

It is in the best tradition of organized labor to stand for others' rights and against a system that attempts to exploit the most vulnerable in our society. They stood up against threats to organized labor. They stood up against separating immigrant families. They stood up for working families and the most vulnerable in our society.

Again, I congratulate Tom Lemmon, Gretchen Newsom, and Carol Kim, along with many others, for their courage to speak up and resist.

Their resistance is a great patriotic reminder to all of us to stand up for what we know is right.

PENDING CRISIS IN AFRICA

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the impending crisis in Africa. More than 20 million people in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria face starvation and famine, according to the U.N. Secretary-General.

At a time when the mainstream media and the Washington press corps is obsessed with President Trump, they remain silent when there is a mounting disaster that could make the Syrian refugee crisis look like child's play.

All four of these countries have weak or failing governments, and each is in the midst of a seemingly endless conflict perpetrated by evil terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram, al Shabaab, and al-Qaida.

Pouring the billions of needed dollars into the region will help stop the coming famine, but it will take American leadership working with partners in the region willing to take a stand to rid their continent of these terrorist threats.

I will continue to bring light to the imminent crisis in Africa, and I urge my colleagues to focus on this critical issue.

MAKE IT IN AMERICA

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, in the 20th century, good-paying manufacturing jobs built the middle class in Rhode Island and across our country. But in recent decades, millions of these jobs have disappeared. Factories have been shuttered. Bad trade deals have moved American jobs to other countries.

It is time to rebuild American manufacturing. It is time to support making things in America again. That is why I have introduced H.R. 1672, the Make It In America Manufacturing Communities Act, a bipartisan bill that will help revitalize American manufacturing and promote the creation of good-paying jobs in our country.

This is a commonsense bill that incentivizes communities, together

with the private sector, higher education, and other key stakeholders to work together to strengthen their manufacturing economies. It provides targeted investments and support to make regions and local communities competitive in manufacturing again—communities like those in my home State of Rhode Island, the birthplace of the American industrial revolution.

Mr. Speaker, let's put America back to work at good-paying jobs. Let's get this done and pass H.R. 1672. Let's work to export great American goods and not great American jobs.

SIKH FESTIVAL OF VAISAKHI

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and to raise national awareness of the Sikh festival of Vaisakhi. Next Friday, hundreds of thousands of Sikhs living across the United States will take part in the festival to celebrate these significant elements of their religion: the Sikh New Year, the spring harvest, and the creation of Khalsa, the fellowship of devout Sikhs created in 1699.

This year, on April 8, the East Coast Sikh Coordination Committee has organized a National Sikh Day Parade to mark this occasion.

Mr. Speaker, I, along with my fellow chairs on the Sikh Congressional Caucus, introduced H. Res. 189, which recognizes Vaisakhi's historic, cultural, and religious significance and its importance to the Sikh communities across the United States. Additionally, it expresses this body's respect for all communities and religions who celebrate the festival.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this measure in honor of Vaisakhi.

CLOSE THE FOREIGN MONEY LOOPHOLE

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

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, we know from our law enforcement and intelligence agencies that there was an effort by Russia to covertly influence our elections.

And we know that, according to Republican Intelligence Committee Chairman RICHARD BURR, Russia is both covertly and overtly trying to influence elections right now in France and in Germany.

What most folks may not know is that right now there is a loophole in our campaign finance laws that would allow foreigners to use their wealth to influence our elections, possibly including wealthy individuals aligned with Russian dictator Vladimir Putin and corporations controlled by Putin allies.

This is not a partisan issue. This is an American issue. There was more

than \$1 billion spent by outside groups in the 2016 election. It is virtually impossible to know where all this money is coming from.

While U.S. laws prohibit foreign money from being used in our elections, there is a loophole that could allow this money in. That is why I am introducing the Election Protection and Integrity Certification Act to close that loophole and keep money from Russia and other foreign sources out of our election system.

Mr. Speaker, our democracy is under attack and Democrats and Republicans need to join together to stop Russian influence in our elections. We need to close the foreign money loophole.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHIEF DEPUTY CLINT GREENWOOD

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

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the life of Harris County Precinct 3 Assistant Chief Deputy Constable Clint Greenwood.

On Monday morning, Chief Deputy Greenwood was tragically murdered as he arrived to work at the Baytown, Texas, courthouse. Chief Deputy Greenwood was a respected and committed 30-year law enforcement veteran of the Houston area.

My heartfelt prayers go out to Chief Deputy Greenwood, his family, and the entire law enforcement community.

After yet another intentional killing of a Texas law enforcement officer, we must do more to end the continued violence and hate-filled rhetoric directed at our brave law enforcement officers. We hope for a quick apprehension of the evil perpetrators and an answer to why.

I stand in strong solidarity with the law enforcement community and offer my deepest condolences to all those impacted by the senseless murder of Chief Deputy Greenwood.

Rest in peace, Brother Clint Greenwood, and may God bless your family and all those who wear the uniform.

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PUTIN'S ATTEMPT TO HIJACK DEMOCRACY NEEDS INVESTIGATION

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, from the North Atlantic to the North Pacific, to the Baltic Seas, the Russian people are standing up to Vladimir Putin and his decades of egregious corruption. The protests in Moscow are punctuated with chants that Putin is a thief. And, of course, the anticorruption protest leaders have been jailed. And our President, the United States President, the leader of the free world, says that he admires Putin's strongman ways.

