

Don was later elected as township supervisor in 2003, giving 50 years of his life to serving Allegheny Township in Pennsylvania.

My thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Nancy; his daughters, Tracy and Tonya; and his grandchildren, McKenzie and Jordan.

Don's service and his commitment to community will never be forgotten by the individuals of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District.

RECOGNIZING CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION MONTH

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this month is Career and Technology Education Month, celebrating the students, teachers, and administrators throughout the country who participate in these important programs.

Last week, I met with the students and staff at Colonial Career and Technology Center at New Oxford High School in Adams County, Pennsylvania, and the Bedford County Technical Center in Everett, Pennsylvania.

It was a pleasure to tour these facilities at both campuses and meet with their dedicated staff and the talented students to learn more about the skills that these students are building each and every day while in those classrooms.

Programs like these give students an opportunity to explore future careers while gaining real-world, hands-on experience in that field. This gives students an opportunity to use their hands and brains as they carve out careers, careers that are so necessary right now throughout America.

I thank all the career and technology centers throughout Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District for preparing students for success in a competitive job market, strengthening regional workforces, and helping to bolster the economic health of our communities.

HONORING MICHAEL STRANK

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sergeant Michael Strank of Franklin borough, Pennsylvania, who is one of the patriots who planted the American flag atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima in late February 1945.

An immigrant from Eastern Europe, Sergeant Strank signed up for the Marine Corps in 1939, and in 1942, he was promoted to sergeant, preparing to go to war in the Pacific after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

In February 1945, Sergeant Strank was on the island of Iwo Jima, where some of the most intense fighting throughout the war had occurred.

On February 23, 1945, Sergeant Michael Strank, along with other Marines, climbed to the top of the volcanic rock and planted Old Glory for all to see.

Though the battle waged for 2 more weeks, Sergeant Strank and his fellow marines created a lasting image that would go on to embody American strength and courage.

Unfortunately, Sergeant Strank never made it home from Iwo Jima, as he was killed in combat just 1 week later. However, the image that he and his fellow soldiers and marines created lives on today, serving as a reminder to all generations of what American perseverance and strength can accomplish.

To Sergeant Strank, I say Semper Paratus, and to all who served as part of the Greatest Generation, I thank them.

May the brave men and women who pick up the torch today to protect our freedoms around the globe take inspiration from those who came before them, like Sergeant Strank.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET BETRAYS
MIDDLE CLASS

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, we are now in the eighth week of the 119th Congress, which has distinguished itself with incredibly low productivity and low effort.

So far, we have brought up just a bunch of moldy old leftovers from the last Congress. We have been averaging roughly about two votes a day since the Congress was sworn in on January 3.

Despite the fact that we have a government shutdown looming in about 2 weeks, on March 14, the Speaker is much more focused on other things than trying to again avoid a catastrophe like that.

It appears that this week we actually are going to take up the budget reconciliation bill that again has been worked out down at the Mar-a-Lago hotel over the last 2 months or so, where a conga line of billionaires have been observed walking through, meeting with leadership of the Republican Conference, laying out their priorities, not the American people's priorities, in terms of what they want to see in that reconciliation bill.

This week, we are going to take up, apparently, according to the Speaker's Office, an actual vote on that.

Why is that being given priority over a government shutdown? The real reason that is being given priority is that the tax cuts that were passed in 2017, particularly on personal rates, are going to be expiring in 2025. For the people who benefited the most, the top 1 percent of this country in terms of their economic position, for them, that is their number one priority.

A week ago Friday, in the Budget Committee, on a party-line vote, the Republicans produced their bill, their budget reconciliation bill, which extends those tax cuts, despite the fact that it worsens our budget deficit and leaves middle-class and lower income Americans in the dust.

This chart was done by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a nonpartisan think tank, which shows again where the benefit of that bill is

going to go. The top 1 percent in income—in the State of Connecticut from where I am from, that is people whose income is about \$1.2 million a year—they are going to get a \$70,000 tax cut. For somebody who is in the lowest quintile, which is income up to \$14,000 a year, you can see on this chart they are going to get about \$130. For a middle-income person who makes roughly about \$114,000 a year, they are going to get about a grand in terms of their tax payments.

