Murza who wrote a letter critical of Putin to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarding the nomination of Secretary Tillerson. Last Thursday, while in Moscow, he fell into a life-threatening coma believed to be caused by an unknown poison.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to normalize what President Trump is doing. We cannot afford to take our country back to an era of unchecked Russian aggression.

We need freedom. That is what is at stake.

I include in the RECORD a February 6, 2017, article by Julie Hirschfeld Davis.

[Feb. 6, 2017]

TRUMP SEEMS TO SIDE WITH RUSSIA IN COMMENTS ON UKRAINE

(By Julie Hirschfeld Davis)

WASHINGTON.—President Trump cast doubt on whether Moscow is backing separatists engaged in the recent escalation of fighting in eastern Ukraine, appearing to side with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, who has long denied involvement in the conflict despite evidence to the contrary.

Mr. Trump said he did not take offense at the outbreak of a lethal bout of fighting in Ukraine that came within a day of a phone conversation he had with Mr. Putin, saying of the recent clashes, ''we don't really know exactly what that is.''

''They're pro-forces,'' Mr. Trump said of the Ukrainian separatists in an interview that aired on Monday on ''The O'Reilly Factor,'' on Fox News. ''We don't know, are they uncontrollable? Are they uncontrolled? That happens also. We're going to find out; I would be surprised, but we'll see.''

Mr. Trump's comments were the latest indication that his desire for warmer relations with Russia may be coloring his view of the conflict in Ukraine, which pits the country's military—trained and equipped in part by the United States Army—against Russian-backed separatists. Moscow has denied involvement in the three-year conflict, despite evidence that it has provided equipment and fighters to support separatist forces in eastern Ukraine.

The president's push for a friendlier relationship with Mr. Putin has alarmed Ukrainian officials, who fear that the pressure former President Barack Obama applied on Russia to withdraw its unacknowledged military forces from eastern Ukraine will wane.

A telephone call Mr. Trump held on Saturday with President Petro O. Poroshenko of Ukraine raised further questions about his position on the conflict and his administration's commitment to maintaining sanctions against Russia for the annexation of Crimea.

In an official account of the call, Mr. Trump had said he was willing to work with Kiev and Moscow to resolve the conflict. But the statement referred to helping to ''restore peace along the border,'' while the violence has been playing out inside eastern Ukraine.

UF HEALTH SHANDS HOSPITAL PEDIATRIC HEART TRANSPLANT PROGRAM

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

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the University of Florida's UF Health Shands Hospital pediatric heart transplant program for being named one of the best in the Nation. According to the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients, this unit has had zero pediatric heart transplant deaths in the last 2½ years.

Since 2006, the UF Health Shands Transplant Center has performed a total of 120 pediatric heart and lung transplants, making it one of the most active pediatric heart transplant programs in the Southeast. In fact, in the last year, U.S. News and World Report named UF Health number one in the State and fourth in the Nation for pediatric heart surgeries and cardiology. This recognition speaks volumes about the level of care shown by the physicians and their teams at UF Health, and I look forward to watching them continue to be a leader in patient care and innovation in the coming years.

I must end with Go Gators.

PULL THE MUSLIM BAN DOWN

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me again repeat my concern, when the United States is compared to the thuggish behavior of Russian leadership, the attempt to poison individuals who are activists and opponents to that kind of oppression.

But I want to speak today to what is impacting our neighbors, Mr. Speaker, and that is the executive order that has been issued by the President of the United States. I want to dispel any myth that Members of this body who oppose the executive order are against security for this Nation.

I am a years'-long member of the Homeland Security Committee, the Transportation Security Committee, the Border Security Committee, and work hard to write a stiff border security bill. But, frankly, this is a Muslim ban, and when a 17-year-old, 16-year-old from my community, from Jordan, was stopped and held for 48 hours and shipped to Chicago, that is a Muslim ban.

What I say to those who have executed it is that you have to realize that the order that you tried to copy from President Obama was not the same. It was stringent review; it was not rejection. You are rejecting Muslims and allowing others.

As a Christian, I know that Christians are not being subjected to the same kind of scrutiny. This is a Muslim ban. I ask the White House, as we go to court this evening: Why don't you reconsider and pull that Muslim ban down?

□ 1730

WHAT HAS WASHINGTON DONE TO YOU?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, well, let's see, I got a phone call from my district—one of several dozen today—and they all are kind of about the same thing: What is going on in Washington? What are they doing in Washington? What is happening? What is happening with ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act? What are they going to do about this wall? People are concerned. People want to know what is happening in Washington.