Here is the rub that every American of every political persuasion should be concerned with, and that every American family, millions of whom have lost a soldier in defense of our democracy, should be concerned with: Putin is trying to discredit the exact democracy that millions of our brothers and sisters have died for. Putin is a thug and a street punk. His attempt to hijack our democracy needs an aggressive and honest, independent investigation.

HONORING ELBERT BENNETT

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Mr. Elbert Bennett for his service as president of the Kentucky Magistrates and Commissioners Association board of directors. Elbert, one of nine children, was born in Princeton, Kentucky. After graduating Caldwell County High School in 1967, he began working at The Times Leader newspaper in Caldwell County. He has accomplished much since starting at that newspaper.

Elbert held office in the Kentucky Young Farmers Association and was elected magistrate in 2002. Prior to this election, Elbert served 20 years on the Fredonia City Council. Elbert has been a lifelong cattle farmer, is the former president of the Fredonia Lions Club, and is an active member of the Cattlemen's Association.

Most recently, Elbert has given his time to the Wounded Warrior Project, cooking barbecue and hosting veterans on his farms. Elbert is widely known and respected as a barbecue cook, cooking for thousands at church events, Lions Club events and children's events.

In 2008, Elbert Bennett's peers elected him to the Kentucky Magistrates and Commissioners Association board of directors. He has held every office inside the State association, including sergeant-at-arms, secretary, treasurer, vice president, and president.

While president of KMCA, the association has had many legislative victories, including stabilizing essential 911 resources for cities and counties in Kentucky. One of Elbert's most notable accomplishments as president of KMCA is the association's annual children's shoe drive, which donates over 600 pairs of shoes annually to needy schoolchildren all across the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

He was recently elected to the Kentucky Association of Counties executive board as second vice president, where he represents the magistrates and commissioners.

I cannot speak highly enough about Elbert Bennett and how his service has positively influenced the First District and the Commonwealth of Kentucky as a whole. I am honored to recognize Elbert Bennett today and the great work he does for the people of our State.

LET'S FIX THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT TOGETHER

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a sincere suggestion to our Republican colleagues who are working hard to come up with a replacement for the replacement plan on health care that didn't fly.

Let's fix the Affordable Care Act and work together in a bipartisan way. I have always said: the best legislation is always bipartisan. Drop your plans to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Stop undermining this law, and work with Democrats to make the law work better.

That is what the majority of Americans want us to do. Millions of people now have health insurance, thanks to the Affordable Care Act. Insurance companies can no longer refuse to insure people with preexisting conditions, and essential health benefits like maternity care and mental health care are now provided.

We know that no law is perfect. We acknowledge that. So let's do our job and do what the American public want us to do: join together in a bipartisan way to make the Affordable Care Act work better.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS HARMING OUR HEALTH

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Earth Day 2017 provides an important opportunity to raise awareness of the consequences of President Trump's executive action abandoning meaningful progress on climate. Left unchecked, climate change will continue to harm the health and safety of our communities. That is why the American Public Health Association declared 2017 as the Year of Climate Change and Health.

Seasonal changes, higher temperature, droughts, and severe storms are leading to more heat-related illnesses and death, increased asthma attacks, and more severe allergies. The scientific evidence is clear: climate change endangers human health. The health harms of climate change led 11 medical societies to form the Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health, which recently issued a report titled: "Medical Alert! Climate Change Is Harming Our Health."

One of the consortium doctors said: "The worst-case scenarios of climate change really worry me. It would mean a level of human suffering we can hardly contemplate, much less respond to."

Mr. Speaker, we can't allow that to happen. This problem demands immediate action, not denial, and certainly not delay.

NATIONAL RETIREMENT PLANNING WEEK

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the nearly 50 million baby boomers about to retire. It is National Retirement Planning Week, and before I get to the importance of this effort, let me say, there are no more important foundational programs that sustain our seniors and retirees than Medicare and Social Security. These earned benefits are critical, as nearly half of all baby boomers saved nothing for their retirement.

Thank you to Representative JOHN LARSON from Connecticut for introducing the Social Security 2100 Act, which protects and strengthens Social Security for decades to come. I have long been an advocate for protecting workers' pensions, and, sadly, more Americans than ever before are shouldering the burden of financing retirement alone.

That is why we need a national conversation on retirement planning, and Congress should lead it. Far too many seniors find Social Security is simply not enough to live on. America must preserve Social Security, protect retirement accounts and pensions, and work with our constituents to make sure they have the resources they need to have a dignified retirement.

Thank you to the National Retirement Planning Coalition, whose fantastic online resources are available to all Americans free of charge. Let's get to work for our retirees.

In closing, let me also say hardest congratulations to Congressman STEVE STIVERS from the great State of Ohio, who has been just promoted to brigadier general in the Ohio National Guard. Onward, STEVE STIVERS. We are very proud of you on a bipartisan basis.

ELIMINATE SUNSET DATE OF VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

(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, I rise today in support of H.R. 369, which will eliminate the sunset date of the Veterans Choice Program. The Choice Program gives the men and women who served this great Nation the ability to receive health care in their own home communities.

Instead of waiting for a VA appointment or traveling a long distance to a VA facility, our veterans can get services closer to home. The Choice Act states that the Department of Veterans Affairs is authorized to continue services until August 7, 2017, or until the funds provided under the Choice Act ran out, whatever occurs first.

There is still funding set aside for this program. Our veterans should be entitled to use it. That is why I support