Now, if we actually had a mature, reasonable process in this Chamber where Democrats would also be consulted in terms of putting together a plan to make sure that lower income and middle-income individuals' taxes don't go up, we could work out an arrangement, but not with a price tag of which the top 1 percent are going to continue to rake in tax cuts that were, again, shoved into the bill in 2017, lowering the top marginal rate from 39 percent to 36 percent. Again, that was just a complete and total windfall for people who don't need that type of tax relief.

Let's look again at what else the Budget Committee did with this chart, which shows how they are going to pay for extending those tax cuts. The cost of extending those tax cuts for the top 1 percent is \$4.5 trillion over the next 10 years.

There were some other additions that they put into the budget, which are going to add to the deficit. To pay for it, they included a whole bunch of cuts. The big one is to cut the Medicaid program, a program which provides healthcare for 70 million Americans, such as people in nursing homes. Almost half the live births in this country are covered by Medicaid. Young, working-class individuals, because of the ACA expansion, are covered by Medicaid.

Again, this bill talks about cutting \$880 billion, about 20 percent of the cost of the program, indiscriminately with no precision in terms of who it is affecting. It has work requirements. Are people in their nineties in nursing homes really going to do that? Give me a break.

There are some other cuts to higher education to help pay for this.

The bottom line is, at the end of the day, we are still going to be adding to the deficit. The deficit hawks in the Republican Party are adding to the deficit with this measure on top of the deficits that we are already running today.

This bill is fiscally irresponsible and outrageously unfair in terms of who benefits from it. It is extremely harmful to middle-class and working families of this country whose essential need for educational services and healthcare are going to be cut. They will take the hit in terms of advancing this priority.

This is an important vote for the people of this country to be watching. This is a gut check for every Member in this

House about where their priorities are because that is what budgets are about. They are an expression of people's moral values and their priorities in terms of who should get help in our country.

This measure will not help the people who need it, who are still struggling with the high cost of living, and who don't need to basically have the rug pulled out from under them with a measure like this.

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HONORING BELOVED IOWAN DAVE HEATON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Dave Heaton, a beloved Iowan, whose passing on February 12 at age 84 has left his wife Carmen; daughter, Mary Elizabeth; the city of Mount Pleasant; and Iowa in mourning.

Dave graduated from Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant, and he enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve and served with an engineering battalion in Washington, Iowa. He taught social studies and government at Van Buren High School, and he also was an assistant coach for the girls' basketball team and a defensive coach for the football team.

Before public service, Dave and his wife, Carmen, ran the Iris Restaurant for 42 years, and Dave's family in Sigourney, Iowa, ran restaurants as well. The Iris Restaurant was a community hub where he carved roast beef and listened to everyone who entered. Known as the best boss, he made it into southeast Iowa's finest dining spot.

For 24 years, Dave served in the Iowa House of Representatives, where his pragmatic compassion shaped mental health, human services, and education policy. As chair of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, he turned conviction into progress.

His reach extended to education, working with school boards, and inspiring leaders like Jesse Howard. Healthcare in general, but also mental health, were his focus, and later in life he served on the board of directors of the National Alliance of Mental Illness.

He was a giant of a man: mentor, friend and neighbor. Always humble and always selfless, Dave Heaton's legacy of dedication, kindness, and service defines what public life should be. Iowa stands stronger because of him.

Rest in peace, Dave. You will definitely be missed.

HAITIAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Puerto Rico (Mr. HERNÁNDEZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, last week, I met with priests and leaders of the Haitian immigrant community in Puerto Rico. I heard their accounts of what has been happening since ICE began its raids. The stories were devastating and demoralizing.

Mr. Speaker, imagine living in Puerto Rico for 40 years, building a life, raising children, and contributing to our economy, and facing the fear of being unfairly deported to a country you barely know, one devastated by violence and disaster.

Mr. Speaker, imagine being a documented resident of Puerto Rico and being placed under arrest, simply because you looked or sounded like an undocumented immigrant.

Mr. Speaker, imagine needing medical care but being too afraid to leave your home and seek help out of fear of being detained and deported.

