

MILITARY FOOD INSECURITY

(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, the House Agriculture Committee has been focused on the issue of food insecurity and the programs that serve those in need beyond personal resources, family support, and community programs.

Many are surprised to learn that 22,000 Active Duty military families receive supplemental nutritional assistance, or SNAP. Food insecurity for the families of these American heroes can be triggered by low pay among lower-ranking enlistees, high military spouse unemployment, larger household sizes, and unexpected financial emergencies.

We lifted one barrier to SNAP assistance for military families by disbanding the Department of Defense-administered Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance, or FSSA. It was determined that the FSSA benefit was duplicative, underutilized, hard to qualify for, and less valuable than SNAP, with as few as 100 military families utilizing FSSA.

Another significant barrier that prevents some military families from qualifying for SNAP is the fact that their off-base housing allowance counts as income when computing eligibility. It is my hope we remedy this.

Mr. Speaker, as we prepare for reauthorization of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, we must remember the needs of America's finest and their families, our American military. After all, nutrition matters.

AFFIRMING THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to affirm the great work of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

In my home community of Buffalo, New York, we have seen the EPA's effectiveness firsthand. Thirty years ago, the Buffalo River was declared biologically dead and ecologically destroyed because of industrial dumping of toxic waste directly into the river bed. Today, the Buffalo River has been remediated and continues to show vastly improved water quality.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, administered by the EPA; the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper; and our corporate partner, Honeywell, have invested more than \$70 million to remove 67,000 truckloads of toxic waste from the Buffalo River.

Today, the Buffalo River and adjacent land are helping to lead an economic and life-quality renaissance at the water's edge in Buffalo, New York.

TO THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT: IT'S TIME

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, it is a bitter reality that universal human rights are under daily assault around the world.

I rise today joining in celebration and in mourning with Chinese democracy activist Zhu Yufu. This past week, he turned 64, but he marked the occasion in prison.

Zhu Yufu has devoted his life to promoting democracy and human rights, to the ire of Chinese authorities. In 2012, he was condemned to 7 years imprisonment on unjust charges. Since then, his health has deteriorated, made worse by denial of medical care and inhumane treatment. His family fears for his life.

The poem that led to Yufu's imprisonment is called "It's Time." I completely agree. It is time. It is time for the Chinese government to provide Zhu Yufu with proper medical treatment and humane care. More than that, it is time for the Chinese Government to release Zhu Yufu and political prisoners like him who are unjustly detained. It is time for the Chinese Government to recognize and support freedom of speech, assembly, thought, and belief.

PUT AMERICA FIRST INSTEAD OF THE KREMLIN

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, for the sake of our country, I was relieved that General Michael Flynn resigned from his post as National Security Adviser. Not only did he mislead the Vice President and the public on his secret conversations with the Russian government, he may have also violated Federal law.

But what is just as concerning is that the Trump administration was aware of General Flynn's misconduct weeks ago and did nothing about it. The American people deserve to know what President Trump knew, and when he knew it.

And let me be clear: General Flynn's resignation is not the end of the Trump administration's shady ties to Russia. We still don't know President Trump's financial interests in Russia because he refuses to release his tax returns.

We still don't know the extent of Russia's disturbing interference in our election because our calls for an investigation have been stonewalled.

And we just learned that the Trump campaign was in regular conversation with Russian intelligence officials.

President Trump's coziness with Vladimir Putin is an urgent matter of national security.

It is time that the Trump administration truly put America first, rather than the Kremlin.

AMERICAN HEART MONTH

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

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize American Heart Month and the need to encourage and support one another to be proactive in preventative heart care.

I would like to thank President Trump for honoring the tradition of dedicating February as American Heart Month so that we may continue our fight against heart disease and heart defects as a nation.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Every year, one in four deaths is caused by heart disease, and approximately 40,000 babies are born in the U.S. with a congenital heart defect, including myself.

The good news is that heart disease can often be detected earlier and even prevented when we are proactive, make healthy choices, manage our health conditions, and keep up with our annual physicals.

Communities, health professionals, and families can work together to create opportunities for people to make healthier life choices and to lessen the stigma and fear of simply going to the doctor.

As this is American Heart Month, I encourage all Americans to use this month to raise awareness about heart disease and heart defects, and how we can prevent, treat, and cope with them, both at home and throughout our communities.

Through the support of my family and friends, the guidance of my doctors, and the grace of God, I am blessed to be standing here to support those across our Nation who are affected in some way by heart disease and heart defects. My prayers and thoughts go out to every one of you.

I ask my colleagues to join me in promoting American Heart Month so that we can all help save precious lives.

WE OWE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, National Security Adviser Michael Flynn's resignation is no substitute for answers to the serious questions that remain over President Trump's questionable connections to Russia, to Vladimir Putin.

