

the public health emergency has been extended again for the twelfth time.

Madam Speaker, it is past time to end this blatant Federal overreach, and that is exactly what we are going to do. This week, House Republicans will vote to repeal the public health emergency, stop the forced vaccination of our healthcare workers, and finally get Federal workers back to their offices to serve the American people.

It is time to restore individual liberty to the American people so the American people, not the Federal Government, can make the best decisions for themselves and their families.

NATIONAL SALES TAX OF 30 PERCENT

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

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Madam Speaker, extreme MAGA Republicans have an economic plan that will hurt working families. House Republicans are set to advance a new 30 percent national sales tax.

Let me repeat that: 30 percent national sales tax.

This will increase the average family's cost for groceries and everyday essentials by about \$100 every single month.

On top of that, they want to cut Social Security, cut Medicare. Working families will lose their hard-earned benefits.

They are putting their special interests over the working class. They are putting special interests over people.

Rest assured, Madam Speaker, no matter what extreme MAGA Republicans do, House Democrats will continue to fight for working families. It is the middle class that makes our country strong. We will be there to put them over politics. We will be there to put people first.

OUR NATION IS CURRENTLY \$31 TRILLION IN DEBT

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, our Nation is currently \$31 trillion in debt. Unfunded liabilities, meaning debt we can't fund, are almost \$124 trillion.

For the past 2 years, Democrat majorities have added \$300 billion in new extra Federal spending. This level of spending is actually driving inflation. It is fueling runaway inflation that is driving up the price of everything from gasoline—we have known about that for a long time—to eggs, which seems to be a more recent phenomena.

Why do we have to keep doing this? We shouldn't. America is the land of plenty. America is the land of innovation. We can produce anything we want. We can innovate new and better ways to do it in this country. We are

being hampered by government, regulations, lack of planning. Overspending by government has taken away the initiative of people to be able to do things on their own instead of being harmed by government spending and regulation.

We have to address Washington, D.C.'s, reckless spending, which is driving inflation and a massive amount of debt. If the interest rates keep going up, we won't even be able to service the debt the way we should.

RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

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

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight a major legislative win which was the designation of the National Heritage Area Act for my home of St. Croix in the Virgin Islands.

I thank Senator ANGUS KING for his support, who introduced the Senate companion bill, which was signed into law by President Biden.

St. Croix, with its place of landing, is the only place in the United States in which Christopher Columbus actually set his foot. It is home to native Caribs, as well as Taino Indians, who engaged and fought with Christopher Columbus. It is the home of Alexander Hamilton. We have a history of enslavement and struggle to maintain our African ancestors' culture on that island.

Seven nations have owned the U.S. Virgin Islands at one point or another, adding to a rich blend of many cultures and ideas; the epitome of Americanism, how the innovation and continual change in our country takes place.

St. Croix's National Heritage Area designation is the culmination of nearly 20 years of advocacy and work. We look forward to what it brings to our island.

□ 1215

REDUCING THE NATIONAL DEBT

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

Mr. MCCORMICK. Madam Speaker, this week, Americans are hearing about yet another battle over the debt ceiling, a fiscal restraint that was supposed to stop Congress from spending too much.

Every couple of years, Congress basically gives itself a free pass and votes to raise the debt ceiling, kicking the can down the road. With a national debt over \$31 trillion, this is a game our country cannot afford to keep playing.

Today, President Biden is set to miss his budget deadline as required by law for the third consecutive year. I would love to see us actually handle the budget one item at a time rather than in a typical omnibus.

Vilification of debt control and protecting our future generations is not where this discussion should start. We are not going to get rid of this deficit in 1 year, but we can get rid of something this year. Can we at least have a small step toward reducing our national debt for the future of our children?

Hardworking American families have balanced budgets every month, every year, and they deserve a government that does the same.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 7, RELATING TO A NATIONAL EMERGENCY DECLARED BY THE PRESIDENT ON MARCH 13, 2020; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 139, STOPPING HOME OFFICE WORK'S UNPRODUCTIVE PROBLEMS ACT OF 2023; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 382, PANDEMIC IS OVER ACT; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 497, FREEDOM FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS ACT

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 75 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 75

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 7) relating to a national emergency declared by the President on March 13, 2020. All points of order against consideration of the joint resolution are waived. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the joint resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 139) to require Executive agencies to submit to Congress a study of the impacts of expanded telework and remote work by agency employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and a plan for the agency's future use of telework and remote work, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 3. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 382) to terminate the public health emergency declared with respect to COVID-19. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered

on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 4. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 497) to eliminate the COVID-19 vaccine mandate on health care providers furnishing items and services under certain Federal health care programs. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, last night the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 75, providing for the consideration of four measures: H.J. Res. 7, H.R. 139, H.R. 382, and H.R. 497.

The rule provides for consideration of all four measures under closed rules, with 1 hour of debate each equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the committees of jurisdiction or their designees. The rule provides one motion to recommit for each measure.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule and in support of the underlying bills.

Today, the Republican majority begins the long process of reversing the policy failures of President Biden and the previous Democratic majority.

Madam Speaker, Republicans last week demonstrated that Republicans are committed to governing for the American people. Toward that end, Madam Speaker, House Republicans have had one of the most productive legislative weeks in recent memory. Our new governing majority has demonstrated that it is no longer a closed shop, which was business as usual in a Democratic House in the last Congress.

Instead of a lethargic Congress, Republicans, in only 3 short weeks, have

set a precedent that I hope subsequent Members will emulate. The new Republican majority is eager to begin the important work that America has sent us here to do.

Instead of legislating for the few at the expense of the many, Republicans are making good on our commitment to America. We are dismantling the COVID surveillance state. We are protecting the conscience rights of our healthcare workers. We are demanding that government employees show up to do their jobs like the rest of America has done. We are terminating and rescinding the interminable extensions of President Bidens's public health emergency declaration.

Sometimes, Madam Speaker, I almost feel as if I have been trapped in a Dickens novel. In this tale of two cities, it seems the Biden administration is clearly of two minds on the COVID pandemic, one being the best of times: the administration's policies to combat the pandemic have been a resounding success. But then, on the other hand, we are still living through a crisis that requires emergency measures that have to be prolonged indefinitely.

The American people spoke in the last election, Madam Speaker. Their message was clear enough. Their message by electing Republicans was enough is enough.

Now, thanks to Chairman GRAVES and H.J. Res. 7, the American people can be assured that President Biden's national emergency will be rescinded. Americans will finally have a government that recognizes the reality across our Nation, the very words spoken by President Biden on "60 Minutes" last September: "The pandemic is over."

Madam Speaker, nowhere is the contrast more evident between Republicans and Democrats than what is included in this rule today. The Republican majority is already hard at work passing commonsense legislation that will benefit our people, that will benefit all Americans, not just a connected few.

Madam Speaker, just like you, one of the most vital services I provide to the constituents of the people of the 26th District of Texas is communicating with Federal agencies on their behalf. Through this communication, I am able to ensure timely services like passport services, Social Security benefits, Medicare enrollment, veterans' benefits, and many more. Over the past few years, I have seen that these services have been severely delayed or even halted—completely in some cases—because what do you get? No one answers the phone, or you get an out-of-office response from a Federal agency.

