

better. She has been the jewel of my congressional operations and the truest friend to the people of southern and eastern Kentucky.

My wife, Cynthia, and I wish Sarah and her husband, Bud, many joyful and restful years of retirement with their children and grandchildren.

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OUR MILITARY DESERVES BETTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, when our bravest men and women raise their hand and volunteered to defend our Nation, they defend all of her people, rich and poor, young and old, Democrat and Republican, gay and straight, Americans of all races, religions, ethnicities, beliefs, gender identities.

Our soldiers do not discriminate. They do not offer to pay the ultimate sacrifice for some Americans and not for others. Their government owes them that same courtesy, that same decency in return.

Instead, this morning, our President has told thousands of American soldiers that they will fight for us, but we will not fight for them; that their deeply personal medical decisions are somehow the public's business; that although they are willing to sacrifice their lives to protect our freedom, we will not offer them the most basic freedom in return.

Today, the President of the United States looked American soldiers in the eye and dared to question their patriotism, their courage. He doubted their commitment to their brothers and sisters in uniform. He said that our military couldn't or wouldn't stand for all of us.

To the thousands of brave transgender men and women serving today in uniform, please know that a grateful Nation does not take your service, your patriotism for granted.

You deserve better from your President. You deserve better from your government. You deserve better from your country.

THE SECRET SERBIAN RESCUE MISSION OF WORLD WAR II

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, during the long, dark, lamentable days of World War II, Serbians and Americans forged a bond in a secret mission that remained classified for almost 60 years.

What was known as Operation Halyard became the largest rescue operation of American airmen in history. It would not have been possible without the courage of the Serbian people.

In 1944, as the Allies advanced into fortress Europe, American bombers based in southern Italy began to strike

Germany's vital oil supplies in Romania. The 15th Air Force launched nearly 20,000 sorties into Eastern Europe to degrade Hitler's war machine. To do this, they had to fly over Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia. As many as 1,500 pilots and airmen were shot down during these dangerous flights.

Serbian who had been resisting German forces since 1941 risked their own lives to rescue American aircrews and hide them from patrolling Nazis. One of them was Serbian George Dudich, the father of Elaine Dudich, my chief of staff when I was a judge in Texas.

For months, George Dudich and the other Serbians aided downed Americans, caring for and protecting the pilots, and then smuggling the aircrews back to Allied lines.

By August 1944, hundreds of other downed aircrews were being sheltered by the Serbian guerillas. The OSS, the predecessor to the CIA, devised a plan to evacuate the Allied pilots in a daring mission coordinated with the Serbian resistance.

On August 10, unarmed American C-47s flew numerous sorties deep into enemy territory and landed at an improvised airfield built and protected by local Serbians near the village of Pranjani. By the 18th, more than 500 Allied airmen had been secretly rescued and flown back to Italy.

Here on this poster you see the Serbian resistance, along with American aircrews that had been downed, moving them to hiding from the Nazis that were patrolling the areas. For over 60 years, this bold, unbelievable secret operation was kept classified.

Our alliance with Serbia and the Serbian people goes back even further to the First World War. One hundred years ago, Serbia stood up to the aggression from the larger Austrian-Hungarian empire. We should admire such defiance against overwhelming odds.

Serbia's stand against tyranny also set events in motion that would lead the U.S. to take up the cause of freedom in Europe in World War I. That common devotion to liberty and the spirit of the Halyard mission still lives today with the close ties between the United States and Serbia.

As was the case in both World Wars, Serbia and the United States still face shared threats. We work together now to preserve each others' security. Serbian soldiers serve along with U.S. forces in fighting terrorism in Afghanistan, and Serbia is a partner in keeping terrorism from spreading in Serbia and in Europe.

However, Russian propaganda efforts in the country are particularly strong and anti-Western. We must be vigilant to thwart the Kremlin's efforts to poison our relationship with Serbia.