I suspect a good many of us are trying to figure out what the next steps are. It seems like every other moment something new is erupting from the White House, another tweet or another executive order, and we have had a lot of them. And so what I want to do today is to kind of go back and take a look at what has transpired over these last 2½ weeks. What has happened in Washington these last 2½ weeks?

Besides a lot of confusion, angst, and concern, some very, very important things are happening, and here is my take on it. I am going to kind of put a title on today, and I am going to say: What has Washington done to you, not for you. What has Washington done to you?

Let's start with the very first day that President Trump was inaugurated. Well, it was all about the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as ObamaCare. So he set out to begin the repeal of ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act.

Oh, by the way, they are one and the same. It depends which way you are looking at this thing, but the repeal of the Affordable Care Act has dire consequences on Americans.

Some 30 million Americans could be affected, according to the Congressional Budget Office, or in my State, we are looking at maybe 5 million people could lose their health coverage, their insurance, as a result of that. There is $16 billion that immediately flows to the State of California for the expansion of the Medicaid, Medi-Cal program in California. That would be gone. And those people that are on that program would simply not be able to get care.

It goes beyond just those who are in the exchanges. The exchange in California is working quite well. Maybe a 1½ million people in California are covered through the exchange, and they have options in most every part of the State.

In my part of the State, there are some shortcomings because services are not readily available, but there are 34 clinics managed by nine organizations that provide medical services in my district. Every one of those clinics rely upon ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act, for the services that they render. If the Affordable Care Act disappears, we repeal ObamaCare, those clinics are out of business.

And what does that mean? It means that thousands, literally hundreds of thousands of people in my district would no longer be receiving medical

services through the clinics, through the Affordable Care Act's expansion, or through the Medi-Cal program. This is serious business.

There is another piece to this, and I would like to put up some charts on that, but let's just go back and quickly review the benefits. The benefits are:

5.1 million seniors receive savings on prescription drugs. You know that famous drug doughnut hole; it has almost disappeared as the result of the ObamaCare Affordable Care Act.

32.5 million seniors receive free annual preventions, health checkups, every year. What does that mean? It means their blood pressure is checked out, their potential for diabetes, for other chronic illnesses, and they get the medicine for diabetes. They get better health care, and the cost of Medicare is reduced.

Also, it strengthens consumer protections for seniors in Medicare part D, and at least 85 percent of Medicare Advantage Plans' revenues go back towards providing senior services. That is just for seniors.

So there are many, many benefits in the Affordable Care Act beyond just those that are getting new insurance policies. It is a big deal for seniors. They are able to get an annual checkup. They are able to get their drugs much cheaper, able to provide them with the necessary pieces of it.

One of the very first acts that has been taken up here by Congress is the budget resolution passed by both Houses. It is now in effect, the first budget resolution, and that budget resolution tells the Budget Committee and the Ways and Means Committee: Repeal the taxes that are associated with the Affordable Care Act. It is a lot of money, somewhere between $700 million and $1 trillion of tax cuts directly associated with the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare.

Who gets the benefit of those tax reductions? Well, the top 1 percent would receive some 70 percent of the benefit.

What does that amount to? Well, it amounts to—did I say 1 percent? The top one-tenth of 1 percent would receive the great majority of the benefit, or $200,000 tax reduction for the super-superwealthy. The rest of them, the top 1 percent, get 57 percent of that $700 billion, and that is over a 10-year period. And everyone else, that would be the other 99 percent, will share in a much smaller portion, the remaining 43 percent.

For an average family, it probably amounts to maybe a tax reduction of $160. However, those are the people that are able to get their insurance through the exchanges, and so they are getting a really bad deal because the average exchange, for example, in California, is somewhere over $2,500.

So this is the tax repeal. It is a massive tax cut for the super-super-wealthy.

It turns out that to pay for the Affordable Care Act, a very progressive tax was put in place, and it does provide benefits for those who are uninsured, the Medicaid population across the Nation, as well as providing the buy-down of the insurance policies that are available through the various exchanges.

Keep in mind, when people talk about repealing the Affordable Care Act taxes, what they are talking about is a massive redistribution of wealth in this Nation and a furtherance of this income inequality that has been such a problem in our society and in our economy.

So the repeal of the Affordable Care Act does many, many things, most of which would be quite a problem for working men and women, for the seniors, for the elderly.

I didn't mention here that a good portion of that Medicaid population goes to provide long-term care in nursing homes for seniors who are not wealthy. I don't have the exact percentage, but some people say it is 50, 60 percent of Medicaid benefits across the Nation wind up providing services in the long-term care facilities.