I submit that is entirely unacceptable. In fact, last week, I introduced a bill called the REACT Act, in a bipartisan fashion, to require a timely response from executive agencies after inquiries from Members of Congress. However, in order for the agencies to fulfill their responsibilities, they first have to get back to work.

H.R. 139, the SHOW UP Act, would end the unproductive telework policies to ensure that these Federal agencies are back at work for the American people.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this bill, and I urge other Members to support the underlying bill, as well as the rule.

Madam Speaker, again this September, President Biden, in a candid and unguarded moment, officially admitted that the pandemic is over, and then for emphasis he repeated it. Despite this declaration, this administration just reauthorized the twelfth extension of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

I think all of us who were here at the time agreed that, in March 2020, the country was very much in a public health emergency. However, now the landscape has changed, and now the American people are transitioning back to their normal routines.

Today, the Biden administration's lack of transparency has, yet again, put our country in a very difficult position. Throughout the last 3 years and 12 extensions of this public health emergency, people have had ample time to seriously discuss a plan to avoid disruptions to patients and providers as we transition out of this pandemic.

This new House majority has been pressing the administration to come up with a plan to make permanent the policies that work and unwind those policies that don't. While there were several successful policies and innovations that came out of the emergency declaration, not just telehealth and hospital at-home flexibilities, this administration has repeatedly failed to provide a plan.

The public health emergency cannot serve as a permanent means for the Biden administration to subvert Congress to enact their radical agenda.

Madam Speaker, I support Congressman GUTHRIE's efforts to officially end this public health emergency, and I look forward to transitioning back to regular order.

Madam Speaker, our healthcare workers across America are still subject to President Biden's vaccine mandate enforced by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The healthcare industry is already suffering from a severe workforce shortage that will have drastic effects on our ability to take care of patients.

Republicans have been crystal clear on the issue, Madam Speaker. We never have and never will support Federal vaccine mandates. The personal health decision of whether to receive a vaccine should be left between a patient and their doctor. The Federal Government has no place in demanding what an American must do for their personal health and certainly as a condition of employment.

For Texas specifically, one of our hospitals lost over 150 workers due to

the Federal vaccine mandate. This decision has deepened the staffing shortages back home, especially in rural areas, leaving all of us ill-equipped to deal with day-to-day functions.

Madam Speaker, I will conclude by saying that I stand in strong support of this rule and the underlying bills that they will allow to be debated.

Madam Speaker, I urge my fellow Members to support the rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Texas, now the new vice chair of the Rules Committee, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, there is a lot to take in from the opening remarks the gentleman has provided. I want to say one thing. He says that the Republicans have a mandate. I think the message of the last two elections was that the overwhelming number of people in this country said no to extremism.

And mandate? Democrats picked up a seat in the Senate. The red wave that was predicted by my Republican friends turned into a pink splash.

The reason why was because people were turned off by their extremism, and this in spite of all kinds of gerrymandering, crazy redistricting plans, and money like we have never seen in an election before, and we have the narrowest of narrow margins.

So if the gentleman thinks that there is a mandate here to embrace extremism, I beg to differ with that.

Madam Speaker, there is no denying that the situation with COVID has improved. Cases are down, deaths are down, and most of us have returned to the lifestyles we had before the pandemic. That is because of the incredible steps we have taken to keep people safe: vaccines, expanded healthcare, telework flexibilities, and other programs and initiatives that ensure Americans can lead healthy, full lives.

The rule before us today allows for the consideration of four measures, four reckless and regressive measures, to turn back the clock on all that we have gone through and learned over these last 3 years, and all under closed rules. Let me repeat that: all under closed rules.

□ 1230

H.J. Res. 7 would terminate, effective immediately, the COVID national emergency declared in 2020 by President Trump and renewed by President Biden in 2021.

This immediate reversal offers no off-ramps for relief programs and benefits, threatening aid for nursing homes and hospitals, additional support for the VA, as well as help for small businesses and more. It would end flexibilities to ensure more food-insecure people have access to SNAP, our Nation's first line of defense against hunger.

H.R. 382, the Pandemic is Over Act, would similarly repeal Health and

Human Services' public health emergency declarations. This would roll back significant expansions to healthcare access and services for millions across the country.

H.R. 139, the SHOW UP Act, would force Federal agencies to return to prepandemic telework policies, despite the fact that the pandemic demonstrated workers from many industries could complete their jobs remotely.

H.R. 497, the Freedom for Health Care Workers Act, would remove COVID vaccine requirements for Medicare and Medicaid healthcare workers.

Now, if you take a second to think about these bills, not a single one makes things easier, safer, or more effective. They are sound bites. That is what my Republican friends are good at, sound bites, not legislating. They are good at making political statements but not solving problems.

Eliminating vaccine mandates for healthcare providers will not help healthcare providers. Instead, it increases their chances of getting sick, increases their patients' chances of getting sick.

COVID vaccines are safe and effective. You wouldn't know that if you listened to some of the commentary in the Rules Committee last night, but they are. They have protected millions of healthcare workers and their families from infections, hospitalization, and death.

Pulling the plug on the national and public health emergency declarations will throw Federal programs in our healthcare system into chaos. No longer will Americans be able to receive free COVID testing and treatments. Hospitals that already struggle to stock their shelves with proper PPE will face an even greater uphill battle.

I am not saying that these declarations should continue indefinitely. Nobody is saying that. President Biden announced yesterday that he plans to end the declarations on May 11. But we need time to understand the impact that ending the declarations will have on our country.

The responsible thing to do is to provide an orderly off-ramp for these agencies so that essential benefits aren't suddenly ripped away from those who need them most.

Essentially, getting rid of telework for Federal agencies when it has allowed our Nation and government to function through this historic pandemic is nonsense. Studies have shown that telework has been largely beneficial, resulting in increased productivity, reduced absences, reduced turnover, and reduced office costs. If corporate America has chosen to harness the net positive effects of teleworking, government agencies should, too.

Madam Speaker, my Republican friends who are screaming against teleworking provisions, I point out, for the RECORD, that Republicans voted by proxy more than 14,500 times in the last Congress.

Let me repeat that. Republicans voted by proxy—that means they were operating remotely—more than 14,500 times in the last Congress.

It was kind of comical. Last night, my friend from Texas in the Rules Committee said that Republicans were voting by proxy because they felt Democrats pressured them, that Democrats made them do that. Really? I mean, I have heard a lot of crazy things in my life, but I have never heard that used as an excuse. Give me a break.

I find it outrageous that some Members are so worried about government workers getting their work done from home while they themselves took advantage of proxy voting over the last 3 years. Guess what? Proxy voting is called telework, and my friends are okay with telework for themselves, but when it comes to Federal workers, no, they are not okay. I guess for House Republicans, it is do as I say, not as I do.

We had the chair of the Oversight Committee testify very passionately against telework last night, and he voted by proxy—get this—83 times. You can't make this stuff up.

We all know that COVID has moved into a new phase, and thanks to the use of safe, effective vaccines and other prevention tools, we are moving forward. We are learning to live with it, but let's not forget that over a million of our fellow Americans have died from it.