Fortunately, Serbia's integration into the West has continued to move in spite of Russian disinformation. In 2006, Serbia joined NATO's Partnership for Peace and, in 2015, signed an Individual Partnership Action Plan with the alliance to strengthen cooperation.

Serbia has no stronger supporter for increased integration with the EuroAtlantic community than the United States. So for more than 100 years, we have been friends with the Serbian people. And as co-chair of the Serbian Caucus, along with the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER), I want to welcome Serbian Ambassador Matkovic and his staff to the House Chamber today.

With our shared events in Operation Halyard, our combined history, and our fight for freedom, the American people are forever grateful for those Serbs who came to America's rescue during those bleak days of World War II.

And that is just the way it is.

HONORING THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1927, which is on the floor this afternoon, the African American Civil Rights Network Act. This is to honor the sad, yet heroic struggle for civil rights in America, a struggle for those who participated in the civil rights movement, a struggle for people that were, in fact, soldiers in a war for justice and democracy.

We appropriately and regularly honor the soldiers who wore uniforms and went to Europe and Asia to defend our country, and we appropriately and properly give them benefits that they deserve for what they did to protect democracy and justice.

But what we forget is those citizens in America who had to fight their own government and their own country for those same rights of justice and democracy.

Enslaved for over 250 years, and then treated in a netherworld of segregation for 100 years, and then slowly creeping in after Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 and the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act of the sixties and to this day, those who fought for civil rights deserve to be recognized as soldiers for justice and democracy, and this bill will honor their work with the Civil Rights Network Act in our country.

They used protests to gain public attention and, eventually, to spur judicial and legislative action. It goes all the way back to W.E.B. DuBois and others who fought when they weren't so popular and on television.

H.R. 1927 would establish a Civil Rights Network to commemorate and honor the history of the civil rights movement. And I want to encourage that the proposed sites include the Memphis Heritage Trail, which has applied for funding as part of that historical network.

It was in Memphis, unfortunately, in April of 1968, where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was slain. Dr. King gave his last speech in Memphis the night before at the Mason Temple, the "I Have

Been to the Mountaintop" speech. And it was in Memphis where he started his last march about a week earlier, marching from the historic Clayborn Temple with the AFSCME workers—the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees—who were garbage workers not recognized as a union and not recognized as men. "I am a man." Dr. King came to Memphis as part of his fight for justice and freedom.

The Clayborn Temple has risen from the ashes and is being renewed in Memphis as a place for events, worship, concerts, and protests. The National Civil Rights Museum has risen at the Lorraine Motel, where Dr. King was slain; the National Civil Rights Museum, which is outstanding and, next year, will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the assassination. Our own JOHN LEWIS will be there.

H.R. 1927 would help to memorialize these events and these places across the United States and others, from North Carolina, where the sit-ins started, and Nashville, to the voting rights march in Selma, the atrocities in Birmingham, and Rosa Parks and the bus boycott in Montgomery.

Julian Bond, our own JOHN LEWIS, Rosa Parks, Viola Liuzzo, Ida B. Wells, Michael Schwerner, James Cheney, Andrew Goodman, Joseph Lowery, Roy Wilkins, and others will be recognized.

I look forward to voting for H.R. 1927 and saying that it more appropriately represents and remembers heroes, fighters for justice, democracy and freedom; not recognized as such, but, in fact, such.

SUPPORT FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA, IRAN, AND NORTH KOREA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my support of the Russia, Iran, and North Korea Sanctions Act. These countries actively undermine U.S. national security and threaten the safety and freedoms we enjoy in the United States.

Yesterday, Congress acted swiftly, voting 419-3 to defend the interests of the American people. I commend the leadership of House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman ROYCE and Majority Leader MCCARTHY for moving forward strong, meaningful legislation targeting the regimes carrying out brutal human rights violations against vulnerable peoples across the globe and threatening our national security.

The Obama administration, time and again, failed to hold these regimes accountable, and the outcomes of that inaction have had lasting ramifications on global stability and security.