Is that important to seniors? Oh, yeah.

Is it important for children of seniors, you know, those people that are in their forties and fifties whose parents are in their seventies and eighties? They are deeply concerned about this particular issue of the Medicaid expansion being eliminated by a repeal of the Affordable Care Act, and then they wind up in a situation of having to take care of Mom and Dad, trying to figure out how to do it on their insufficient income.

So we need to understand that the very first act undertaken by the President was to set in motion a very serious rejiggering, a reoperation of the entire healthcare system in this Nation, so much so that the standard insurance companies that provide policies to the great majority of Americans are going: Whoa, wait a minute. You eliminate the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, and we don't know how to price in the marketplace for the coming year.

Right now, those insurance companies are in the process of figuring out what their policies are going to be, how they would price them.

One of the things the Affordable Care Act does is to provide an opportunity for those that have preexisting conditions, serious healthcare problems, for those people to be able to get insurance; therefore, the risk is spread. Now, if the Affordable Care Act disappears, would this be part of the replacement? We don't know.

Our colleagues on the Republican side keep talking about repeal and replace. We don't have a replacement plan yet, but what we do have is a probability of a massive tax cut for the very wealthy. We are also looking at chaos in the insurance system.

So let's be aware of what is going on in Washington when we talk about repeal and replace and when you talk about ObamaCare—which, by the way, is also known as the Affordable Care Act.

I have, today, some of my colleagues joining us. I notice that two of them are here. We could go alphabetically, in which case—well, let me see, P-Q-R. That means PANETTA comes first.

My new colleague from the Monterey Bay area of California will join us here. He wants to talk about some of these issues that confront Americans and explain to all of us what this Congress and what the President is doing to Americans.

I welcome Mr. PANETTA to his very first Special Order hour that I have been able to work with him. I know you have spoken on the floor before, and we look forward to your comments tonight. I thank the gentleman very much for joining us.

I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA).

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California, and I rise today to oppose President Trump's anti-immigrant executive orders and to share with you why I feel these orders harm the people across my district and, ultimately, across our Nation.

I am here because my grandfather came here as an Italian immigrant back in 1921. He told us that the reason he came here was to give his children a better life, and he wanted a chance to achieve what I think we all know to be the American Dream.

I am here in front of you living the reality of that dream. And that is why I strive every day as best as I can to give back to my country and community here in Washington, D.C., and especially on the central coast of California.

I do that not only because of my grandfather, but because it was our forefathers that made it clear that this is a nation, this is a country based on ''We the People.'' And so to me, being in this country, being American, means that all of us bear the burden to serve one another and to welcome those—especially those—who are willing to come here and share in that responsibility. I believe that we should embrace them. I believe that we should embolden them with the opportunities to share in that American Dream.

We know that the world looks to the United States for enlightened leadership, but these ill-advised actions send a wrong message about our values as a nation. We are a nation of immigrants. We are stronger because of our diversity and because of the people who have taken the risks to come here just as my grandfather did, to live here and to contribute to our country and our communities.

On the central coast of California, that is the heart and soul of that area. I see hardworking men and women who have come to this country to live in it and contribute to it. The two main industries there on the central coast are agriculture and tourism—big industries.

There are people, workers, owners who contribute greatly not only to those industries, but to our communities, and they are our neighbors, our friends, our families, our children. They sit next to my two daughters and play with them at school. Clearly, without them, my community would be a shell of its former self.

I hear the pain in their voices because they feel that this administration's executive order targets them and makes them feel unwelcome. I see that these types of executive orders drive a wedge in our country, and it drives them further away from participating in our community.

Before I was sworn in on January 3 of this year, I was a prosecutor; and for the 5½ years that I was there at the Monterey County District Attorney's Office, I prosecuted gang crimes. That kind of prosecution, as you can imagine, as you know well, it can be very difficult to have witnesses come forward and participate in one of the cornerstones of our country: our criminal justice system. They are intimidated. They are worried about retribution and retaliation.

Yet now, from what I have heard, they are worried not just about criminals; they are worried about the government, the government cracking down on them if they came forward, cracking down on them and sending them back to where they came from. These executive orders discourage participation in our community. Instead, as a nation, we should encourage people to step up, to step forward, and to be a part of our criminal justice system.

Last weekend, I met with community members and I heard directly from them about their concerns, and this weekend, I am doing it again. I am holding a townhall to continue this conversation.

