SURVIVAL CHECKS FOR MIXED-STATUS FAMILIES

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

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, we are close to finalizing a relief package, but I ask my colleagues: Relief for whom?

A relief package without survival checks is not a relief package at all, nor is a relief package that leaves out millions of immigrants and their families. Any deal that we strike must include survival checks to families and immigrants, and mixed-status families must be included.

Earlier this year, countless families that I represent were denied stimulus checks, including U.S. citizens whose spouses are immigrants. We even excluded children who may have an immigrant parent.

How in the world did we exclude U.S. citizen children?

In this season of sacred holidays, I implore all of us to be compassionate and not punish kids for their parents' status. Families are struggling to put food on their tables and keep roofs over their heads.

Circumstances are dire. We need to put money directly into working families' pockets. I urge my colleagues that any relief package must include survival checks for everyone, including immigrant children.

HONORING THOSE WHO HONOR OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Johnny Isakson and DAVID P. ROE, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, a bipartisan legislative package that includes two bills that I have proudly introduced this Congress, the VET TEC Expansion Act and the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act of 2020.

Since coming to Congress in 2007, one of my most important priorities in this Chamber has been to protect and improve the benefits that our Nation's veterans have earned and deserve. I introduced the VET TEC Expansion Act and the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act earlier this Congress in response to comments and feedback I received from veterans and veterans organizations throughout my district and across the country.

Both pieces of legislation seek to build upon existing veterans benefits programs, including the VET TEC pilot program and the HUD–VA Supportive Housing Program, by expanding and streamlining them for veterans and veterans service providers who utilize them.

The VET TEC Expansion Act will continue to ensure that our heroes can enhance skills they developed in the military when returning to private life by providing access to nontraditional and technology-oriented courses through the VET TEC pilot program. This bill would expand VET TEC to include part-time courses and permit additional course providers into the VET TEC pilot program.

I am also pleased that H.R. 7105, like the initial House-passed version of this bill, would increase the VET TEC funding authorization by $30 million per year through 2023 to help the VA meet demand for this popular program with our veterans.

In addition, no veteran in my district or anywhere in the country should be homeless due to unnecessary VA staffing vacancies. The Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act would require that the VA contract out any consistently vacant HUD-VA Supportive Housing case management positions to community experts so that unused housing vouchers can be matched with homeless veterans who need them the most.

Finally, I want to take a moment to thank Dr. ROE for his unwavering commitment to our Nation's veterans throughout his time in this Congress, specifically as chairman and ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee over the course of the past 4 years and for his own personal service to the United States Army, serving in Korea.

His strong leadership on behalf of our fellow veterans has been unwavering since he came to Congress, and his tenacity, knowledge, and friendship will be missed in this Chamber after he retires from Congress.

On behalf of a very grateful Nation, we thank Dr. ROE for his servant's heart, for putting the veterans first, and for improving the quality of the care for them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this bipartisan bill and thanking Congressman ROE for his service.

HOPE AND DESPAIR IN CENTRAL FLORIDA

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, there is a mix of hope and despair in central Florida.

This week, the first vaccines arrived to help protect our healthcare professionals. But unemployment remains around 10 percent; food banks lay bare; many are behind on rent; and coronavirus cases continue to rise.

The message is clear in both Florida and across our Nation: Americans need help.

It is time for this Congress to come together and pass meaningful coronavirus emergency relief to defeat the virus; to help small businesses and the unemployed; and to ensure food, housing, and direct stimulus checks for our constituents.

The solution is within our grasp. We just need to come together this week to get the job done.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues: Don't be an Ebenezer Scrooge. Embrace the Christmas spirit. Join me and vote ''yes.''

RECOGNIZING MIKE VUCKOVICH

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give a special shout-out to Mike Vuckovich, superintendent of the Indiana Area School District.

Mike was recently recognized as one of America's Superintendents to Watch for 2020. He was one of only 24 recipients to receive this recognition and the only Pennsylvanian.

Mike has been on the job just 2 years but recently was recognized by the National School Public Relations Association as a 2020 Superintendent to Watch. The organization selects superintendents from across the country who ''demonstrate dynamic, fast-paced leadership with strong communication at its core.''

This is exactly what Mike has done with his time at Indiana Area School District.

Mike has been a champion for digital technology and online communication throughout the district, investments that have clearly come in handy in the age of coronavirus. The district's new website and social media accounts have been a useful tool to keep parents, teachers, and students on the same page during what has undoubtedly been a hectic and stressful school year.

I thank Mike for his drive, dedication, and initiative, and I am pleased to have a leader like Mike in Indiana County.

□ 1415

EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SHOOTING

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

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the 26 beautiful lives that were lost on December 14, 2012, at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Mr. Speaker, 8 years ago, 20 innocent children and six selfless educators were murdered in what should have been the safest places in their community: their school.

Today, I ask that we pause, reflect, remember, and recommit ourselves to working to ensure that this never happens again.

For many residents of Newtown, Connecticut, 8 years feels like yesterday. Time has stood still for so many families as they attempt to rebuild their