

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, last week, Congressman STEVE CHABOT and I, as the co-chairs of the Cambodia Caucus, called upon Secretary Tillerson and the administration to prioritize human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Cambodia.

Just days later, Sam Rainsy, the leader of the opposition party in Cambodia, resigned in the face of a proposed bill that would dissolve the opposition party if he continued to lead the party.

This law on political parties would give the government far-reaching powers to suspend political parties at will. I urge the Cambodian National Assembly to set aside this undemocratic law that dangerously moves Cambodia toward being a one-party state, and to allow the Cambodian people to freely choose their own leaders.

ONLY CONGRESS HAS THE POWER TO DECLARE WAR

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I have just seen a news report that the President may invade Syria with ground troops.

Now, I criticized former President Obama for his actions in Libya, Iraq, and Syria, without seeking authorization from Congress, and leaning on the weak need that these were somehow authorized back in the AUMF after 9/11. This is far beyond the scope of that resolution, which I helped write, so to have a ground invasion of Syria, without authorization from Congress, will trigger the War Powers Act.

Let's be clear: The Constitution says, once we are at war, the President runs the war as Commander in Chief. But it is only the United States Congress that has the power to declare war, authorize war, which this essentially would be.

So the President must come to the Congress and ask for a new Authorization for Use of Military Force before launching any ground invasion of Syria.

SEATTLE'S DIVESTMENT FROM WELLS FARGO

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

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my hometown, the city of Seattle, on its historic decision to terminate its \$3 billion relationship with Wells Fargo Bank over its financing and support of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Last week, the Seattle City Council voted unanimously to divest from Wells Fargo, making it the first major city to do so.

Led by Native American and environmental activists, our city made an im-

portant statement about the vision that we have for our community and for our world. That vision centralizes both the rights of our native brothers and sisters, and our environment.

Just like it did with the \$15 minimum wage, Seattle continues to be a leader and a model for the rest of the country, and activists and cities around the United States have picked up the torch.

We stand united in prioritizing our environment, as it is deeply connected to the health of our communities. Rather than allowing dangerous pipeline projects to continue, putting millions of people at risk, we should be focused on being leaders in the international fight against climate change.

I am committed, Mr. Speaker, to taking every opportunity to protect our resources and fight for a bold alternative energy plan that includes a just transition that creates great union jobs and puts us on a sustainable path forward.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE HONORABLE JOHN MERCER LANGSTON

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

Mr. McEACHIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Honorable John Mercer Langston, who served in the 51st Congress as the first African-American Congressman from Virginia and, incidentally, represented the same district that I do, Virginia's Fourth.

Representative Langston became the fifth African-American man to graduate from the Oberlin Collegiate Department, and continued his education at Oberlin to receive a master's degree in theology.

Although he was deprived of admission to law school, Mr. Langston studied law under Philemon Bliss and passed the bar in 1844 to become Ohio's first African-American lawyer.

Mr. Langston's passion to uplift the Black community was demonstrated through the organization of State and local antislavery societies, his efforts to assist runaway slaves, and through calls for social reform.

Among his many other life accomplishments, Langston also served as the president of what is now known as Virginia State University.

I have great respect and appreciation for Mr. Langston and the life he led. Not only will his legacy live on through his descendants, but through myself and all of us who occupy this great hall who fight for the spirit of equality and justice.

RUSSIAN INFILTRATION

(Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is literally every day now that something new and even

more shocking comes out about the Trump administration and its connections with the Russian Government. Just last night, it was reported that, according to American intelligence officials, at least four members of the Trump campaign, senior members, were in constant contact with Russian intelligence officials for a year.

Mr. Speaker, this is not so much about Republican or Democrat as it is about democracy, our democracy. I want to thank those few Republicans in the Senate who have had the courage to put country before party and come forward and demand an independent, bipartisan investigation. Sadly, that has been met with silence on the Republican side of the aisle in this House.

We must have a 9/11-like commission to investigate to what extent Russian intelligence infiltrated our election.

MUSLIM AND REFUGEE BAN

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I want to read a letter from a Syrian refugee to the interfaith coalition sponsoring his family, which settled in Bloomfield, New Jersey, last month.

Muhammad is a father of four. His family was one of the last to arrive prior to the signing of President Trump's ban.

Muhammad wrote:

I feel ashamed when I repeat the words: Thank you.

I feel it's very few and very weak in front of your interest and your generosity.

The first thing I want to learn in the English language is how I can thank you more and more.

America is beautiful because you live in it.

These are the kind of families the Trump administration wants to turn away. They are the oppressed and the persecuted, the kind of people this country was founded for.

I understand the need to vet people coming to our country, and the importance of protecting our Nation's security. No one questions that at all.

But we cannot close our country to refugees like Muhammad and his family. We cannot sacrifice what it means to be American.

Muhammad is right, America is beautiful, and we can keep it that way by remaining a beacon of freedom and hope.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO BRITISH-AMERICAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BERGMAN). The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2761, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, of the following Member on the part of the House to the British-American Interparliamentary Group:

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS, Illinois

□ 1730

THE BLUE COLLAR CAUCUS

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, we are going to talk today about something very important: our economy, jobs, and the state of America in regards to those subject matters.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the State of South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), who is a good friend of mine, our colleague, and our assistant leader, to come address us on a very important issue that relates to many of those things that we talk about.