□ 1745

I believe it is our responsibility to listen to all of our community members and consider the implications of these types of executive orders and the implications that they have on all of our constituents.

When the President of the United States was sworn in, he took an oath to protect all members of our Nation by supporting and defending our Constitution. As a Member of Congress, I took an oath to support and defend that very same Constitution. Rest assured, I will honor that oath, and I will honor the oath to my grandfather and to this country by fighting and resisting unconstitutional orders from this or any other President.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. PANETTA, thank you so very much for joining us this evening. Thank you for your statement of your life and your family's work. We know your father. Leon has been a dear friend of mine and most of us here in the House. You're going to really be a tremendous addition to this House. Your experience as a prosecutor and in local government and county government positions you very well to bring the message.

Certainly, the Salinas Valley is one in which immigrants are the history, and they are the reality of today. Thank you so very much for watching out for them, for your passion, and for your extraordinary background in making all of us aware of what happens when sanctuary cities, immigration laws, and others are just tossed around without much thought about what the impact is in the community and to families, as well as to the economy of the community. I appreciate that and hope you will come back and join us on another Special Order.

From the other side of the country, we have Mr. RASKIN, another new Member of the House of Representatives. Welcome. You have a fascinating background, and I look forward to your comments today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN).

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you so much, Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you for convening us to talk about the first month of the Trump administration. The attacks on our Constitution, our Bill of Rights, and the rule of law are coming fast and furious, so it is hard to collect all of them, and I appreciate the effort to try to inventory them today.

I represent the wonderful people of Montgomery County, Frederick County, and Carroll County, Maryland, the Eighth Congressional District, and I am, by training, a professor of constitutional law which I have done for the last quarter century at American University.

So in reviewing the highlights—or the low lights—of the last several weeks, Mr. GARAMENDI, I thought I would start, actually, with my very first day on the job. I went to sign up for health insurance in the basement of the Longworth House Office Building, which I was delighted to do because my job entitles me to sign up for health insurance, and I recognized how fortunate I was. As I was down there, a number of other new Members began to form, and I looked at them.

Then, as I was going through, at the same time, some memoranda that my office had received, I noticed that some of the first bills we were going to be looking at were to set the stage for dismantling the Affordable Care Act, for voucherizing Medicare, for pulverizing Medicaid and downsizing it, for demonizing Planned Parenthood, and for making it impossible for hundreds of thousands of citizens across the country to get basic health care.

I said to myself: Tell me that it is not the case that I am entering Congress with other Members who are going to be signing up for health insurance that they get as part of their job, and then they are going to go upstairs to the floor of the House and vote to strip 22 million Americans of their health care in the Affordable Care Act.

But, believe it or not, this is precisely what has transpired, and there is a very clear move on to try to dismantle the Affordable Care Act. The majority has voted more than 60 times to repeal the Affordable Care Act, but America has woken up to the fact that it is for real this time, and we have hundreds of thousands—millions—of citizens mobilizing across the country to defend the Affordable Care Act and to demand accountability from their Member of Congress. I am thrilled to see that.

Also, during the last few weeks, we all read a report from 16 intelligence agencies of the United States, including the FBI, the CIA, the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and a dozen more, all of them expressing their confidence and their very strong belief that Vladimir Putin, the KGB, and the Russian Government worked a campaign to undermine and sabotage American democracy in the 2016 Presidential election. It included acts of cyber sabotage, espionage, fake news, and propaganda that all entered into American political discourse and our institutions in order to change the outcome of the 2016 Presidential election.

What we have gotten from the President of the United States is a series of blithe dismissals of the whole thing saying repeatedly: Other people do the same.

I think it was yesterday that commentator Bill O'Reilly said that he needed to criticize Vladimir Putin, who was a killer, to which the President responded: Lots of people are killers. And, essentially: Have you looked at what America has done recently?

That kind of talk is absolutely outrageous and scandalous that the President would say that.

The point is not to join the killers of the world. The point is not to participate in the league of bandits, bullies, dictators, despots, and rightwing movements that are forming all over the world. The point is to take them on and to stand up for democracy, human rights, and the real ideals of the country.

So back in the home office, in Moscow, they must be chortling that the President of the United States would establish a moral equivalency between the first democracy—the first constitutional democracy ever created on Earth—and a thug who is presiding over essentially a kleptocratic, authoritarian regime in Russia, a man who has said that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the single greatest catastrophe of the 20th century.

So we have that to deal with.

