



## **Community Voices: On the 'Commitment to America' platform**

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You may have already heard the Republicans' platform for the 2022 elections, namely the "Commitment to America."

In very general terms, it promises, among other things, to fight back against rising costs.

They should start with the salaries of the congressmen. Kevin McCarthy's base salary, as minority leader of the House of Representatives, is \$193,400 per year, according to Wikipedia. Although his salary is paid by the U.S. Treasury, it should be noted that his Kern County constituents' median household income is \$65,687, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. A Kern County median-income family must work 2.94 years to make what he makes in one year. Other congressmen make \$174,000 in base salary.

Has anyone heard Mr. McCarthy, or any other congressman regardless of political party, complain about their high cost to the taxpayer?

Jeb Hensarling, a former chairman of the House Financial Services Committee (2013-19) and an economics fellow at the Cato Institute, wrote this month in The Wall Street Journal: "According to the American Action Forum, Mr. Trump's (China) tariffs combined have increased consumer costs by approximately \$51 billion a year." That's something else omitted in Mr. McCarthy's "Commitment to America."

From Congressman McCarthy's webpage on Jan. 15, 2020: "Today, Congressman Kevin McCarthy joined President Trump at the White House during the signing of Phase 1 of a trade pact between the United States and China."

The Midwestern farmers suffered severely from retaliatory tariffs from China and, of course, we, the taxpayers, bailed out the farmers with \$12 billion in subsidies in addition to the customary farm subsidies the federal government has been handing out since the New Deal in the 1930s. In other words, for 72 years straight we have been making many farmers happy. Some are relatively rich, corporate farmers.

More specifically, since 2009, taxpayers have given Valadao Dairy \$1.4 million in subsidies, according to EWG's Farm Subsidy Database.

Another part of the "Commitment to America" platform is addressing the inflow of immigrants at the southern border. You can trust me on the following: If this issue was a significant problem

to the United States of America, it would have been solved many years ago. The fact is that the American economy needs the low-skill workers crossing the border. For this reason, E-verify has mostly been shunned since its inception. Roughly 50 percent of the agricultural workers in the country are here illegally.

According to the New American Economy Research Fund, “In California, immigrants make up more than 80 percent of the state’s agricultural workforce. Other states like, Washington State (72.6 percent), Florida (65.4 percent), and Oregon (60.7 percent), also have higher than average shares of immigrants in their agricultural workforce.”

Of course the counterargument to the foregoing is that a lot of illegal drugs cross the border. No arguing there, it is true. However, what is also sadly true is that we, Americans, are demanding the drugs. If we build a wall and completely block illegal drug flow, new suppliers (likely domestic suppliers) will pop up to meet the huge demand.

On energy, oil and gas operators are operating under new models with profitability in mind — not volume production. Oil is an internationally traded and priced commodity. As I write, the Wall Street Journal put out this article, “OPEC+ Agrees to Biggest Oil Production Cut Since Start of Pandemic. Move to reduce daily output by two million barrels...”

Republicans would do so much better in November if they had acted like VP Mike Pence and Congresswoman Liz Cheney — with integrity and loyalty to the Constitution.

With all that said, know that anyone can order a flag from Mr. McCarthy’s office. I will order one with the request that it be flown at half-staff because most Republicans showed no commitment to democracy and the American voter after the 2020 election. Shame on them!