I would like to invite Leader Clyburn to come and talk to today. I really appreciate his coming and taking the time to be part of this hour.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Congressman VEASEY, from the great State of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as part of the observation of Black History Month to continue my series of remarks recognizing HBCUs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina.

Founded in 1870, just 5 years after the end of the Civil War, by the American Baptist Home Mission Society, Benedict was originally named Benedict Institute, after Stephen and Bathsheba Benedict of Rhode Island, Baptist abolitionists who had donated the funds to acquire the property on which the campus sits. Formerly the site of a pre-Civil War plantation, the first classes were held in a dilapidated mansion on the grounds. Benedict Institute was formerly chartered by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1894 and renamed Benedict College.

From its founding through 1930, Benedict was led by northern White Baptist ministers. In 1930, Reverend John Starks, an alumnus of Benedict, became the school's first African-American president. The heart of its campus has been designated the Benedict College Historic District, consisting of Morgan Hall, Pratt Hall, Duckett Hall, Antisdel Chapel, and Starks Center.

Like Allen University, its neighbor, Benedict College has a long legacy of

activism for civil rights and social justice. One of the very first civil rights campaigns in South Carolina was organized at Benedict College in 1937. Students participating in a national NAACP campaign led a demonstration in support of antilynching legislation pending in Congress.

One of Benedict's early graduates was Reverend Richard Carroll. Born into slavery in Barnwell, South Carolina, Reverend Carroll was a prominent Baptist minister in the late 1800s who received honors and appointments from both President William McKinley and President Theodore Roosevelt. Other prominent alumni include Modjeska Simkins, a prominent civil rights and public health champion; General Matthew Zimmerman, who served as Chief of Chaplains of the United States Army; and I.S. Leevy Johnson, the first African-American president of the South Carolina State Bar Association.

In the modern era, under the leadership of President David Swinton, Benedict has grown to a student body of more than 2,800 undergraduate students. In 1995, Swinton revived the football program and marching band 30 years after they had been shut down. He also championed a new sports complex on Two Notch Road in Columbia, which includes a football stadium, tennis courts, baseball fields, and fitness facilities. The liberal arts curriculum now offers degrees in 30 different disciplines. President Swinton also has led the efforts to preserve and restore many of the historic buildings on the campus, in part paid for with Federal funds from the HBCU Historic Preservation Program that we in this Congress have championed.

President Swinton will retire this summer after 23 years of service to the institution. I wish him well and thank him for his leadership.

Today, on the same land where Blacks once toiled in slavery, their descendants are now learning the tools they need to live up to Benedict College's motto: to be powers for good. Like so many HBCUs, Benedict offers a unique religious experience in which students from many different backgrounds share a common struggle for equality, and I am pleased to recognize them today.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the leader for his comments and for participating tonight. I really appreciate his words and that recognition.

I want to thank everyone that is with us today to talk about our Blue Collar Caucus and jobs in this country. I think that there is nothing more important to any individual—any man or woman—than the ability to be able to have a good job, to take care of your family, and to be able to be a part of the American economy and to contribute to that economy.

I want to start off talking about President Barack Obama. Under President Barack Obama, the American economy added 9.3 million jobs and

overcame one of the worst economic crises our Nation has ever seen.

In Arlington, Texas, which is part of the district that I represent in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, we have a General Motors plant. As you know, we could have lost our car industry. We have probably the most profitable plant in the General Motors family. All of the cars that you see around here at the Capitol, all of the Yukons, all of the Suburbans, the Tahoes, the Escalades, we make those in Arlington, Texas. We are very proud of our plant, very proud of the company being there all those years and for the UAW workers there that help make that plant great.

Despite the gains that we have seen with President Obama's saving the auto industry with the 9.3 million jobs and our overcoming one of the worst economic crises, again, that our country has ever seen, many workers across the U.S. felt that the economic recovery had left them behind. The rise of automation and outsourcing pushed many of those workers out of jobs that they absolutely loved. The frustration felt by these workers is understandable. Everyone—everyone—wants a good job that lets them, for their family, be able to take care of themselves, be able to pay their bills, send their kids to college, and buy a car.

President Trump appealed to many blue-collar workers during his campaign with a populist message and pledges to help working America, but his actions since taking office directly contradict so many of his promises. President Trump is playing one of the slickest political scams we have ever seen on hardworking American families. It is a scam. It is not real.

On his first day in office, President Trump signed an executive order that raised mortgage rates for new homeowners. Those same people that live in those Rust Belt States are those same individuals that were Democrats that went on television and went on social media and said they were going to give this guy a chance. What does he do on the very first day? We are going to raise interest rates on new homeowners, people trying to live the American Dream. There is nothing more that embodies the American Dream than being able to buy that first home. It was a slap in the face to those blue-collar workers and a boost to Wall Street.

President Trump also signed an executive order that made it easier for Wall Street bankers to make money on risky bets. His Labor and his Treasury Cabinet nominees both have track records that are very unfriendly to the middle class and have no understanding what middle class workers face.

It is clear that President Trump does not have a plan to fight for the working man and woman as he promised on the campaign trail. That is why my colleagues and I—BRENDAN BOYLE who is here with me from the State of Pennsylvania, we formed the Blue Collar Caucus to address challenges facing