Meantime, instead of taking on the real authoritarians on Earth, the President summons up all of his courage with Steve Bannon, and they impose a ban on people coming to America from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen; and they invoke 9/11 several times in the course of establishing this unprecedented refugee ban. The only problem is that the terrorist hijackers who came to attack

the country on 9/11 were from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. The vast majority of them came from Saudi Arabia, which is the stronghold and the organizing center of Wahhabism, fundamentalism, radical Islamic terrorism on Earth which has been promoting and disseminating militant Islamist ideology all over the world. Yet, the Trump administration did nothing about that, either because they were too powerful for them to take on or because Mr. Trump has had extensive business dealings with Saudi Arabia, as well as in other countries that were passed over in this ban.

Now, of course, because this is a religiously oriented Muslim ban that is meant to whip up propaganda, hysteria, and chaos in the country and has nothing to do with national security, it has been struck down in different parts or in whole by five or six Federal district courts, most recently by the United States District Court in Seattle. The case is now in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

There are so many problems with the executive order in terms of due process, equal protection, free exercise of religion, and so on, that there are multiple judicial decisions that are striking down different aspects of the executive order.

Well, what else do we have going on? Today, in one of the committees that I serve on, the House Administration Committee, there was a 6–3 vote to dismantle the only Federal election entity, the EAC, which is charged with trying to promote the cybersecurity of our elections. That vote was along party lines—6–3—to dismantle the Election Assistance Commission which had been created and established on a bipartisan vote many years ago. That was just taken down.

So I would say that there appears to be an effort to plunge America into a certain kind of chaos at this point. That, of course, has been the explicit wish of Steve Bannon, who has described himself as a Leninist who wants to tear down our system of government and demolish the politics of the country to replace with something else which has gone un-named.

So, my fellow Americans, Mr. GARAMENDI, these are very serious times. I am thrilled that the people of America are organizing in every State of the Union and in every community to build up the capacity to resist these attacks on our Constitution, on our Bill of Rights, and on the rule of law. The majority of the people who did not vote for this President are mobilized, they are galvanized, and they understand that eternal vigilance is, indeed, the price of liberty, and people are going to remain eternally vigilant—and passionately so—during the course of this administration when the attacks continue to come fast and furious on our Constitution and our Bill of Rights.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. RASKIN, thank you so very much.

Indeed, your experience as a professor teaching constitutional law will be a very valuable asset to this House, and particularly in the context of what is transpiring on the floor with the repeal of so many of the regulations that are protecting Americans in so many different ways, and certainly with the incredible array of outlandish executive orders emanating from the White House, not the least of which is the immigration issue.

So as we journey through this period of disruption and chaos, I am certain that we will count upon you to provide us with insight into the way in which all of this fits into the very clear framework of the Constitution.

Mr. RASKIN. I thank the gentleman from California for his leadership.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, there are so many other things to talk about here, and I probably have another 20 minutes to do it. I doubt that I will take all that time, unless my colleague from Iowa wants to engage in a colloquy about some issues of the day which we might find a very exciting and interesting thing to do, Mr. KING. I see you await your turn here.

Over the last week, Congress—the last 2 weeks now, 3 almost—has enacted a series of repeals of regulations that had been passed in the Obama administration. On the floor today, not more than an hour and a half ago, three additional repeals of regulations took place. These were under the Congressional Review Act, a law that is some 25 years old now that allows the Congress to literally repeal regulations that are out there.

I will give you a couple of examples. Today, one of them dealt with the planning process for the Bureau of Land Management. About a quarter of a million acres of land are under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. This is public land. It belongs to all of us. This land is your land. Well, this is the land that belongs to the American people. The repeal today of a new public review process on land planning is—I don't understand it. I was once deputy secretary at the Department of the Interior, and I oversaw the Bureau of Land Management. I was operating under the law that was old in the 1990s.

But here we are with this repeal of a new process, a process that actually invited into the land planning for the Bureau of Land Management where are the roads going to go, how are they going to manage the various uses of the land, whether it is agriculture, for cattle, or for recreation, or hunting, whatever, that they invite into that process all of the local agencies. The county, the State, environmental groups, hunting, fishing, cattlemen, agricultural groups, whoever would have a stake in that, they were invited into the process. It shortened the process from 8 years down to something probably in the 2-or 3-year range to go through this entire thing, and, for reasons that I will never understand, the repeal eliminated the use of good science and economics.

So I don't understand what is going on here. This is a good process so that the public would be invited. Yet, the Congressional Review Act—should the Senate agree and the President sign this particular review—the Bureau of Land Management will never be able to go back and enter this process of land planning again.