We should not ignore the fact that COVID continues to spread and mutate. It still poses a danger to people.

It is clear that House Republicans just want to pretend that COVID isn't still a problem, that science doesn't exist, and that telework doesn't have a place in the 21st century.

At the end of the day, these measures were introduced really out of spite. Our colleagues across the aisle are looking to undo everything we did, even if that means getting rid of important, effective measures that help American workers, families, and patients.

In closing, Madam Speaker, none of these have gone through committee. There were no hearings, not a single hearing.

Again, there were lots of questions raised about these bills in the Rules Committee last night, including whether or not title 42 would be overturned. The administration has one opinion, and the Republicans have another opinion. I don't know what the truth is. A hearing would have made a difference, but they couldn't even wait a couple of days to do a hearing. They just wanted to rush this to the floor to get a press release out.

There were not only no markups, but there were no amendments. We had amendments submitted to the Rules Committee last night not just by Democrats but by Republicans. They said: No. Closed. Can't even have a debate on the floor. Can't have an up-or-down vote.

Fifteen out of the 16 measures that this Congress has considered so far have been totally closed. I am thinking I need to call the Office of Attending Physician and get a neck brace because I have whiplash trying to reconcile what my friends said they were going to do and what they are actually doing.

I mean, the last time the Republicans controlled Congress, they presided over the most closed Congress in the history of the United States of America. Let me repeat that. The last time they were in control, they presided over the most closed Congress in the history of our country, and they are on track to try to beat their own record.

This is not what the Speaker promised. I didn't see the secret memo that Speaker MCCARTHY was circulating to get votes. Maybe there was some stuff in the secret memo that basically said that, you know, say one thing and do another.

The bottom line is this is not what anyone was promised, and there is absolutely no reason that we couldn't have waited a few days to do hearings on this stuff so we could decide whether or not any of these measures were the responsible thing to do or whether or not there were some additions that we could have made to these measures to make them responsible.

We all want to move on, but we want to do so responsibly. We all want to move beyond the national emergency, but we want to make sure that there are not unintended consequences. This is not serious legislating. This is political posturing, and it is a lousy way to begin the new Congress.

Madam Speaker, I urge a "no" vote on the rule and a "no" vote on the underlying legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I disagree with everything the gentleman just said, except his kind remarks on me being named vice chair of the Rules Committee.

I do think it is somewhat ironic he brings up redistricting. After all, it was Democrats' gerrymandering in the State of New York that led to the court throwing out their map. As a consequence of the court map, we elected more Republicans from New York than anyone thought possible, which delivered the majority.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) to speak on the rule.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, I would note that last week, for the first time in 7 years, we were able to offer amendments on the floor of this body with a modified open rule, and for the first time in 10 years, we were able to amend a bill other than an appropriations measure.

I believe the gentleman doth protest too much. The bills we are talking about here are one page each, and one is six pages. We have had these bills out there for 72 hours. They have been publicly available.

When the gentleman asks why we are doing this so quickly, I will tell you why. Because I am not going to look at another nurse, another doctor, another healthcare practitioner in my district who is begging to go do his or her job, to go care for the American people that they want to take care of, and have to look at them and say: You can't do it because the Federal Government is telling you that you can't, without any basis in science, without any basis rooted in any defense whatsoever.

Keep this in mind:

The OSHA mandate put forward by this President: Struck down by SCOTUS.

The Federal employee mandate: Enjoined by the Fifth Circuit.

Federal contractor mandate: Enjoined by Federal courts.

Head Start mandate: Enjoined by Federal courts.

The CMS mandate remaining in effect is making it impossible for some of the men and women who want to serve their constituents and take care of them to be able to do so.

Let's just keep in mind what we are operating under, something that dates back to September 2021, keeping in mind what Dr. Walensky, the CDC Director, said in August 2021: "What they can't do anymore is prevent transmission," "they" being the vaccines.

The CDC's own website right now says that the vaccine does nothing for transmission, zero. Yet, that was the whole basis for the vaccine mandates, the whole reason given. To have the power of the Federal Government unconstitutionally and wrongly stepping into the purview of American people wanting to carry out their livelihoods, and you have to look them in the eye—you being us, broadly—look them in the eye and say: Sorry, you can't do your job. You can't do your job because some bureaucrats in Washington said so.

Now, the President of the United States, lo and behold, says: Oh, the groundhog has come out, and now, on May 11, suddenly, we can go ahead and end these emergencies. We can go ahead and end the public health emergencies, end the national emergencies so that we can move on, on May 11, the magic date that the groundhog has doth spoken.

Right now, the American people are dying for us to actually stop the madness out of this town interfering with their lives, and the Republican Party, the majority in the House, is now doing that.

With all due respect to the ranking member on the Rules Committee, this rule is allowing for us to bring forward four very simple measures. They don't need a whole lot of going back and forth in debate and discussion. They are four simple measures. We debated them last night. They have been put forward. They are one-page bills. The American people understand what those bills say, that these emergencies need to end.

Let me be clear: I am an equal opportunity basher of national emergencies that have been in existence for too long that shouldn't be here. I introduced legislation when President Trump was President, saying that we should end 40 years of national emergencies, the ARTICLE ONE Act Senator MIKE LEE and I introduced.

I invite my Democratic colleagues to just jump across the aisle. Let's work together to end 40-year-old national emergencies because we have no business carrying out business under emergency.

Why aren't we praising and applauding the end of the emergencies? Why aren't we saying this is a great day in America that we can move forward?

One last point on the efficacy of the vaccines. There are enormous questions that have been raised about the vaccines. There are Americans that are around this country that are saying: I don't want to have something put into my arm through the force of government mandate.

Why are we stepping over that for a vaccine that has been admitted by our own CDC Director, by the CDC, by the NIH, to do nothing to stop transmission?

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle do not want to address that. They want to hide behind "the science." They want to say Congress has no role to step over into the executive branch and say, wait a minute, on behalf of the American people, enough. But today, the Republican majority is saying enough.

Madam Speaker, we should support this rule.

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

There is a lot to unpack here, but let me just tell the gentleman on the issue of national emergencies—by the way, I will add war powers—we did a hearing in the Rules Committee on that in the last Congress. I did it with now-Chairman COLE. We thought that it was appropriate to do a hearing because we wanted to avoid any unintended consequences. So, we have done that.

It is now becoming very clear to me how this Congress is going to operate in the Rules Committee. The gentleman just made it clear that everything should go through regular order except what he thinks is important. If he thinks it is important, we can come here with a closed rule.

□ 1245

Then I am a little confused over the gentleman's pontificating on the fact these are only one-page bills and, therefore, they shouldn't be amended. I point out that the bill that they had the modified open rule on was a three-page bill, but is the number of pages of the bill going to be determinative of whether or not we have amendments or not?

The bottom line is people had some good ideas that they offered to the

Rules Committee last night. Not only that, but people also had a lot of questions. If you read the President's Statement of Administration Policy, he raises issues about title 42 that we seem to have a dispute on, but, boy, if you did a hearing and you did a markup, you might have been able to address those things.

