stark reminder of the incredible bravery shown by all of our first responders in the Hudson Valley and across our Nation, but especially our volunteer firefighters.

Thank you, Jared. Thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and your example. I know all of Rockland mourns you today and every day, and we will always be there to support your family, including your two incredible sons.

EDUCATION IS THE LIFELINE FOR THE FUTURE

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, recently I traveled to six counties in my district and looked at different aspects of education, ranging from Title I funds, STEM, school nutrition, and physical education, to providing safe learning environments.

Mr. Speaker, after speaking with many students, I learned that they are seeking new opportunities to live their dreams, and they tend to respond best to caring adults such as parents, guardians, teachers, coaches, custodians, and even bus drivers.

During my visits, I also was honored to serve as a teacher assistant at Central Elementary in Northampton County.

Ms. Leanna Cahoon, also known by her students as Ms. C, stayed busy as ever, grading tests, helping students with math and spelling, and assisting classrooms when needed. We must applaud not only Ms. C, but all teacher assistants and educators.

Mr. Speaker, education is a lifeline for the future, and we must provide the resources for our students to succeed because, after all, our young minds will be the ones who will transform not only eastern North Carolina but America forever.

AFFORDABLE SCHOOL LUNCHES

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

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the importance of ensuring that all students are fed in a nutritious and affordable manner. I am proud to have introduced H.R. 1168, the School Lunch Affordability Act Of 2023.

Every year, schools are forced to raise their school lunch prices to comply with the Paid Lunch Equity program set by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. This arbitrary price increase mandated miles away by Congress has no impact on nutritional content and puts unnecessary pressure on hardworking American families and, ultimately, leads to more hungry students.

This legislation would amend the regulation to return local control to schools. Protecting the health and nutrition of our youth is a critical, critical aspect of a strong educational system and it is completely un-American to subject our local schools to the burdensome Federal regulations.

Schools should be able to make these decisions for themselves, not the bureaucrats in Washington. This legislation grants them this ability at the local level.

CULTURE WARS IN OUR CLASSROOMS

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

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 5, a partisan effort to bring culture wars into our Nation's classrooms.

My grandfather had a way of saying no to me as a kid. He would hold up his hand and he would say, when red hair grows right here in the palm of his hand. That was his way of saying no. It is the same with this legislation in the Senate which will go nowhere in the Senate.

It opens the door to more book bans in our local school libraries by requiring schools to report each and every book in their inventory.

Let's be clear: Recent attempts to restrict access to books are an attack on the fundamental values of our democracy. Banning books is not only a violation of our First Amendment rights, but it also undermines our children's education and intellectual growth.

As a father of two, I am disappointed by these partisan attempts to restrict access to books that could inspire and educate our children. We should be working together to build a better future for our kids, instead of engaging in more partisan political games.

TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call attention to a disturbing trend that is going on in our colleges and universities.

We all know—or at least anybody on this side of the aisle—from talking to college students, they feel there are certain things they just can't say. It is going to cost them a grade. When you are dealing with young professors, it is going to cost them tenure, and that is the intolerance for conservative ideas or religious ideas in America's universities.

Lately, we have had universities say they are not going to deal with standardized tests anymore, the SAT, that sort of thing. It is another way—and people have to remember this. It is fun not to take a test, but it is another way to go after people who are at all conservative.

Right now, you can be as religious as you want, you can be as Republican as you want, you can have a lifestyle that includes, for example, hunting, and if you get a good SAT score, they have got to let you in even though they don't want to, or they will let you in even though they don't want to.