

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 Cattle-men'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

H.R. 369, which would eliminate the expiration date on the Choice Act.

However, I do have serious concerns that I want to see addressed in the future with the third-party provider Health Net, which has provided less than satisfactory services to our veterans. We must give our veterans all that we can when they return home, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 369.

SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT TO CHANGE POLICY

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

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on February 1, I introduced legislation to prohibit individuals whose primary role is political, like Steve Bannon, from serving on the National Security Council or its main subgroup, the Principals Committee. The bill has obtained 183 cosponsors and received significant public support. The majority of the American people clearly believe that our national security policymaking process should not be contaminated by partisan politics.

Today, the Trump administration responded to this message, removing Mr. Bannon from the NSC and the Principals Committee. I am incredibly proud of this development, which is clearly in the interest of our Nation's security.

Today is a victory for democracy because it proves that the people, when they speak up and speak out, can change policy for the better.

MAKE OUR GOVERNMENT SAFE ACT

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

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, today, President Trump finally saw what I recognized and what the American people knew months ago: someone like Steve Bannon should not hold a security clearance, no less serve on the National Security Council.

Bannon has made numerous inflammatory statements in support of overthrowing the United States Government. During an interview on August 22, 2016, Bannon referred to himself as "Leninist," saying:

"Lenin wanted to destroy the state, and that's my goal too. I want to bring everything crashing down, and destroy all of today's establishment."

That is what he said, Mr. Speaker. That is why I introduced the Make Our Government Safe Act, which would amend the National Security Act of 1947 to prevent anyone from serving on the National Security Council who has made the statements that Steve Bannon did about taking down the system.

My bill would prevent someone who has threatened to destroy the government from participating in or attend-

ing National Security Council meetings. And today I stand a little bit more reassured that Bannon will not be serving on the National Security Council.

Up next: remove him from the White House.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1219, SUPPORTING AMERICA'S INNOVATORS ACT OF 2017, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM APRIL 7, 2017, THROUGH APRIL 24, 2017

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 242 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 242

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 1219) to amend the Investment Company Act of 1940 to expand the investor limitation for qualifying venture capital funds under an exemption from the definition of an investment company. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services; and (2) one motion to recommend.

SEC. 2. . On any legislative day during the period from April 7, 2017, through April 24, 2017—

(a) the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and

(b) the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time, within the limits of clause 4, section 5, article I of the Constitution, to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment.

SEC. 3. The Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 2 of this resolution as though under clause 8(a) of rule I.

SEC. 4. Each day during the period addressed by section 2 of this resolution shall not constitute a calendar day for purposes of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1546).

SEC. 5. Each day during the period addressed by section 2 of this resolution shall not constitute a legislative day for purposes of clause 7 of rule XIII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia). The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1230

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the underlying legislation. H.R. 1219, the Supporting America's Innovators Act of 2017, will allow America's small businesses to thrive, creating jobs, developing incredible products and services, and growing our Nation's economy.

Starting a business, designing a product, developing a service, these projects often require upfront capital. For entrepreneurs and startups in this country, access to capital is one of the biggest hurdles they will face. Without it, they may not have the cash on hand for research and development, the funds to make payroll at the end of the month, or the raw material needed to start production.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1219 seeks to provide more sources of funding for our small businesses by raising the cap that requires a group of investors to register as an investment company. This change in the law is important. It allows angel funds, which are basically a pool of accredited investors, to permit up to 250 investors in one fund as opposed to the 100 permitted by current law.

As long as the fund does not exceed \$10 million in capital commitments, it would be considered a qualified venture capital fund that is exempt from costly registration with the SEC.

Angel funds allow individuals who may not otherwise invest in startups to join together and direct their investment dollars to promising young companies. Without raising the cap on the size of these funds, we may be pushing potential investors out of the market.

Small businesses, in their earliest stages, often have nowhere to turn for credit. While banks have historically been a source of funds, in recent years, small business loans from banks have declined. That is where these groups of individual investors come in. In many cases, they are providing just enough cash to push businesses off the ground to the next level of funding; but by overregulating groups of angel investors, we are blocking significant sources of capital from ever reaching startups.

We need to wisely regulate in this country, and this legislation doesn't eliminate the need for larger investment funds to register with the SEC. It simply raises the cap for smaller groups of individuals to contribute a limited amount of funds to the American small business community. For businesses on the receiving end, these funds may be the difference between success and bankruptcy.

Thankfully, the Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act has already raised the cap requiring companies to register with the SEC from 500 investors to 2,000 investors. By allowing small companies