□ 1800

They cannot issue a new regulation. What is happening here is nonsense. There is mountaintop removal in coal country, where mountains are simply wiped off the face of the Earth and all of that dirt is piled into the nearby streams. We have that regulation.

Providing clean water for the communities and the rivers for recreation or fishing or any other thing is gone and no longer available to protect the communities. It goes on and on.

I know one thing that the President did the very first day was an executive order to eliminate the reduction in the mortgage guarantee fee. This is a fee paid by homeowners—usually low-income homeowners—who, because of their income, because of their financial status, cannot get a regular mortgage unless there is a guarantee. He said this was for the benefit of the homeowner. Baloney. This was for the benefit of the bankers.

We already know that he has appointed three people to his cabinet that are from Wall Street, particularly from Goldman Sachs, and another one from another agency on Wall Street. He was going to do away with Wall Street. No, he brought Wall Street into the cabinet. We are going backwards on this.

I am going to take a deep breath—I need it after all of that—and I am just beginning to get wound up and haven't gone through the other 20 things that are on my list.

I did notice that this is my day to welcome to the floor of the House of Representatives new Democratic members. Mr. RASKIN is from the marvelous State of Maryland. I have two Californians here. RO KHANNA is from the Silicon Valley.

I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA) to share with us his take on his first 33 days in Congress.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative GARAMENDI for his leadership in the State of California and the country.

I rise today to voice my strong objection and disapproval for FCC Chairman Ajit Pai's decision to roll back a program that would provide internet access to low-income Americans.

I was shocked that this was one of the first decisions that the FCC Chairman made. What he has done is provide few subsidies for low-income Americans who need internet access.

Now, we know that 45 percent of Americans under 30,000 currently don't have internet access. Providing these

folks with internet access is giving their kids a basic shot at digital proficiency and having a job in technology or a chance at the American Dream.

Chairman Ajit Pai has become a poster child with this decision for everything that is wrong with Washington. It is what people complain about. He is writing the rules of modern-day capitalism in a way that privileges these elite telecom companies with concentrated economic power at the expense of low-income Americans.

This Congress must stand united to make sure that an unelected bureaucrat doesn't get to write the rules of our economy in favor of wealthy interests at the expense of ordinary Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I will be circulating a letter to our colleagues that I hope we can send to Chairman Pai, and, hopefully, he will reconsider this decision that is really not in the interest of ordinary Americans.

Mr. GARAMENDI. If I might ask a question of the gentlemen. He represents the Silicon Valley—at least a large portion of the Silicon Valley—and the issue of net neutrality has been bouncing around here for some time.

Basically, the FCC, as I understand it, has decided that there would be net neutrality, which, as I understand it—and perhaps the gentleman can explain it better than I, so I will let him do so—may be the next thing that this new chairman intends to do away with.

Has the gentleman followed that?

Mr. KHANNA. I have. I appreciate the Congressman's leadership on this.

Net neutrality, as the gentleman knows, is a very simple idea. That means that everyone should have equal access to the internet; that you shouldn't get to pay for faster service or you shouldn't get to pay to have more of your message out.

You would think that if anyone would appreciate the importance of it, it is the President, who uses the tool of the internet with Twitter and Facebook.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Oh, the tweets.

Mr. KHANNA. You would think we would want a democracy where every citizen has equal access to these tools.

Well, who doesn't want that?

Some of these big companies that have concentrated economic power and have an interest in making money and not for speech.

This Chairman has shown a consistent pattern already, in a few weeks, of basically siding with these large telecommunication companies at the expense of ordinary citizens.

It may sound like a technical issue. Some folks glaze over when you say net neutrality or you talk about the technical issues of the lifeline program, but I think what they have got to know is you have an FCC Chairman who is siding with wealth interests in telecom companies over what would benefit ordinary people.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank the gentleman for the explanation and the purpose of net neutrality. In a way, it is one of the things that, in a very real way, protects the individual—by having access.

What is happening with these regulations and many of these executive orders that the President puts out is to remove from the individual protections that they have. I mentioned mountaintop removal in coal country and the protections that the indigent farmer down the stream has for clean water. That protection is gone.

You look at the mortgage guarantee. It is a small amount, but it is an additional $500 a year that an individual would have to pay, assuming they had to have a mortgage guarantee. Most low-income people have to have that mortgage guarantee in order to buy a home. It is $500 out of their pockets.

So it is the protections that have been in place. There may be others. I am sure that in the gentleman's area he may know of others, if he would like to share with us, but I really thank him for bringing to us his expertise in the area of communications. I know that he has worked in this area before. He represents a part of America and California where this is a very big issue.