I'm not saying we are moving too quickly. I am just saying we are not moving responsibly. Once your committees are constituted, you can have a hearing immediately. You can bring this to the floor next Monday or Tuesday if you want; but you chose to shut the system down.

Notwithstanding all of your rhetoric, not notwithstanding all of the pontificating on the need for more amendments to be made in order, a more open process, a more transparent process, you are beginning this session with closed rule after closed rule after closed rule.

Last night, the Committee on Rules reported out four more closed rules. That is the choice you have made. We have a sense of where you are going. The last time you were in charge, you presided over the most closed Congress in the history of the United States Government. I wouldn't be surprised if you beat your own record.

Madam Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to ensure that none of the bills in this rule take effect unless it is certified that they do not decrease Social Security benefits.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment into the RECORD along with any extraneous material immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, Social Security is the bedrock of our Nation's social safety net. Since its inception, it has lifted millions of our seniors out of poverty. Protecting the benefits it provides should be a priority for this Congress.

As my Republican colleagues demand reckless cuts in exchange for paying our Nation's bills, Democrats will continue taking action to protect Social Security. This is not the first time Social Security has been under attack by my friends on the other side of the aisle.

Don't be fooled by their phraseology that they are only interested in "protecting Social Security." We know that that is code for cutting benefits, for raising the retirement age, for throwing people off the benefit.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) to discuss our proposal.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding.

Madam Speaker, first and foremost, today should be a day of celebration.

Madam Speaker, 83 years ago today, Ida Mae Fuller received the first Social Security check. It is the Nation's number one insurance program. It is the Nation's number one antipoverty program for the elderly. It is also the Nation's number one program to help children out of poverty, as well as the number one disability program, especially for veterans and those who utilize Social Security, even more so than the VA.

Looking at this proposal today, I commend the chairman for the Committee on Rules for having come up and situated because of everything we have heard from the other side. Imagine, holding the American economy hostage so you can make cuts to Social Security and Medicare, the bedrock insurance policy for the Nation; something that impacts your brothers, your sisters, your family members, people you go to church with, people you work with on a daily basis.

You have proposed both, in your study group analysis a 21 percent across-the-board cut to Social Security. That is what has got our attention.

In the midst of all of this, and especially amidst this pandemic, this global pandemic where more than 1 million people have perished here in the United States, over 756,000 are over the age of 65.

There are 66 million Social Security recipients. They are predominantly on fixed incomes and impacted the most by this pandemic and the most by inflation. So to call for 21 percent across-the-board cuts and to hold hostage the American economy is beyond the pale.

I hope all of our citizens are aware of this. We are going to continue to make everyone around the country aware of what is going to happen and the attempt to cut Social Security and Medicare.

That is what this is about, Madam Speaker. That is why I rise on this floor today.

Madam Speaker, there are 10,000 baby boomers a day who become eligible for Social Security. And Congress has done nothing to enhance Social Security in more than 51 years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I appreciate the passion on this other side. I think this passion and engagement has to be brought forward to the Nation's number one insurance program. It is not an entitlement. It is an earned benefit, and the citizens of this country know it.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds for the purpose of response.

First off, the Speaker has been very clear that it is not negotiable. There will be no cuts to the Social Security

and Medicare. But more importantly, the only person who is cutting Medicare right now is President Biden.

Ask any doctor in this country: Has your pay been cut in the last 4 years? And they will answer resoundingly in the affirmative.

Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MASSIE), to speak on this rule, another new member of the House Committee on Rules.

Mr. MASSIE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution because it would facilitate the passage of H.R. 497, the Freedom for Health Care Workers Act.

What does that bill do? It ends the unscientific, illogical, immoral, unconstitutional, unethical, vaccine mandate on healthcare workers that is predicated on lies.

What are some of those lies? Let's start with the first one.

The first lie: The vaccine prevents spread. Who says that it doesn't prevent spread? Is this an internet conspiracy? Well, it is on the internet, but it is the CDC director, Rochelle Walensky, who said 1 year ago, "What the vaccines can't do anymore is prevent transmission."

Pfizer admitted they were not asked by regulators to assess whether their shots reduced transmission, nor did their trials measure whether the shots reduced transmission.

What is the second lie that this mandate is predicated on?

The vaccines don't cause any harm, can't cause any harm. They are safe. They are completely safe. You have nothing to worry about. No side effects. No adverse reactions.

Who disputes that? Is it an internet conspiracy? It is the CDC website. Yes, it is on the internet.

The CDC website acknowledges that the vaccines can cause myocarditis, pericarditis, blood clots, and even death.

CDC and FDA recently announced they had identified a preliminary vaccine safety signal for persons 65 and older for the bivalent vaccine, that it could increase their chance of stroke in the 21 days following vaccination with Pfizer's new bivalent vaccine.

What is the third lie that this is predicated on, this vaccine mandate for healthcare workers?

That it is scientific. That it makes sense.

How does it make sense? To require somebody to have two shots targeted at a variant of the virus that is no longer circulating; to have two shots that wear off after 8 months, two shots that were taken 2 years ago.

The CDC acknowledges that those vaccines that are mandated taken two years ago have worn off by now. Why would you mandate them?

What is the fourth lie that this vaccine mandate is predicated on?

It ignores natural immunity.

When the vaccines first came out, the CDC said that the Pfizer trial showed

that the vaccine was 92 percent efficacious for those who had already had COVID.

Guess what? It showed no such thing.

I called the CDC. They admitted to me it was wrong. They said they would fix the website.

Here we are over 2 years later, they haven't fixed that lie on their website. They know it is a lie. I have them on a recording if anybody over there wants to hear it.

Finally, who is liable for the damage that this could cause? Nobody is liable.

We are living under medical malpractice martial law right now under the PREP Act in the EUAs.

Madam Speaker, let me close with this: This vaccine mandate affects nurses; 85 percent of nurses are female.

Joe Biden's COVID vaccine mandate for healthcare workers have forced many from the workplace. Many of them quit nursing as a career, retired early, or didn't pursue it as a degree.

This is the epitome of hypocrisy. Nobody in this room was mandated to take a vaccine, and we are voting on whether we are going to force people who want to take care of people, whether they have to take the vaccine.

End the hypocrisy. None of us were mandated. None of the staff in this room were mandated to take this vaccine. End it now. Support this rule.

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

Madam Speaker, oh my God. There are doctors who serve in Congress—Democrats and Republicans. I hope that they will stand up and correct the misinformation. I mean, really.

The gentleman talks about herd immunity as if somehow that was some panacea here.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from Harvard Medical School titled, "COVID-19 diagnosis raises risks of heart attack, stroke."

[From Harvard Health Publishing, Nov. 1, 2021]

COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS RAISES RISK OF HEART ATTACK, STROKE

(By Julie Corliss)

In one of the largest studies of its kind to date, researchers found strong evidence that heart attack and stroke risk rises sharply in the weeks following a COVID-19 diagnosis. The findings were published Aug. 14, 2021, in *The Lancet*.

The study included every person in Sweden diagnosed with COVID-19 from Feb. 1, 2020, to Sept. 14, 2020—a total of nearly 87,000 people. Their median age was 48, and 57 percent were women. Researchers compared them with more than 348,000 Swedish people of similar age and sex who did not have the virus.

