

The First Amendment protects freedom of religion, along with the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. This assurance of freedom gives us all the opportunity to openly practice and speak our beliefs and allows me to speak on the House floor right now.

The United States is a place where all faiths can be peacefully practiced, free from fear of persecution. The very foundation of our Nation, a place of freedom and liberty for all, was conceived by individuals in search of religious freedom.

Mr. Speaker, the United States of America will always be a beacon of light in the world, and we will always protect our fundamental, unified commitment of religious freedom.

#### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO MARGARET MARIE PETERS

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to wish one of my constituents from my hometown of Anaheim, Ms. Margaret Marie Peters, a very happy 94th birthday.

Margaret was born in the year of the Great Crash. From an early age, she wanted to learn, and her grandmother taught her how to read and write. She graduated first in her high school class, and she was the first to graduate from high school in her family.

Later, Margaret married a decorated World War II marine. Together, they raised five daughters in Anaheim. In her forties, she attended college classes. It was something she always wanted to do. Later on, Margaret spent 29 years working for Disneyland.

Margaret will turn 94 on February 2, and she has witnessed many changes in this great country. Clearly, the United States today has come a long way since 1929.

Margaret, happy birthday to you and many more.

#### NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, God created all children with unique skills and talents. We should encourage flexibility in learning to allow each student's gifts to flourish so they can live the American Dream.

On this National School Choice Week, we must empower America's families to have a voice, enabling them to choose a learning environment that is just right for their children, one that will both challenge that student and encourage them to develop their God-given talents.

Sadly, our schoolchildren are facing years' worth of learning and development loss, which is why education freedom today is so important.

According to polling done by the American Federation for Children, 72 percent of voters polled support school choice, highlighting broad bipartisan support on this issue. A ZIP code should never determine a child's future.

As a member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, I am committed to advancing the cause of school choice this Congress. I call on my colleagues on both sides to join me and to do the same.

#### ON BEHALF OF FOOD INSECURE CHILDREN

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

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of every American child who is going to bed tonight hungry. I rise on behalf of the food insecure child and the meal insecure child. Pandemic-era lunch programs have expired, and that number is now 10 million. That is more than the entire populations of New York City, Washington, D.C., and Detroit combined.

I was meeting with the school administrators of Farmington Hills, and they were telling me 40 percent of our children are food insecure. This is impacting Oakland County, Michigan.

We have a bill to address this, as we did last term in the Congress, the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act. Let's get this passed. Let's work together.

My colleagues are talking about school choice. Let's make sure that when students go to school, they have lunch guaranteed.

#### OPPOSING NEW YORK'S CONGESTION PRICING TAX

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

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to oppose New York State's disastrous congestion pricing tax, which is nothing more than a tax grab hurting middle-class and working-class families in my district, especially those first responders who are forced to commute into New York City by car. It would cost them an additional \$5,000 a year to commute to work, \$23 a day, just to get into Midtown Manhattan.

Rockland County, where I live, faces a \$40 million value gap. We pay \$40 million more in taxes to the MTA system than services we receive. We have no one-seat ride option from Rockland County, and express rail service has been cut. In Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess Counties, commuters have received a 10 percent cut in express rail service.

Many folks choose not to take the subway anymore because of the rise in crime. Violent felonies are up over 40 percent on the subways in New York City.

That is why I joined Congressman GOTTHEIMER from New Jersey in co-sponsoring the Anti-Congestion Tax Act. We will hold the MTA accountable and end this program, stopping it dead in its tracks.

#### CHAMPIONING THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

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

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to champion the American economy and to voice my support for American workers and businesses.

I have just returned from a busy district work period back in west Michigan, where I saw firsthand the need for a champion on economic revitalization.

The district I represent has long been known for manufacturing and industry. Many global companies started right in west Michigan out of garages and storefronts, driven by their local communities and supported by their representatives in government, but we all see firsthand the difficult economic times that are taking their toll on our communities and across the United States. Just last year, my district alone lost dozens of small businesses.

This is unacceptable, and it is why I am committed to moving the American economy forward in Congress. It is so important that we, both Republicans and Democrats, support American industry and our economy. It is not only the right thing to do; it is what our constituents expect us to do.

We have so much in common here, and I believe that both parties can come together and support American ingenuity and innovation. Let's get to work.

#### DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF ROE V. WADE

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

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, the consequences of Roe have been nothing short of devastating. Reporting data indicates that nearly 64 million souls have perished since the fateful decision in 1973.

I want to take this 50th anniversary, a dark moment in our history, and turn it into an opportunity to remind my fellow Americans of the gift of life, a gift that I have been so blessed and fortunate to witness.

My greatest joy has been the birth of my two children, Madeline and Oliver. In October, we welcomed our son, Oliver Theodore, who was a month early after my wife, Erin, had a very debilitating and uncertain pregnancy.

As we spent time in the NICU, we were blessed that our little boy got stronger every single day. He is now very healthy. We also saw those parents in the NICU that were praying for their babies' survival after deliveries at 23 weeks.