Mr. KHANNA. I thank Congressman GARAMENDI for his leadership and showing what is really happening with the scale-back of all these regulations.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I will use another analogy of flying below the radar.

A lot of this is flying below the radar because we are looking at all of the tweets that come out in the morning, the various news programs focusing on the President, and missing some really important things that protect Americans.

Mr. KHANNA. If I can make one more comment. Everyone says they are not for regulation. That is easy. Every time I get on an airplane, I am very thankful that we have some regulations. Regulations can't just be eliminated with a hatchet, like this administration is doing.

Mr. GARAMENDI. That is so very true.

Let me just go through some of the regulations that are being repealed here in the House over the last couple of weeks.

First of all, let's remember that the Congressional Review Act being used to repeal these regulations has two parts to it. One, it has the ability of Congress to repeal regulations, which I think is a good idea. The second part of it, I think, has some real shortcomings. And that is, once that regulation has been repealed, both Houses vote before the President signs it, then the issue cannot be revisited by that administrative agency.

I gave the example of the BLM, but it applies across the board. Regulations that deal with smoking on airplanes is a regulation. If we repeal that regulation, suddenly there is smoking on airplanes. You can never go back and do a regulation again in that area.

I thank Mr. KHANNA for joining us and for bringing his expertise to us.

I am going to run down a quick list here. Oil and gas companies operate around the world. Our new Secretary of State was the CEO of ExxonMobil, the world's biggest oil company.

Did ExxonMobil pay a fee or a gratuity or corruption to a foreign country?

We will never know now because the Congress has passed a regulation that required oil and gas companies to disclose any fees, any money that they have paid to a foreign government for the opportunity to extract oil or gas from their country.

We happen to know that many of the countries in which these American oil and gas companies operate are rife with corruption. So this is a way for us to do an anticorruption program around the world that involves our national oil companies. That is on the way to being repealed.

How about mentally ill people being able to get a firearm?

I suspect 80 percent of Americans—maybe 100 percent—think that somebody who is seriously mentally ill ought not to be able to get a firearm.

Well, there is a mechanism. It is a national database. We call it the NICS database. It is a database that gun shops have to inquire if an individual is on that database for domestic violence, criminal activity, or for mental illness.

We have had a problem with the mental illness part of this because many mentally ill people do not get on the database for a variety of reasons. The counties, cities, States don't provide that information. In some cases, it is deemed to be proprietary or confidential.

But there is a way. It exists in the regulations today that would require the Social Security Administration—when it makes a payment for disability for severe mental illness to an individual, that individual's name goes on this database. When that individual may want to go down to the gun shop and buy a weapon, the gun shop would query the database and, lo and behold, the individual comes up and he won't able to get a gun.

It makes sense. It enhances the database. It adds to the database individuals that are so severely mentally ill that they are able to get Social Security disability payments.

Who is to object to that?

Well, apparently a majority of the House of Representatives and the Senate does object to that. Probably the National Rifle Association also. So now we have a situation in which we have a protection for Americans being protected from the mentally ill individual that could not buy a gun now suddenly being able to not be on the national database for those people that are mentally ill. One more protection is gone.

There are others, and I am going to run through them as quickly as I can here.

I don't know whether you believe in climate change, global warming. I certainly do. I have worked on this for

more than 30 years now, and it is a real issue. We know—there is no debate about this—that methane is a very powerful greenhouse gas. In fact, it is far more powerful than carbon dioxide.

So the emissions of methane are one of the things that we would want to reduce going into the atmosphere to add to those elements in the atmosphere that creates global warming, climate change.

Well, the House of Representatives has passed a resolution through the law that allows it to do so—to roll back a requirement that the Bureau of Land Management put in place that requires oil and gas companies that are drilling for oil, drilling for natural gas, to control the leakage of methane from the gas well.

Wow, that is a terrible thing to do. Really? To require that an oil company, a drilling company that is going after natural gas on government—excuse me, your land, the American public's land—that they, in the process of drilling for that natural gas or oil, control, capture the methane that would otherwise leak from that well?

Well, that regulation is gone. The protections of Americans are gone. Greenhouse gas emissions are emitted without regulatory control. Many of these gas wells are in communities and in neighborhoods that will also enjoy more methane emissions.

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One more—or maybe more. Oh, yes, labor violations. Labor laws have been on the books for well over 80 years. The labor laws are health and safety, worker safety, requirements on hours, working conditions, hazardous circumstances. There are many different regulations that affect employers. They have to provide a safe working environment for their workers. Some do. Well, I would say most work at making sure that their workplace is safe. Some do not. Some of those who do not provide a safe workplace have been fined by the Federal Government for those labor violations. It is a good thing. It causes those companies to provide a safe working environment for their employees.