In the week after a COVID-19 diagnosis, the risk of a first heart attack increased by three to eight times. The risk of a first stroke caused by a blood clot multiplied by three to six times. In the following weeks, both risks decreased steadily but stayed elevated for at least a month.

Other bacterial and viral infections (such as influenza) are known to temporarily boost rates of heart attacks and strokes. But COVID-19 infections appear to be especially

risky, perhaps because they trigger an exaggerated inflammatory response that makes blood clots more likely.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, a study found that in the week after a COVID diagnosis, the risk of a first heart attack increased by three to eight times. The risk of a first stroke caused by a blood clot multiplied by three to six times. In the following weeks, both risks decreased steadily but stayed elevated for at least a month.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD a USA Today piece titled, "Fact check: COVID-19 vaccines primarily designed to prevent serious illness, death."

[From the USA TODAY, Jan. 21, 2022]

FACT CHECK: COVID-19 VACCINES PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO PREVENT SERIOUS ILLNESS, DEATH

(By Valerie Paviionis)

As the omicron variant surges across the world and the United States logs case numbers near and over 1 million per day, the virus is prompting scientists to develop new treatments and government officials to fight to curb the spread.

While the Biden administration continues to urge Americans to get vaccinated, a Jan. 10 Facebook post claims that Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said vaccines can't prevent COVID-19 transmission. Other sites have shared the same claim, linking Walensky's words back to an interview with CNN in August 2021.

"Our vaccines are working exceptionally well," Walensky said to CNN's Wolf Blitzer in the interview. "They continue to work well for delta, with regard to severe illness and death—they prevent it. But what they can't do anymore is prevent transmission."

Though Walensky did say these words on CNN, the original interview was aired in early August, not recently. And while it's true vaccines can't entirely halt transmission, experts say they do reduce it—and reduce the chances of hospitalization and death—as USA TODAY previously reported.

USA TODAY reached out to the original poster of the claim for comment.

Various websites have written about the same claim, amassing thousands of interactions on Facebook.

VACCINE EFFECTS DEPEND ON SEVERAL FACTORS

In an email, Walensky spokesperson Kathleen Conley wrote that in August 2021—when the interview originally ran—the delta variant was the dominant variant in the United States.

Experts at that time said it was clear the vaccines provided protection.

"Vaccines provide significant protection from 'getting it'—infection—and 'spreading it'—transmission—even against the delta variant," a professor of immunobiology and molecular, cellular and developmental biology at Yale University, told USA TODAY in November.

However, Conley noted data did show vaccines were "less effective at preventing infections and transmission with Delta than with previous other variants." Omicron has proven even more difficult to contain.

While mRNA vaccines—produced by Pfizer and Moderna—continue to offer some level of protection against transmission of omicron, other vaccines—such as Johnson & Johnson, Sinopharm and AstraZeneca—offer "almost no defense," according to a Dec. 19, 2021, report by the New York Times.

Other factors beyond variant type, vaccination type and booster status can also influence whether or not a person contracts COVID-19.

Dr. David Dowdy, associate professor of epidemiology at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, said it's difficult to succinctly explain the vaccines' nuanced effects on transmission.

A vaccine might protect you from a passing interaction with someone at a grocery store, but it may not prevent infection from someone you live with and share air with for several hours a day.

"It gets very easy to misconstrue," Dowdy said. "If someone asks, do vaccines prevent infection, and you have to give a yes or no answer, then the answer is no, they're not a perfect blockade. But do the vaccines offer some protection against infection? The answer is yes."

VACCINES STILL PROTECT AGAINST SERIOUS DISEASE

While vaccinations don't offer perfect protection against the transmission of COVID-19, experts still urge people to get vaccinated.

According to Conley, COVID-19 vaccination remains effective against hospitalization and death caused by the virus. Getting a booster, she added, further decreases these risks, and the CDC continues to recommend that Americans receive vaccines and boosters.

Dr. Chris Beyrer, professor of public health and human rights at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, said both the mRNA and J&J vaccines were never designed to prevent infection entirely.

It's "very hard", he said, to prevent infection via an injected vaccine when you're dealing with a virus that enters the body through the nose and mouth. Instead, the vaccine trials were designed to study reduction in serious illness, hospitalization and death. All three vaccines were highly effective by this measure, Beyrer said.

"People who say, well, why would I take it if it doesn't prevent me from getting infected?" Beyrer said. "You have to remember that having a COVID-19 infection can be everything from completely asymptomatic . . . to a head-cold-like symptoms or full flu-like symptoms, all the way to death. So what the vaccines are doing is really dramatically increasing the likelihood that you will have mild infection. And that's incredibly important."

A CDC study released Jan. 21 showed booster shots of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines were 90% effective at preventing hospitalizations from the omicron variant.

OUR RATING: MISSING CONTEXT

Because it can be misleading without additional information, we rate MISSING CONTEXT the claim that the CDC director says vaccines can't prevent transmission of COVID-19. While vaccines do not offer 100% protection against COVID-19 infection, they can still partially defend against infection. Vaccines remain effective at protecting from COVID-19-caused serious illness, hospitalization and death.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I would highlight one of the quotes that I guess the gentleman was referring to.

"Though Walensky did say these words on CNN, the original interview was aired in early August, not recently. And while it is true vaccines cannot entirely halt transmission, experts say they do reduce it—and reduce the chances of hospitalizations and death."

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD a study by the Commonwealth

Fund titled, “Two years of U.S. COVID-19 Vaccines Have Prevented Millions of Hospitalizations and Deaths.”

[The Commonwealth Fund, Dec. 13, 2022]

TWO YEARS OF U.S. COVID-19 VACCINES HAVE PREVENTED MILLIONS OF HOSPITALIZATIONS AND DEATHS

(By Meagan C. Fitzpatrick, Seyed M. Moghadas, Abhishek Pandey, and Alison P. Galvani)

It has been two years since the first COVID-19 vaccine was given to a patient in the United States. Since then, the U.S. has administered more than 655 million doses—80 percent of the population has received at least one dose—with the cumulative effect of preventing more than 18 million additional hospitalizations and more than 3 million additional deaths. The swift development of the vaccine, emergency authorization to distribute widely, and rapid rollout have been instrumental in curbing hospitalization and death, while mitigating socioeconomic repercussions of the pandemic.

As more transmissible and immune-evasive variants have emerged over the past two years, the U.S. has responded by deploying additional doses and variant-specific boosters. The Omicron variants caused the largest wave of infections during the pandemic. COVID-19 monovalent vaccines available at the time were not as efficacious against the variant as bivalent boosters introduced later, but the wave would have been more devastating in the absence of vaccination.

As we mark the second anniversary of the U.S. COVID-19 vaccination campaign, understanding the impact of vaccines on reducing disease burden is needed to inform future, evidence-based actions. We therefore used a computer model of disease transmission to estimate hospitalizations and deaths averted through the end of November 2022. The model incorporates the age-stratified demographics, risk factors, and immunological dynamics of infection and vaccination. We simulated this model to compare the observed pandemic trajectory to a counterfactual scenario without a vaccination program.