This is not justice, and as our former Governor, Luis Muñoz Marín, once said: Injustice towards some is injustice towards all.

Beyond the ethical concerns, beyond the moral concerns, and beyond the emotional concerns that these injustices raise, there are practical consequences that I urge the administration to consider. The persecution of documented immigrants hurts our communities, our economy, and our businesses.

Businesses in Puerto Rico and across the United States are suffering because immigrants are too afraid to go to work, seek services, or even buy food. I have heard stories of construction workers who don't show up to work and of local restaurants that have suddenly changed their business model from dining-in to delivery. Barrio Obrero, a Dominican neighborhood in San Juan, is not what it used to be.

We are doing our best to protect immigrants and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect. That is why on January 27 I sent an oversight letter, along with the chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, ADRIANO ESPAILLAT, to demand answers from DHS and ICE on wrongful tactics used by agents that have caused considerable distress within communities in Puerto Rico and across the country. To date, DHS and ICE have not adequately answered our questions.

On January 29, I personally called the Puerto Rico Association of Mayors and asked them to provide as much assistance as legally possible to protect our immigrant communities.

On February 6, I joined Congressman ESPAILLAT in introducing H.R. 1061, which would prevent immigration enforcement at sensitive locations, such as churches and schools, so that migrants can safely visit.

Our message to the immigrant communities in Puerto Rico and the United States is simple: You are not alone, and we will keep fighting for you.

Now for the interests of my constituents, I will repeat my remarks in Spanish.

(Spanish translation of the statement made in English is as follows:)

Señor Presidente, La semana pasada me reuní con sacerdotes y líderes de la comunidad inmigrante haitiana en Puerto Rico. Escuché sus relatos sobre lo que ha estado ocurriendo desde que ICE comenzó sus redadas. Las historias eran devastadoras y desmoralizantes.

Imagine vivir en Puerto Rico por 40 años—construir una vida, criar hijos, contribuir a nuestra economía—y enfrentarse al temor de ser deportado injustamente a un país que apenas conoces, un país devastado por la violencia y los desastres.

Imagina ser un residente documentado de Puerto Rico y ser arrestado—simplemente porque “parecías” o “sonabas” como un inmigrante indocumentado.

Imagina necesitar atención médica, pero tener demasiado miedo de salir de tu hogar y buscarla por temor a ser detenido y deportado.

Esto no es justicia, y como dijo una vez nuestro exgobernador Luis Muñoz Marín, “en la larga historia de los pueblos, lo que es injusto para algunos, es injusto para todos”.

Más allá de las preocupaciones éticas, morales y emocionales que generan estas injusticias, hay consecuencias prácticas que insto a la administración a considerar. La persecución de inmigrantes documentados perjudica nuestra economía, nuestros negocios y nuestras comunidades.

Los negocios en Puerto Rico y en Estados Unidos están sufriendo. Hemos oído historias de trabajadores de la industria de construcción que no llegan a su lugar de trabajo. Hemos oído historias de restaurantes que han tenido que cambiar su modelo de negocio de cenar en el restaurante a hacer entrega.

Los negocios en Puerto Rico, en lugares como Barrio Obrero, se han visto profundamente afectados, y las comunidades no son lo que eran antes.

Estamos haciendo todo lo posible para proteger a los inmigrantes y garantizar que sean tratados con dignidad, con respeto y como seres humanos.

Por eso, el 27 de enero, lideré una carta junto con el presidente del Caucus Hispano del Congreso, Adriano Espaillet, exigiendo respuestas de DHS y de ICE sobre las tácticas erróneas utilizadas por los agentes en estas redadas. Hasta la fecha, no hemos recibido respuestas satisfactorias.

El 29 de enero, llamé personalmente a la Asociación de Alcaldes y les pedí que brindaran toda la asistencia posible, dentro de la legalidad, a nuestras comunidades inmigrantes. Y el 6 de febrero, me uní al congresista Espaillet para presentar el Proyecto de ley con el fin de proteger los lugares sensibles de redadas.

Nuestro mensaje para las comunidades inmigrantes en Puerto Rico y en Estados Unidos es simple: no están solos y seguiremos luchando por ustedes.