

THE PUBLIC SPEAKS

Republicans working to keep American Dream alive

For many Louisianans, the American Dream means starting a family, having a high-paying job, and living in a safe neighborhood. That dream has become unaffordable and unattainable for many. President Trump and Republicans are working to fix it. We took action to support working families across Louisiana. The Working Families Tax Cuts bill expands the Child Tax Credit, making it easier for parents to start and sustain a family.

Republicans’ tax cuts also deliver higher paychecks by cutting taxes on tips and over-time for the beauty industry and small businesses. The idea to extend tip tax credit to beauticians came from a Louisiana business owner who visited my office over a year ago to propose the change.

I agreed, and we got it done. Through that meeting, a Louisiana influenced national policy, and people across the state are taking home more of their hard-earned pay.

Republicans’ economic agenda is about more than creating jobs and lowering taxes. It is also making quality health care more accessible to all Louisianans. Through President Trump’s tax cuts, we invested \$50 billion into rural health care.

The Rural Health Transformation Fund is designed to help families in rural areas like Cameron and Vernon parishes, where a doctor’s visit often means a long drive. As a practicing physician, I saw firsthand the challenges patients in rural areas faced. As a senator, I’m delivering

solutions.

We created a \$50 billion rural health fund as part of the Working Families Tax Cuts package to deliver lifesaving care closer to home. It means rural hospitals can stay open, hire more doctors and nurses, and serve more patients. It means investing in telehealth and community-based care. President Trump and I made this a priority because we agree access to quality care shouldn’t depend on your address.

We are also working together toward a stronger energy sector so that Louisianans can have high-paying jobs and affordable electricity. From losing jobs in the energy sector to paying skyrocketing electric bills, Louisianans were hit hard by the Biden Administration’s war against domestic energy

production. President Trump is reversing this disaster and reminding the nation that Louisiana is the place to invest. It’s no coincidence that Woodside Energy announced a \$17.5 billion investment in Calcasieu Parish in his first 100 days, and we’ve continued to see many more successes as we work to restore America’s energy dominance.

But Louisiana needs the infrastructure to keep up with this historic growth. I am constantly working to bring federal funding, which could go to Texas or Mississippi or some other state, to Louisiana instead. Stable, affordable electricity enables families to keep the lights on without breaking the bank.

Investing in broadband infrastructure also sets students

up for success. Through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, I secured a \$1.36 million broadband investment for our state, of which Southwest Louisiana — including Rapides, Evangeline, Vernon, Jefferson Davis, Calcasieu, Allen, Vermilion, Acadia, and Beauregard parishes — will benefit.

So, whether your American Dream is to start a family, open a business, or simply create a stable life for yourself and your family, President Trump and Republicans have your back. We will continue lowering costs, creating opportunity, and making life easier. Louisiana holds the key to much of our success. I will keep Making Louisiana great — and affordable — again!

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy
Louisiana



Unlocking the door for Gold Star spouses

During my 20 years wearing the uniform as an Air Force judge advocate, I sat across from more young Airmen than I can count, helping them draft wills and powers of attorney before deployment. Almost without exception, they asked the same question: “Sir, if something happens to me, who takes care of my family?”

In Louisiana we are home to more than 5,000 active-duty spouses who keep the home fires burning while their loved ones are downrange. They are the unheralded force multiplier behind every successful mission. When a knock at the door brings the news no one wants, these spouses should not be handed a folded flag with one hand and a stack of impossible paperwork with the other.

That is why the Gold Star and Surviving Spouse Career Services Act, introduced and championed by Sen. Bill Cassidy, is one of the most important pieces of legislation most Americans have never heard of. It is not a multibillion-dollar program or a sweeping new entitlement. It is a focused, commonsense fix that does two straightforward things. First, it guarantees surviving spouses dedicated, one-on-one career counseling through the Department of Labor’s American Job Centers. Second, and more importantly, it opens the door to the existing Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program — a battle-tested resource that already helps wounded warriors and unemployed veterans find meaningful work. Right now, Gold Star spouses are locked out of those programs by statute. This bill simply removes that lock.

The Senate recognized the

urgency and passed the bill unanimously. Every Democrat, every Republican, every Independent voted yes. That kind of bipartisan agreement does not happen by accident; it happens when something is undeniably right. Unfortunately, the measure was not included in the final National Defense Authorization Act recently passed by the House. However, the fight should go on to send this important piece of legislation to the president’s desk.

Our troops are asked to write a blank check payable to the United States for an amount up to and including their lives. The least we can do is ensure that if that check is cashed, their spouses receive the tools they need to rebuild. This bill will allow DVOP specialists to provide résumé guidance that turns the term “military spouse” into “proven resilience and dedication.” This is simply earned support for families who have already paid the highest price.