FINDINGS

From December 2020 through November 2022, we estimate that the COVID-19 vaccination program in the U.S. prevented more than 18.5 million additional hospitalizations and 3.2 million additional deaths. Without vaccination, there would have been nearly 120 million more COVID-19 infections. The vaccination program also saved the U.S. \$1.15 trillion (Credible Interval: \$1.10 trillion–\$1.19 trillion) (data not shown) in medical costs that would otherwise have been incurred.

DISCUSSION

Our findings highlight the substantial impact of the U.S. vaccination program on reducing infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. Curbing hospitalization rates by reducing both COVID-19 incidence and symptom severity is particularly important amidst the strain on the health care system caused by unusually high levels of flu and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus). COVID-19 vaccination has preserved hospital resources for individuals who would otherwise have not received timely care.

Vaccination also has prevented many millions of COVID infections. Although the acute phase of these infections may not have required medical attention, each infection carries a risk of long COVID and debilitating symptoms. Many of the prevented infections would have been reinfections, which have higher risk of death compared to initial infections. In addition, as our previous anal-

ysis demonstrated, vaccines have kept children in school, highlighting the societal value of the ongoing vaccination program.

The estimated infections, hospitalizations, and deaths averted by vaccination are particularly striking when compared to the actual values observed during this time period. Since December 12, 2020, 82 million infections, 4.8 million hospitalizations, and 798,000 deaths have been reported in the U.S. In other words, without vaccination the U.S. would have experienced 1.5 times more infections, 3.8 times more hospitalizations, and 4.1 times more deaths. These losses would have been accompanied by more than \$1 trillion in additional medical costs that were averted because of fewer infections, hospitalizations, and deaths.

The impact of the vaccination program is more remarkable given the challenges posed by the multiple variants that have arisen. The Omicron variants have been particularly immune-evasive and drove the largest surge in COVID-19 cases to date. However, the vaccines provided broader and more durable protection against severe clinical outcomes, including hospitalization and death. The reported “mild” nature of Omicron is in large part because of vaccine protection.

A limitation of our study is that we modeled only viral dynamics within the U.S. However, vaccines developed by the U.S. were also deployed around the world, changing the trajectory of the pandemic on a global scale. Without them, more variants could have emerged or there could have been greater importation of COVID-19 cases. In this regard, our study underestimates the true impact of COVID-19 vaccine development on U.S. outcomes.

The unprecedented pace at which vaccines were developed and deployed has saved many lives and allowed for safer easing of COVID-19 restrictions and reopening of businesses, schools, and other activities. This extraordinary achievement has been possible only through sustained funding and effective policymaking that ensured vaccines were available to all Americans. Moving forward, accelerating uptake of the new booster will be fundamental to averting future hospitalizations and deaths.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, we have lost over 1 million of our fellow citizens to COVID, over 1 million in the United States alone; mothers, fathers, siblings, friends, and children, as well.

But the development of safe vaccines has meant that millions more lives have been saved. There is no question whether or not the vaccination is effective.

Madam Speaker, I would just highlight one of the findings in The Commonwealth Fund report.

It says, “From December 2020 through November 2022, we estimate that the COVID-19 vaccination program in the United States prevented more than 18.5 million additional hospitalizations and 3.2 million additional deaths. Without vaccination, there would have been nearly 120 million more COVID-19 infections. The vaccination program also saved the U.S. \$1.15 trillion in medical costs that would otherwise have been incurred.”

Here we are, after having gone through what we went through, after knowing the benefits of these vaccinations, and to hear what we are hearing on the floor, it really is disappointing.

Madam Speaker, I would ask the doctors in this Chamber, Democrats and

Republicans, please stand up. Please correct the RECORD. Please tell people that vaccinations have been a good thing and that people should get vaccinated. They could save their lives.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1300

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR) to speak on the rule.

Mr. GOSAR. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of my own bill, H.J. Res. 7, terminating the COVID national emergency declaration.

It is the same bill text that I sponsored in the 117th Congress and the same bill text that passed the Senate twice last year, most recently in November with the bipartisan support of all Republican Senators and 12 Democratic Senators.

Emergency powers were created to give the executive branch flexibility to respond to a range of crises facing the United States, and the National Emergencies Act was passed in 1974 to rein in the Presidential emergency powers that are activated when a formal emergency is declared.

As I have said before, good process builds good policies builds good politics. So, let's look at the timeline. On March 13, 2020, President Trump rightfully declared a national emergency concerning COVID-19. Mr. Biden has since abused Presidential authorities by repeatedly extending pandemic powers beyond their timeline and scope.

Section 202 of the National Emergencies Act requires Congress to review termination of all national emergencies, stating that 6 months after declaration, and every 6 months after the emergency continues, Congress must—must—meet to consider a resolution of termination.

Sadly, rather than debate and vote on terminating the emergency declaration, the former Speaker changed the rules of the entire House of Representatives and handicapped Congress' ability to perform its most basic constitutional duty: check the powers of the executive branch and the power of the purse.

As a result, Mr. Biden continues to extend the COVID national emergency into perpetuity. Until now, there has been zero oversight from the House, even though Federal law requires congressional review.

By now, and by any measure, the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States has ended, but Biden has dubiously continued to extend his pandemic power. Why? Under the continued COVID national emergency extension, more than 120 special statutory powers only meant for times of actual emergency continue to be available to Mr. Biden, including the power to draft Americans without consent, barricade the United States Capitol, place the Public Health Service under military control, and, yes, even move money around.

Biden's unwillingness to let go of the temporary pandemic powers is tyranny, and the former Speaker is complicit.

Thankfully, with our new Republican majority and restored House rules, Members of Congress and millions of Americans that they represent are finally able to weigh in on their concerns with continued pandemic powers.

The COVID pandemic emergency in the U.S. has ended, and most Americans have returned to prepandemic normalcy. Biden himself stated: "The pandemic is over."

So, why does Biden continue to extend the COVID national emergency? The answer is simple: To force Americans to live under extreme measures that deprive us of our freedoms.

It is sad to hear the other side talk about all this lack of tyranny and not following the rules. We were forbidden to do our job.

The National Emergencies Act requires, demands, that Congress, every 6 months, look at this national emergency and decide whether to go up or down. That is all it did.

In the 2 years since he has been President, we have done neither. It is high time that we answer that call and do our job. At least the Senate has done it twice.

I think we need to get back to getting back the power of the purse and holding this administration accountable. Time is up. I ask that everybody vote for these bills.

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

I include in the RECORD a piece from the New York Post titled: "GOP unveils 'Commitment to America' plan to halt Biden, inflation, and crime."

[From the New York Post, Sept. 23, 2022]

GOP UNVEILS 'COMMITMENT TO AMERICA' PLAN TO HALT BIDEN, INFLATION AND CRIME
(By Steve Nelson)

House Republicans pledged Friday to end soaring inflation and reduce crime by serving as a check on President Biden if they reclaim power—calling the party's midterm election platform a "Commitment to America."

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) announced the big-tent framework inside an HVAC manufacturing plant outside Pittsburgh, Pa.

"We want to roll [the plan] out to you, to the entire country, to know exactly what we will do if you would trust us and give us the ability to take a new direction for this country," McCarthy said.