Federal investigators believe that Flynn, who held secret communications with Russia's Ambassador, could have been compromised, or even the subject of blackmail. The Justice Department disclosed this danger to the White House weeks ago, yet the President allowed Mr. Flynn to continue in his position as National Security Adviser, after having that information disclosed to them.

This conduct could only be the tip of the iceberg. There are serious, unanswered questions that remain, and our

national security is at stake. Americans deserve answers.

Did the President or others know or direct Flynn's secret communications with Russia?

Why did the White House sit on its hands for weeks, even after being told its National Security Adviser could have been compromised?

Were Trump campaign officials colluding with Russians?

These are questions that the American people deserve answers to. We need a bipartisan, independent commission to examine these questions. The credibility of our government is at stake. Congress must act.

VOTERS TRUST TRUMP, NOT THE MEDIA

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, despite the saturation of negative media coverage of President Trump, the people have spoken. A recent poll found that President Trump is thought more trustworthy than the news media.

The administration is considered truthful by 49 percent of registered voters, but the media is less trusted than the administration, with only 39 percent finding it honest. So President Trump is more credible than the liberal national media.

That is no surprise. If the media wants to increase their credibility, they should report the news fairly, objectively, and without malice.

INHUMANE HUNTING TECHNIQUES ON WILDLIFE REFUGES IN ALASKA

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, so far, in 2017, Donald Trump and the Republicans have targeted women, immigrants, and health care. Now they are setting their sights on bear cubs, wolves, and coyotes.

Republicans, in cahoots with the gun lobby and with trophy hunters, want to eliminate a rule that currently prohibits hunters from using brutal means to kill our majestic animals in Alaska's 16 wildlife refuges.

This rule prevents snaring and trapping bears, including cubs, hunting wolves in their dens, and shooting bears from helicopters, among other methods.

Now, those opposed to the rule say that it hurts Alaska's economy, but there is no evidence of that. In fact, big game hunting represents only 2 percent of wildlife-related recreation on our national wildlife refuges.

Meanwhile, the National Park Service has estimated that wildlife watchers, those who go to see wildlife, not to shoot them, contribute \$1 billion to the State's economy.

I ask you: Is a trophy on the wall really worth it?

So please vote "no" on H.J. Res. 69 introduced by our colleague, Mr. YOUNG.

□ 1215

GENERAL MICHAEL FLYNN'S RESIGNATION

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

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for a nonpartisan, independent commission to immediately and thoroughly examine the influence in the 2016 election and at the Trump White House of the Russian Government. This House should have begun this critical oversight work immediately and served as a check on the White House to protect the American people, but it has failed to do so.

The resignation of General Michael Flynn has raised far more questions than it answered, and it is not acceptable to simply sit on our hands or to say that somehow the only problem is the leaks that exposed this misconduct and not the misconduct itself. That won't cut it.

The American people deserve to know the full picture of Russia's involvement in the election, of General Flynn's communication with Russian officials, and why President Trump took no action for weeks after learning of General Flynn's misconduct.

Unfortunately, this administration's idea of transparency is conducting sensitive national security discussions in the middle of a crowded Mar-a-Lago dining room in full view of his wealthy patrons. The American people deserve better. They deserve an independent, nonpartisan commission, and it is time for this House to do its job.

POTENTIAL CRIMES AND COVERUPS

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

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, Donald Trump poses the greatest Presidential threat to our democracy since Richard Nixon. It is about the potential crimes and the potential coverup. Seventeen different intelligence agencies have concluded that the Russians interfered with the election in order to help Donald Trump. Top Trump cronies like Carter Page, Paul Manafort, and Michael Flynn all had regular communications with high-level Russian intelligence agents at the same time they were engaging in hacking.

The National Security Adviser resigned in disgrace because of illegal communication with the Russian Ambassador. The President refuses to denounce Vladimir Putin and continues to try to make Russia great again.

Connect the dots. It is time for House Republicans to do their job and put

country ahead of party. Join us in a bipartisan investigation of the White House. What did the President know, and when did he know it?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The Chair would remind Members to avoid improper references to the President.

TAKING CARE OF OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the many veterans and the work that Congress is doing to support and represent them on the House floor this week. These are the heroes who keep us safe and secure each and every day.

This week, this body passed a few important bills to streamline access to care for veterans as well as provide new and better opportunities for veteran-owned businesses and veterans seeking employment.

Last month, the unemployment rate for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans increased to 6.3 percent, marking the fourth time in the last 7 months that group's percentage has been higher than the overall veteran unemployment rate. That means that about 211,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are still looking for work. That is 211,000 too many.

That is why one of the bills we passed this week establishes a Federal program recognizing private businesses that employ veterans and engage in community service to help our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, helping our Nation's veterans who have sacrificed so much for us is a critical priority and remains one of the most important objectives of this Congress. I will continue to use my time and effort to fight for every opportunity to support them when they return home to give them the hero's welcome they deserve.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 15, 2017.
Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 15, 2017, at 9:19 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 255.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 321.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.