In the service of arms, tragedy can strike at any time. This often leaves behind a Gold Star spouse who has never navigated the civilian job market, who moved every two years for the military, who now faces raising children alone in an economy that waits for no one. Giving surviving spouses real, individualized employment support is not charity; it is the fulfillment of a promise we make when we first issue uniforms to our brothers and sisters in arms. Bring this bill across the finish line. Let our military families know that Louisiana still has their six.

Chad Carter
Bayou Veterans Advocacy executive director Monroe

Time for a ‘revolution of common sense’

Let 2026 be the year that we Americans refuse to bend our knees to the cultural totalitarianism of the socialist wing of the Democrat Party — a party that now pushes policies that only 20 percent of the American people support. The time has arrived to have a revolution of common sense to return to those policies that made this country thrive economically and beneficially to Americans as a whole. As more of us have seen, a once-great party is devolving into one that is no longer concerned about American citizens and is more concerned about non-citizens so we have chosen to leave it. You and your media allies will no longer deceive us as more accurate and propaganda-free information is available through the social media revolution.

No longer will we be brow-beaten by your tox-

ic rhetoric and demeaning names to remain silent. Your beliefs are so out of the main stream and not based in reality, you will not even debate and default to a string of vulgarities against anyone who challenges your opinions.

No longer will we accept your removal of the civil rights of women via gender confusion. They have the right to have women-only sports and privacy in their locker rooms. Our children are too valuable to us to allow you to attack their sense of identity in an effort to persuade them they are not the sex they were born.

Finally, we reject the socialist economic model. The most recent example of its failure is the situation in Venezuela, an economic disaster and now dictatorship. Rather, we want free market capitalism that took the world from 90 percent living

in poverty to only 10 percent. That spurred the modern personal freedoms we enjoy.

Stay the course on the policies that began in 2025, which are beginning to show progress to solving the affordability issue. Remember it took the previous administration four years to do extensive damage to our country. That is the administration that brought out inflation through overspending. New policies by the current administration addressing the structural problems of the economy are showing progress. Recent reporting is that the inflation rate has declined to 2.7 percent GDP, up to 4.3 percent, and a 2.4 percent increase in take-home pay. This all before the new laws the current administration passed go into effect Jan. 1, 2026.

R. Cox
Pitkin

WRITE TO US

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Award Donald Trump actually deserves is not a peace prize

In Donald Trump’s bizarre concept of the world, he is campaigning for the Nobel Peace Prize but what he really should receive is an equivalent of the Golden Raspberry (Razzie) Awards presented as a parody of the Academy Awards to those movies least deserving of Oscars. Here are some of his qualifications for the first annual Warmonger Prize during just the first year of his second term.

- After threatening to go into Nigeria with “guns-a-blazing,” Trump celebrated Christmas by ordering a bombing strike on Nigeria. A social media post by Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth threatened “more to come.”
- As of this writing at least

107 civilians have been killed in 30 U.S. strikes on Venezuelan speedboats in international waters. Trump has claimed, without presenting evidence, that these boats were carrying drugs destined for the United States, which justified these strikes as self-defense in an “armed conflict.” How speedboats could present an imminent danger to the United States, more than a thousand miles away, is hard to imagine. Nor has Congress authorized military action under the War Powers Act. When one strike left two survivors clinging to their boat’s wreckage, they were killed in a second strike even though they hardly presented a danger, imminent or otherwise, to the United States

or anyone. In an earlier strike, two survivors were repatriated to Colombia where they were freed without prosecution. Apparently, they were not a danger to the United States. Usually, alleged low level drug dealers are apprehended for interrogation about higher ups and possible prosecution and not killed as there is no death penalty for drug dealing.

- Trump escalated his undeclared war against Venezuela with a CIA drone strike on a port facility inside Venezuela. Despite the administration not requesting congressional consent, it is likely that this is the first of a series of attacks on land in Venezuela.
- In June the United State bombed three nuclear facilities

in Iran using more than 125 aircraft and bunker busting bombs. The UN Secretary General called this “a dangerous escalation in a region already on the edge.” After his Dec. 29 meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Trump suggested if Iran continued its nuclear program, he would support Israeli military strikes.

- In mid-December, the United States military launched 70 strikes against alleged ISIS targets in Syria. Here too it seems likely that there will be more such attacks in the future.
- President Trump’s “One Beautiful Bill” proposed a \$156 billion increase in defense spending. If he gives an acceptance speech for the Warmonger

Prize, Trump can thank not only the House and Senate majorities but also his presidential predecessors for their support of bloated of military spending.

- In September, Trump issued an executive order changing the name of the Department of Defense to the Department of War. However, only Congress has the power to do this.

There are, sadly, many other serious contenders for this award including Benjamin Netanyahu and Vladimir Putin but, if readers think that this is a joke, the real joke would be if anyone considers him for the Nobel Prize.

Dr. Bruce Altschuler
Oswego, N.Y.