The kickoff featured a business-casual Q&A where dozens of GOP legislators took turns fielding questions.

The Republicans vowed to rein in government spending to lower the worst inflation in 41 years—with consumer prices up 8.3 percent over 12 months as of August.

Speakers also promised to address crime, including record-high illegal immigration, rising violent crime in cities and fentanyl smuggling that's accelerated overdose deaths.

"The sad part is these Democratic policies have already taken one month of your wages. So now the struggle that you have is you're living through 12 months with only 11

months' pay now because inflation is so high," McCarthy said, blasting Biden's \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan spending bill.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy unveiled the Republican "Commitment to America" agenda at DMI Companies in Monongahela, Pennsylvania.

"We've watched what's happened to our border—the millions of people who are just walking across, people on the terrorist watch list. Now we're watching it create every community to be a border community," McCarthy said.

"Fentanyl is the number one killer of Americans between the ages of 18 and 45. The poison starts in China and comes across our border. Do you realize it's killing 300 Americans every day? It's like an airliner crashing each day."

No. 3 House Republican Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York said the GOP would be "making sure that we stop the trillions and trillions of reckless government spending that we have seen under Democrat rule."

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy vowed to stop President Biden's spending policies if Republicans take the House this fall.

"That will immediately help lower the cost of goods as we seek to rein in inflation," she said at the event.

Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-NC) said, "We have to have oversight of what's happening in the administration and go after the wasteful spending of the last administration and return to normalcy—that \$1 today means \$1 tomorrow."

Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-Ohio) said Republicans would declare fentanyl a weapon of mass destruction. "That's what this is. It fits the categories completely. And we're going to declare it as that and use every resource we possibly can," he said.

Rep. Jim Jordan promised Republicans will nix President Biden's plan on hiring more IRS agents over the next decade.

Rep. Guy Reschenthaler (R-Pa.) said that unlike Democrats under House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), "we're not going to have this top-down leadership."

"Kevin McCarthy is going to rely on all of us to have bottom-up leadership that comes from the districts," he said. "We got members here from New York all the way to the border with Tony Gonzales. We got people that have different approaches—all the way from David Joyce to Marjorie Taylor Greene. But we're all united behind Kevin McCarthy."

Republican speakers vowed various oversight efforts focused on the Biden administration and hearings on the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

House Minority Whip Steve Scalise said more hearings will be held on border security.

House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) said, "We were calling for hearings for over a year on the origin of COVID. Shouldn't we know that? I mean, this is a basic question. Millions of people across the globe died."

Scalise said there would be many hearings on border security too after more than 2 million people illegally crossed the southwest border in fiscal 2022.

"We will give [Homeland Security] Secretary [Alejandro] Mayorkas a reserved parking spot, he will be testifying so much about this," Scalise said.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene claimed she will follow the Republicans' new agenda.

Speakers did not specifically mention expected investigations of Biden's links to his son Hunter Biden and brother Jim Biden's multimillion-dollar influence-peddling businesses in China, Ukraine and other countries.

Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) said the Republicans decided their first bill will seek to

nullify an IRS crackdown recently authorized by Democrats to fund an environmental and health care spending bill. He also mentioned oversight of allegedly biased Justice Department actions.

"We're gonna look into this weaponization of the DOJ against the American people . . . not to mention the border. But specifically to the COVID issue . . . they told us so many things that turned out not to be accurate," Jordan said.

"They told us this thing [COVID] . . . didn't come from a lab. Sure it looks like it did," he added. "But they want us to believe, 'No, no, no, it was a bat to a pangolin to Joe Rogan.'"

"We are committed to doing the investigations that need to be done," Jordan said.

The "Commitment to America" organizes various pledges under four broad categories: the economy, safety, freedom and accountability. The outline is an attempt to harness the historical success of former House Speaker Newt Gingrich's 1994 "Contract with America," which propelled GOP gains during President Bill Clinton's first term.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, Republicans promised that as soon as they were in the majority, they would immediately move to address inflation. Well, we are a month into the 118th Congress with zero action to lower costs for families.

My question is, what happened? Why have Republicans spent all of January on messaging bills and trying to get their house in order?

I know it was a tumultuous week to try to elect a Speaker. We made history—4 days and 15 votes. Unprecedented.

Nonetheless, what happened to focusing on issues that were first and foremost on people's minds? Instead, we had abortion bans, and now we are dealing with this. I think we are dealing with a bill on socialism later today. I don't know what the heck prompted that.

In any event, I mean, really? Is that what my Republican friends think the American people want?

Again, I am going to just say that I am urging my colleagues to vote "no" on the previous question so that we can have a vote on my proposal, basically, which says that Social Security benefits must be protected, that there is nothing in any of these bills or any bills going forward that would in any way negatively impact Social Security. Protecting the benefits that Social Security provides should be a priority for this Congress.

Quite frankly, none of us are comforted by any of the words that the Speaker has said. We don't know what is in the secret memo. I don't know what was promised on Social Security.

When Republicans say things like they want to protect the integrity of the program, that is code for they want to cut it. That is code for they want to raise the retirement age. That is code for all the things that our constituents, not just Democrats, but Independents and Republicans, fear might be coming down the road.

They are trying to use Social Security. They are trying to hold it hostage as part of this effort to get some sort of a deal on the debt ceiling.

They are basically holding this economy hostage. The good faith and credit of the United States, they are holding it hostage, ready to just throw it into the wind until they get these cuts in programs that help people.

Again, before I yield back at this point and let the gentleman continue with any speakers he has, I would say that the measures that we are dealing with today are concerning to us because there is a right way to wind down and a wrong way to wind down.

What we suggested last night in the Rules Committee as the right way to do this, and you can do it quickly, is to do hearings and make sure there are no unintended consequences, make sure there aren't vulnerable people who could be adversely impacted by your quick change of the rules. The majority would have none of it.

So, again, this isn't a serious effort. This is about messaging, and it is really disappointing.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 7½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. McCORMICK), a new Member elected last November, to speak on the rule.

Mr. McCORMICK. Well, sir, you asked for a physician to stand. I am a physician. I am an emergency medicine physician who served during the entire COVID pandemic from before the pandemic began.

I am sure I was exposed to it over a thousand times with thousands of patients that I treated for COVID, some of which I intubated.

We had healthcare workers who had decades of experience exposed over and over again before there even was a vaccination. People went home sick. They had fevers.

It may surprise you that I was never tested for COVID. Not in the entire career that I have had as an emergency physician have I ever been tested for COVID.

I came to work time and time again, putting my life on the line. I lost friends. I watched people put their lives on the line and come to work when everybody else got to call in or stay home based on congressional mandates or congressional exceptions because we were essential, because we understand our profession.

We understand how important it is to public service, to save lives, to learn and to continue to grow, to have the debate over what would and would not work for patients, and we evolved.

It wasn't just one size fits all for medicine. People are not treated the same because people are different. Different exposures require different treatments.

Once you have had the disease, you develop an immunity. If you have im-

munity, and you are exposed to a vaccination within a certain time, you can have a hyperimmune response that can be harmful.