A regulation was put forward by the Obama administration that said that if a company wants to contract with the Federal Government, they must disclose their labor violations, where they have violated the various labor laws. It may be hours of work, overtime pay, working conditions, hazardous circumstances, safety. They would have to disclose it. It didn't say they couldn't get a contract, but it did say that they would have to disclose to the public that they have not provided sufficient awareness of the various labor safety and workplace laws. That is on the way to being repealed.

What I want to do tonight is to simply say to the American public: Pay attention. There are many things going on here in Congress and in the administration that are harmful to you, the American public. The kind of protections that you have counted on—worker safety, environmental protections if you live downstream from a coal mining operation, any of those things—are in the process of being repealed, and your protections along with them. So be aware of what the new administration and the Congress is doing to you, not for you.

I could talk about the wall and about the $15 billion to $30 billion that is going to be spent if Mr. Trump gets his way here and builds a 1,400-mile wall. I want to just end with this, and that is choices. Your representatives, myself, 434 of my colleagues here and 100 Senators and a President, we make choices about how your tax money is going to be spent.

Should it be spent on a wall?

Well, let's consider for a moment spending it on a wall. This is $15 billion, the minimum amount of money, and it is not going to build much of the wall. But for $15 billion, what could you do for it?

I am from California. I was once a regent of the University of California and on the board for the California State University, so I am familiar with this system. $15 billion could fund the entire California State University system for 3 years, and that is nearly a half a million students. You could replace all of the water pipes in Flint, Michigan, 270 times over for $15 billion.

Choices. Do you want safe drinking water in Flint and other communities around the United States or do you want a wall? Are you concerned about the American military, the Navy, five Virginia-class submarines, or one Ford-class aircraft carrier plus a submarine? Or how about scholarships for undergraduate programs at the University of California, which I had the privilege of graduating from a few years ago?

27,777 4-year, full-time scholarships. That is the undergraduate population at the University of California Davis, which I have the privilege of representing.

There is one more place you could spend $15 billion or even one part of $15 billion, and it is on this. These are the deadly diseases in America. Let's see. Breast cancer, over the last decade we have seen breast cancer actually decline. Prostate cancer has declined by 11 percent, heart disease by 14 percent, stroke by 23 percent, HIV/AIDS by 52 percent. Alzheimer's has not declined. It has increased by 471 percent, and it is going to go even more.

What could we do with $15 billion of research on a disease that affects every American family?

We could almost assuredly find a cure for Alzheimer's. I thank my colleagues here in the House of Representatives for increasing the budget for Alzheimer's research from around $500 million to just under $1 billion. That was done last year. If we can increase that funding another $1 billion a year, the researchers indicate to us that we have a high probability of delaying the onset of Alzheimer's by 5 years. With another $1 billion after that, we probably could find a cure for this disease that is going to bust the American bank. Medicare and Medicaid, that is where the big money is going to be spent.

So my plea to our President and those who want to build a wall is: We have choices. You want to do something for the American public? Let's spend that $15 billion to $30 billion on education. You want to do something for every American family? Spend some portion of that $15 billion to $30 billion by doubling the amount of money that we are spending annually on Alzheimer's research. You want to do something for the security of our Nation? Meet those critical needs that our military has. Whether it is a new submarine or an aircraft carrier we can debate, but we do know that we have expenditures that are necessary in that area.

So, Mr. President, don't waste our money. Don't waste our tax money on a wall. By the way, we know Mexico is not going to pay for it. Don't get in a fight with our trading partner and our neighbors to the south and Australia.

Be aware, Americans. Watch closely to what is happening here in Washington. If you are concerned, so am I concerned about where we are headed and about what this government is doing to you, not for you, but rather to you.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

IMMIGRATION AND THE RULE OF LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives and to have the privilege to participate in this great deliberative body that we have and are.

On occasion, I come down here and listen to my colleagues from the other side of the aisle. They have been known to change the subject on me, or I have changed the subject that I came down here to speak about because I have listened to the things that they had to say. It is good for us to have that kind of debate, Mr. Speaker, because certainly I disagree with the conclusions that have been drawn here.

I want to take this from the top, and I will get to the wall situation along the way. I think those numbers are a long ways off, myself. I will start the immigration issue, Mr. Speaker. There has been a long battle that has gone on. For me, it goes back into the early