The Manchester VA Medical Center's Office of Community Care steadily plowed through the backlog, giving specialized attention to each provider. After more than 15 months of their hard work, I am proud these diligent efforts have resulted in tens of millions of dollars of paid claims to New Hampshire's VA Community Care providers. They were so successful in this work that their internal process is now being shared nationally across the VA system as a model.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to personally thank the team members at the VA in Manchester who put in so many hours to address this backlog, including:

Michelle Mercer, who spent considerable time dealing with each member's hospital billing department;

Patricia Patterson, who also spent considerable time dealing with each member's billing department;

Tracy Allaire, who worked closely with Tri-West on claims on behalf of hospitals on the back end;

Charlene Eaton, who supervised and provided oversight to the VA Office of Community Care staff;

Dr. Brain Phemester, who worked and provided leadership and served as a conduit between VA Central Office and the New Hampshire Hospital Association and its members;

And Daniel Wilson, who initially spearheaded the billing resolution effort within the VA Central Office, and worked with our district office and the Hospital Association.

These Manchester VA Medical Center employees went above and beyond the call of duty for our veterans and the providers, as well as the future of community care. I couldn't be more proud to be able to recognize them for their efforts here today.

□ 1015

AMERICA DESERVES BETTER

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

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in fierce opposition to President Biden's proposed budget.

When he released his budget just a few weeks ago, nearly 3 months later than any President in a transition year, by the way, President Biden reminded Americans of advice his father gave him years ago. ''Don't tell me what you value,'' Biden's father told him. ''Show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value.''

If that is true, then Biden's $6 trillion budget reveals to us exactly what President Biden values: destroying America's oil and gas industry, prioritizing the rights of illegal immigrants over law-abiding Americans, funneling foreign aid away from our longtime ally Israel, turning a blind eye to protecting the unborn.

Under the Biden budget, President Biden suggests we spend our hard-earned dollars fixing problems he created.

He wants us spending $174 billion on electric cars, carports, car charging stations, and other subsidies to the electric vehicle market in a full-on attempt to replace the oil and gas industry; $40 billion to retain employees who lost their jobs after he blocked the Keystone pipeline and destroyed thousands of energy jobs; and a total of $36 billion to combat climate change, bringing back the waters of the U.S. rule and mandating 30 percent of our privately owned land be locked in conservation practices. President Biden's budget is the progressive's Green New Deal in disguise, and America doesn't want anything to do with it.

President Biden wants $2 billion to provide care for unaccompanied migrant children at our southern border after he put millions of innocent children in harm's way and encouraged immigrants to cross illegally. He wants no extension of funding to complete the already nearly finished wall system or money to enforce our immigration laws at the border and instead instated an executive order stopping construction on the very wall that keeps our country safe.

President Biden wants $63.5 billion for international affairs spending, a 12 percent increase from 2022 that lacks specific defense funding for Israel, America's only democratic ally in the Middle East. His omission is clear and comes at a time when the terrorist organization Hamas launched hundreds of rockets at Israel in the last month alone and when Democrats are on the record for their anti-Semitic language and slurs.

And President Biden refuses to protect our dollars from being spent on abortions or abortion services. Instead, for the first time in four decades, no such protection exists, a protection that 77 percent of Americans support and a protection even Biden supported for years before his Presidential campaign.

On top of all this, President Biden claims his budget is partly in response to the ongoing COVID–19 pandemic, but like the American Rescue Plan, it, too, fails to investigate the origins of COVID–19. Even more, the Biden administration won't commit that none of the budget requests would include funding for the research at the Wuhan lab.

The economic disaster to follow from his reckless spending will cripple American families' purchasing power and leave future generations with the crushing burden of the national debt. It is time we hold President Biden accountable for a budget that would cause our Federal debt to reach 117 percent of gross domestic product by 2031, the highest level since World War II, and continue the record rates of inflation we are already seeing under President Biden.

I ran for Congress with the intention of creating a better world for my children, our children, one where they don't have to pay President Biden's debts and suffer the consequences of irresponsible and egregious spending. America deserves better.

CELEBRATING CARIBBEAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, it is spring, the beginning of summer, but it is also Caribbean-American Heritage Month this June. It brings me great pride to join Virgin Islanders and other Caribbean people across the country in celebrating Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

As a Virgin Islander and an American of Caribbean descent, I am proud to celebrate the life, legacy, and achievement of Caribbean people in this country. Virgin Islanders and other Americans of Caribbean lineage have made enormous contributions to the United States through academia, athletics, the arts, and more.

Caribbeans have been involved in this country since its inception, such as des gens de couleurs libres, who included 800 French-Caribbean soldiers, 500 of whom were Haitian free men of color who fought at the battle of Savannah for the Colonies in the American Revolution.

Caribbean-American Heritage Month was officially celebrated and recognized on June 5, 2006, by Presidential proclamation signed by President George W. Bush. It had been unanimously adopted in the House in 2005 through the unwavering power of our colleague BARBARA LEE, who sponsored the legislation. Since 2006, the White House has released an annual proclamation recognizing June as National Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

Caribbean Americans have added to the history, culture, and communities in America in countless ways. The unique relationship between the United States and the Caribbean has enriched both regions, and this month is a wonderful time to celebrate our shared past and our future.

We should also look for opportunities for us as Americans to pursue new partnerships on a number of issues with the Caribbean. From trade, immigration, disaster preparedness, poverty eradication, and ending HIV/AIDS, the United States and the Caribbean share a number of mutual policy interests.

This year, the COVID–19 pandemic adds a new challenge to both our country and our Caribbean neighbors. I will keep fighting to ensure that the United States works to be an active and constructive partner in safeguarding the health and welfare of our third border.

The people of the Caribbean are as much a part of the fabric of this country as anyone else. We are not monolithic, nor do we represent one culture, one ideology, or even one ethnicity.