U.S. officials are warning that North Korea will soon be able to launch a nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile. And, to be clear, North Korea will soon have the capacity to kill

American citizens on American soil. These are alarming developments and the United States must act aggressively to strengthen our own missile defense and immediately restrict North Korea's access to cash.

Murderous, tyrannical regimes have no place in the world, and I am confident that these bills will hold corrupt dictators accountable and advance justice for some of the world's most repressed populations.

AN IMPRESSIVE MILESTONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the Elk River Municipal Utilities Commission's recent 70th anniversary.

The Elk River Municipal Utilities Commission was created or established in 1915, when a private citizen started Elk River Power and Light. The business was eventually purchased by the village of Elk River and operated by the city council.

Later on, when their responsibilities expanded to include water, the council created the Elk River Municipal Utilities Commission.

Throughout the years, this organization has not only seen their responsibilities expand, but their jurisdiction expand as well. In fact, today, the commission covers Otsego, Dayton, and Big Lake, in addition to the Elk River area, providing services to more than 11,000 Minnesota customers.

Thank you to everyone that makes the Elk River Municipal Utilities work, and congratulations on 70 years of great service to our communities.

AN INCREDIBLE ANNIVERSARY

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 160th anniversary of the Anoka-Champlin Fire Department. Since 1857, this fire department has been dedicated to protecting lives and property in our communities.

To give a little perspective on the history of the organization, the Anoka-Champlin Fire Department has been serving the great State of Minnesota since it was still a territory and before the Civil War.

□ 1100

Due to their hard work and often lifesaving efforts, Anoka and Champlin have been allowed to grow into thriving communities.

I want to thank the cities of Anoka and Champlin for continuing to support this important organization. Thank you for your service and commitment to our communities and their citizens.

Congratulations on your anniversary and upcoming celebration. It is well deserved.

TWO LIVES HONORED FOR SAVING ANOTHER

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two men from my State whose quick thinking saved the life of another earlier this year.

Dr. Bob Schwegler and Dr. Tom Cress were both golfing with Steve Blattner at the Albany Golf Course when Steve began to suffer a cardiac event. Instead of panicking, both doctors successfully performed lifesaving measures on Steve, and with the assistance of the Albany Fire Department, their efforts were successful in saving Steve's life.

As a result of their heroic actions, Dr. Schwegler and Dr. Cress were recently presented with lifesaving awards by Stearns County Sheriff Don Gudmundson and Lieutenant Vic Weiss at the Stearns County Board of Commissioners meeting.

Thank you, Bob Schwegler, Tom Cress, and the Albany Fire Department, for your heroic actions. We appreciate your service.

A PERFECT SCORE

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a student in my district for an incredible academic achievement. Tyler Wilson of Andover, Minnesota, received a perfect score on his ACT this year, making him, no doubt, a valuable candidate for most colleges and universities across this country.

To give an idea on how extraordinary that achievement is, only 0.1 percent of all individuals who take the ACT receive a perfect score.

Tyler is going into his senior year at Andover High School. He hopes to attend either Drake University or the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities, with the goal of pursuing a career as a pharmacist.

We wish Tyler the best of luck on his senior year in high school, and we are excited to see what this scholar will accomplish in the future.

Congratulations again, Tyler. We are all so proud of you.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INDEPENDENT LIVING ON 35 YEARS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the National Council on Independent Living for celebrating its 35th anniversary this year. Their persistent advocacy has had a tremendous impact on the disability community and has not gone unnoticed.

Mr. Speaker, as you may know, before I was elected to serve in Congress, I worked for many years as a therapist, a rehab services manager, and worked in the community with individuals living with intellectual disabilities and as a licensed nursing home administrator.

Working with individuals facing life-changing diseases and disabilities has been one of the greatest joys of my life, after my wife and children and two grandsons. There is something extraordinary about supporting an individual as they set out on challenging journeys toward rehabilitation and autonomy.