This is not taken into account by congressional people who do not understand medicine, who have not been to medical school, who have not had a residency, who have not had decades of experience either as a doctor, a nurse, a mid-level, or some other healthcare professional who understands healthcare far more than anybody who sits in these seats, who have never treated one patient or read one book or had one test concerning the outcome of a patient. They have never held the hand of a patient who is dying.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. McCORMICK. So, I would challenge you, sir, to consider a healthcare professional, when they get to determine their own fate as they continue to put their lives on the line to serve the very people that we are supposed to be serving here in Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

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

I appreciate the gentleman's response, but I am not sure who he is responding to.

The question I asked was for physicians to come down here and to make it clear, contrary to what was said before, that these vaccines are not dangerous, that people should get vaccinated, that it could save lives.

People are still dying of COVID, by the way, and the idea that somehow we should be discouraging people from getting vaccinations by scaring them doesn't make a lot of sense to me. In fact, I think it is irresponsible.

I appreciate the gentleman's service to his patients, and I hope that he understands now his service is to the American people and that service includes getting out the truth and what is accurate and what is not accurate about these vaccinations.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 4½ minutes remaining.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, our side isn't afraid to embrace change. We know that living in the 21st century means that we can and should use technology to improve Americans' quality of life.

We know that vaccines save lives, and we know that science is real. We

know that ending these emergencies immediately is irresponsible.

Most importantly, we know that we are here to make progress, not to go backward, which is what the four measures this rule includes would do.

Again, let me say none of these bills went through committee. They could have, but none of them did.

Madam Speaker, 94 percent of the rules this Congress has dealt with have been completely closed. That is 15 out of 16 measures with no hearings, no amendments, no markups.

Is this what Speaker MCCARTHY promised you in his secret memo, that this is the way you will conduct business?

On top of all that, we are deeply concerned that a small minority on the other side of the aisle representing the most extreme elements of the Republican Conference is calling the shots.

We are worried about Social Security, and we are worried about Medicare. That is why we are asking people to vote "no" on the previous question, because we want to be able to put in place protections so that a fringe group can't mess around with Social Security, can't take away from people what they have earned.

It is not an entitlement. It is what people have earned in this country.

Madam Speaker, I urge a "no" vote on the previous question and a strong "no" vote on this rule.

There is a right way to do this and a wrong way to do this. The majority is in control and in charge. Take the time. Do the hearings. Ask the questions. Make sure there are no unintended consequences.

This is about the health and well-being of the American people. They deserve at least a hearing rather than a messaging bill rushed to the floor.

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

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

In preparing for this debate today on the rule, I reflected on the iconic photograph of the sailor kissing his girlfriend on the streets of New York at the end of the Second World War. Think about that for a moment.

My parents were married in 1946. My wife's parents were married in 1945. The end of the Second World War, the optimism of that couple on the streets of New York, then gave rise to basically my generation, the baby boom generation.

I was thinking back to about a year ago when there was a video making the rounds on the internet of an elementary school class where the teacher said masks are no longer required and the unbridled joy of those young students as they ripped off their masks, never to have to put them on again.

We are standing on the precipice of just such a moment today, and this truly is a historic moment. It is one that the American people should look back on and say this was the time. This is the time for optimism and to, without fear, embrace the future because

we know the good things of which our country is capable.

□ 1315

Now, I do need to thank some of our fellow Members; specifically, the chairwoman of my committee, the Energy and Commerce Committee, Chairwoman RODGERS, Chairman SAM GRAVES of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and Chairman COMER of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee for their hard work in delivering for the American people by bringing these bills to the floor and helping ensure that commitment to America and the future.

The Republican majority has again demonstrated that our governing agenda will be devoted to improving the lives of our Nation's citizens. Our governing majority will continue to focus on the issues that matter most to our people: combating the rising energy costs, sky-high inflation, rampant crime, our porous southern border, and theentanyl crisis.

These are the issues that the American voters rightfully demand that their Representatives address. The Republican majority is committed to solving the crises that the previous Democratic majority has inflicted on our Nation.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 382—Pandemic is Over Act, H.R. 497—Freedom for Health Care Workers Act, H.R. 139—SHOW UP Act of 2023, and H.J. Res. 7—Relating to a national emergency declared by the President on March 13, 2020.

House Republicans have professed a commitment to transparency and fairness that allows all voices to be heard in the legislative process.

Yet, by House Republicans choosing a closed rule, have denied this body the right to weigh in on the rules or these bills.

Republicans are attempting to push through statements of principle that represent the entirety of the House without any reasonable consideration.

These bills have not been adequately considered in committee hearing by the committee of jurisdiction.

Amendments to these bills have not been raised or debated.

Now, with this closed Rule, members are unable to offer any amendments to each of these bills.

The business of the House is of the utmost importance to the American people.

Democrats remain committed to putting people over politics.

During 2020 within my District, the COVID-19 pandemic was surging and I worked desperately to bring COVID-19 testing and then vaccines to communities in need throughout my district.

At the time many Republican leaders refused to even acknowledge the reality of the pandemic.

Now the Republicans are furthering their narrative and lack of action on COVID-19 by attempting to normalize and even deny the horrors of the pandemic.

We should never forget the lives lost and all that we have learned for the pandemic.

In Harris County, over 11 thousand people have died of COVID-19 since 2020. Every one of those lives was important and we must work together to save every life possible.

Vaccines have saved lives and continue to save lives.

The issue of the pandemics' ongoing nature is a complex one that will need to consider potential seasonal surges and the need for annual vaccines.

The Republicans today barely secured a majority in the House and only chose a Speaker from their party after 14 votes. They cannot claim to have any mandate from the public.

We must continue to keep COVID-19 front of mind and create a plan of shifting to living with COVID-19 rather than these brash political statements.

I, for one, care about the safety of healthcare workers, the safety of my constituents, and the safety of workers.

The fact is that we must continue to identify the best way out of the COVID-19 pandemic with careful consideration of the science, and strategic plans that consider the uniqueness of each of the communities that we represent.

The rule before us makes bold unsubstantiated claims that threaten the safety of our healthcare workers, teleworkers, and the constituents in each of our districts.

There is a better way forward.

We must have more discussion and debate.

I cannot in good conscious support this rule.

The material previously referred to by MCGOVERN is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 75

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

That upon adoption of this resolution, it shall be in order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 7) relating to a national emergency declared by the President on March 13, 2020. All points of order against consideration of the joint resolution are waived. The amendment printed in section 5 of this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The joint resolution, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the joint resolution, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution, it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 139) to require Executive agencies to submit to Congress a study of the impacts of expanded telework and remote work by agency employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and a plan for the agency's future use of telework and remote work, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in section 5 of this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 3. Upon adoption of this resolution, it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 382) to terminate the public health emergency declared with respect to COVID-19. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in section 5 of this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 4. Upon adoption of this resolution, it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 497) to eliminate the COVID-19 vaccine mandate on health care providers furnishing items and services under certain Federal health care programs. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in section 5 of this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 5. The amendment referred to in each of the other sections of this resolution is as follows:

“At the end, add the following:

“This Act shall not be effective unless and until the date on which the Director of the Congressional Budget Office certifies that this Act will not result in a decrease to Social Security benefits.”.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1330

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BICE) at 1 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.