Then, over the course of just a few catastrophic weeks, our government took a wrecking ball to it all. In the second quarter, GDP plunged by one-third, the worst decline in productivity ever recorded. Unemployment skyrocketed to its highest levels since the Great Depression. Tens of millions of Americans lost their jobs. Trillions of dollars of the Nation's wealth were squandered.

In the months since, our children have been robbed of a year of their education. Millions of Americans have been forbidden from earning a living by their own government. Shopkeepers have seen their life's work destroyed, and when in desperation they try to hold on, they are led away in handcuffs.

Our most cherished rights to worship freely; to peaceably assemble; and not to be deprived of our lives, liberty, or property without due process of law have all been destroyed.

Now, COVID did not cause this damage. Public officials did. They promised us it was for our own good and that it would save lives. But mounting evidence in multiple scientific studies is putting the lie to these sophistries. It is becoming increasingly, tragically, and bitterly clear that the lockdowns have not only failed to save lives, but they are costing lives.

Last month, the University of Denmark released the results of a study comparing Danish municipalities that locked down with those that did not. Their conclusion: The lockdowns had ''statistically insignificant effects.''

Their conclusion mirrored a similar study out of Stanford University that compared eight lockdown nations and two non-lockdown nations. They concluded: ''We fail to find an additional benefit of stay-at-home orders and business closures.''

Now, these are studies based not on assumptions and models but on actual, real-life, hardcore data. That is what the science is telling us, and it is telling us the same thing for multiple studies: The lockdowns have not saved lives, certainly not to any statistically significant level.

But it gets worse, much worse. We are now seeing mounting evidence that the lockdowns are costing lives on a staggering scale. Last month, the National Bureau of Economic Research warned that increases in poverty caused by the lockdowns will cost more than 800,000 American lives over the next 15 years due to higher poverty levels, with the deaths disproportionately affecting African Americans and women. That comports with a U.N. warning that tens of millions of people worldwide are being pushed to the brink of starvation.

Suicide rates have jumped dramatically over the past year. Dementia deaths between March and September jumped 13,000 as patients were left with little means of social interaction. San Francisco reported that additional deaths from drug overdoses exceeded the total COVID deaths in 2020.

According to The Wall Street Journal, the CDC reported 475,000 excess deaths in the United States at a time when it was reporting 281,000 COVID-related fatalities. Now, that difference is 192,000 additional deaths unexplained by normal mortality and COVID combined.

Could it be this is the butcher's bill from a folly that has produced skyrocketing suicides, drug and alcohol deaths, domestic homicides, isolation-related deaths, delayed health screenings, delayed health treatments, and poverty-related deaths?

Unlike COVID, which is a curse brought us by nature, lockdown deaths are the fault of specific individuals in positions of public trust who imposed draconian restrictions out of panic, fear, ignorance, or egotism. They preened and virtue-signaled and boasted how much they cared for the lives of others while they have pursued a folly that is needlessly taking an appalling toll of lives and livelihoods.

Some of those responsible hold power by virtue of appointments by elected officials while others are elected officials themselves, and I fear this nightmare will not end until the officials who are responsible for it are removed from the offices they hold.

HONORING ALBERT HALE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of former Navajo Nation President Albert Hale, who lost his battle with COVID this week.

Years ago, Albert and I served together in the Arizona House of Representatives, working on water issues and fighting to uphold Tribal sovereignty. As the second elected president of the Navajo Nation, Albert Hale taught me so much about the Dine people, their culture, and their long-overlooked struggles.

In this body, we are no strangers to the suffering the Navajo Nation has endured throughout the course of this pandemic—and still is. Forced to wait months for CARES Act funding to arrive, Navajo families were often at the epicenter of this global pandemic, several times experiencing the highest per capita infection rates in the world.

As a Congress, we must, once and for all, commit ourselves to discontinuing the shelving of Native American issues and concerns. I know that is what Albert Hale would have said.

We must wholeheartedly devote our efforts to serving all Americans equitably and come together reinvigorated to pass legislation to meet our obligations.

Today, I think of Albert's passing with a heavy heart for many reasons. I am saddened to lose his friendship and guidance, his smile, his sense of humor, and his sense of caring for his fellow Navajo and American people. And I am frustrated to see yet again that the community he fought to uplift continues to be left behind. Too many Dine mothers, grandfathers, neighbors, and friends have fallen to this deadly disease.

Since coming to Congress in 2017, I have strived to bring the voices of all 12 sovereign Tribal nations in our district to the discussion table in Washington. Today, I recommit myself to fighting for their needs and honoring their unique stories, as Albert Hale did during his time with us.

My thoughts are with the Hale family and the entire Navajo Nation as we mourn Albert's passing. His work, his light, and his mission will not be forgotten.

And I can't stand here today and not say that one of my last conversations with Albert was about COVID.

I am so sad that he and many other people who have died from this dreaded disease have not been able to be with their loved ones as they have passed away, or their friends. I am saddened that I didn't know at that time that Albert would have been stricken with this terrible virus. But we do know Albert would say to us, Please continue to fight the fight for the American people.

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CONGRATULATING DR. KARLA SAPP

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate a devoted advocate in my district, Dr. Karla Sapp, who was named the 2020 Mental Health Advocate of the Year by the Black Mental Health Symposium.

Dr. Sapp has worked tirelessly to decrease the stigma of mental illness, increase access to care, and improve the wellness of the individuals in her community.

A native of Midway, Georgia, Dr. Sapp previously served with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. For the past 11 years, she has worked as a drug abuse program coordinator with the Federal Bureau of Prisons. I have had the honor of working with Dr. Sapp during her tenure at the Federal Correctional Institution of Jesup.

Karla is a mother, sister, advocate, counselor, teacher, resource, motivator, and public servant. We are blessed to have Dr. Sapp working to better the lives of those suffering from mental illnesses, and I am thankful for her commitment to improving countless lives.

I congratulate her on this amazing accomplishment, and I look forward to her continued journey of service and success.

RECOGNIZING KEN GRINER

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor