

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Vickie Jasmann for winning the 2018 Wyoming Jefferson Award and thank her for her countless contributions to her community. She deserves to be extremely proud of all her hard work and of this award.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF FIRST LADY BARBARA
PIERCE BUSH

SPEECH OF

HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 25, 2018

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of First Lady Barbara Pierce Bush.

As our nation mourns the loss of a true patriot, an advocate for families, a treasured First Lady, a dedicated wife, mother and grandmother, we also take the time to remember the legacy Barbara Bush left behind.

Barbara Bush was born in New York City in 1925 to Pauline and Marvin Pierce.

She went on to marry her beloved husband, George H.W. Bush in 1945. The two recently celebrated their 73rd wedding anniversary early this year. Mrs. Bush devotedly stood by her husband's side though his military service and later supported him as he entered public service and ascended the presidency.

As First Lady, moved to action by her own experience as a mother to a child with dyslexia, she used her influence to highlight the importance of family literacy. She championed this cause across our nation, helping to raise over \$110 million to support family literacy programs through the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

Dedicated to her mission to end the generational cycle of illiteracy, she advocated for the passage of the National Literacy Act of 1991, which established the National Institute for Literacy and allowed libraries to serve as educational literacy center for adults.

Among her big achievements was to set an example of humility and hard work for her family.

In her own words, Mrs. Bush wrote, "I want to be known as a wife, a mother, a grandmother . . . that's what I am. And I'd like to be known as someone who really cared about people . . ."

Our nation grieves with President George H.W. Bush and the entire Bush family. Our hearts are heavy, but we are grateful that we were privileged enough to bear witness to her message of grace, civility, and patriotism. She was a true gift to our nation.

I honor the incredible life and legacy of First Lady Barbara Bush.

H. RES. 861

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have co-sponsored H. Res. 861, urging the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea. This does not mean that I would

necessarily oppose an accord with North Korea that only partially achieves our objectives.

THE LONG ARM OF INJUSTICE:
DID A U.N. COMMISSION FOUND-
ED TO FIGHT CORRUPTION HELP
THE KREMLIN DESTROY A RUS-
SIAN FAMILY?

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, April 27 I chaired a hearing at the Helsinki Commission inquiring into whether a U.N. Commission founded to fight corruption worked with the Kremlin to destroy a Russian family. The Russian government regularly pursues its vendettas beyond its borders, harassing and even murdering Russian emigres abroad—people who are on the Putin circle's target list for various reasons. The poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in England is one of the most recent examples to reach the news.

The family in question is the Bitkovs, and the Kremlin's sadistic pursuit of them is in its way just as shocking as its cruel murder of Litvinenko and the attempted murders of the Skripals. The Bitkovs are still alive today, but they have been hounded for over a decade, to the opposite end of the world, and beyond the limits of human endurance—merely for resisting Putin favorites who sought to take over their successful paper manufacturing company.

More shocking, the facts of the case strongly indicate—and we will hear testimony on this today—that the United Nations' International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, or CICIG, became deeply involved in the Kremlin's persecution of the Bitkov family. Indeed that CICIG acted as the Kremlin's operational agent in brutalizing and tormenting the Bitkov family.

Congress has a special responsibility in this matter because the United States is one of the largest contributors to CICIG's budget. There has been little congressional oversight of CICIG—it's clearly time for that to change.

In the 1990s Igor and Irina Bitkov built the Northwest Timber Company, acquiring and modernizing old factories to increase paper production. As their company grew, the Bitkovs took loans from several Russian state banks to finance further modernization. Their business prospered—grew to a value of hundreds of millions of dollars—and the family was approached by a powerful bank executive who sought to buy a majority share in the company at a significantly below-market rate. Other officials asked Irina to become politically involved in the President Vladimir Putin's party.

When the Bitkovs refused things got very ugly. Their 16-year-old daughter, Anastasia, was kidnapped for several days, drugged, and repeatedly raped. Her parents ransomed her—paying the money to policemen, who said they were go-betweens to the kidnappers. Then the banks suddenly called in the loans, even though the Bitkovs had excellent credit. The family was threatened with imprisonment and death.

Fearing for their lives, the family fled Russia. They found what they thought was legal refuge in Guatemala with the help of a Guatemalan law firm. They acquired Guatemalan passports, bought a house, learned Spanish, and gave birth to their second child, Vladimir.

But the Kremlin caught up to them and VTB Bank, one of Russia's biggest state-controlled banks, often referred to as "Putin's Piggy Bank," filed a complaint against them in Guatemala, alleging use of false identification documents.

While we don't know exactly what transpired internally to CICIG and the Guatemalan state agencies that work with them, it appears to have been taken up by the Guatemalan state and CICIG. In any case, the Bitkovs suddenly found themselves catapulted into what has become for them a horror without end.

On January 15, 2015, Igor, Irina, Anastasia and Vladimir were awoken by an armed raid on their home—70 or so armed policemen woke them up, took them away, and spent 20 hours tearing apart their home and their office.

It got much worse—the Bitkovs were put into cages for nine days. Their daughter—remember she had been kidnapped and repeatedly raped years earlier—was denied medication, now suffered a nervous breakdown. As the ordeal continued, she would later make multiple suicide attempts. Their infant son was torn away from them, not even permitted to stay with friends, and sent to an orphanage, where he sustained facial injuries, a chipped tooth, conjunctivitis, lost the ability to speak. When family friends recovered him they found that, when given food, little Vladimir immediately began hiding it under his shirt. I will not say more now about the Bitkovs harrowing ordeal—their lawyers will speak to that. Suffice it to say that Igor, Irina, and Anastasia have remained incarcerated since January 2015.

In January of this year, despite an earlier appeals court ruling that the Bitkovs' alleged offense was only administrative in nature and punishable with a fine, Igor was sentenced to 19 years in prison and Irina and Anastasia were sentenced to 14 years each. These sentences were far harsher than those given to Guatemalan officials who perpetrated the sale of passports—they are harsher than sentences given to rapists or murderers.

What was CICIG's role in all of this? What we know for a fact is this: CICIG and a special branch of the attorney general's office worked together on the investigation and arrest of the Bitkovs—CICIG personnel participated in the raid on the Bitkovs home. Then CICIG and VTB Bank initiated and aggressively pursued the legal case against them, consistently arguing at every level of the judicial process against the Bitkovs, including against their appeal to be tried as migrants guilty of an administrative offense rather than a criminal one. CICIG—via its representative Claudia Gonzalez Orellana—defended the role of the VTB Bank in the prosecution of the Bitkovs. Oddly, CICIG never prosecuted the law firm which provided the Bitkovs with the passports that destroyed their lives.

As Bill Browder testified: "Inexplicably . . . In January 2015, a criminal case against the Bitkovs was opened at the direction of CICIG. Immediately after, 70 armed police officers raided the Bitkov's home, arrested Irina, Igor, and Anastasia and detained them in cages behind the parking garage in the main court building of Guatemala City."

NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS DAY

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and respect that I take this time to recognize National Civil Rights Day, which was designated by the 100th United States Congress and proclaimed by President Ronald Reagan on August 12, 1987. On this historic occasion, we remember the struggle and perseverance of the brave leaders of the Civil Rights Movement who passionately fought for equal justice and opportunity under the law, while celebrating and honoring the lives of the countless individuals who tirelessly led the charge to create a better America, from President Abraham Lincoln to Susan B. Anthony to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. On this day, we also take the time to reflect on the continued efforts being made every day toward securing and protecting life and liberty for every citizen of our great nation.

On August 28, 1963, Dr. King led an estimated 250,000 people in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Through his words and actions, Dr. King inspired his generation, as well as generations to come, while promoting racial equality in the United States. He was a peaceful human rights activist who denounced violence as a means to communicate. For his vision and work toward a just society, he was the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Dr. King is worthy of the highest praise and continues to be the truest example of all that is good and noble in the struggle for equality and freedom.

The work of Dr. King and each individual who sought positive change during the Civil Rights Movement has strengthened the resolve of future generations. The lasting legacy of these individuals has transformed society in Northwest Indiana, throughout the United States, and beyond. At home in Northwest Indiana, our communities have, for decades, been fortunate to have outstanding leaders of all races, genders, and creeds who have led by example and dedicated themselves to the ideals inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, those of justice, equality, and freedom. Northwest Indiana is also the proud home to many community groups and individuals that have given of their time and greatest efforts to ensure that our civil rights are protected.

I also congratulate the efforts of former Gary, Indiana Mayor Richard Hatcher who, in 1967, was one of two African Americans elected to serve as mayor of a large city. This marked the first time in our nation's history that an African American would hold this office. Following his twenty years of service in this capacity, Mayor Hatcher has continued to work on many projects throughout Northwest Indiana. His proposal for the National Civil Rights Hall of Fame in Gary will honor and recognize the great contributions of those who challenged American culture and whose shoulders we currently stand on as we work to secure a truly fair, just, and tolerant society.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in commemorating National Civil Rights Day. We are honored to take this time to remember those who fight so courageously for equality, and we thank them for their perseverance, sacrifice,

and struggle. The significance of National Civil Rights Day will continue to hold special meaning for generations to come.

IN HONOR OF LEROY JOHNSON
FOR BEING SELECTED AS A FI-
NALIST FOR THE 2018 WYOMING
JEFFERSON AWARD

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate LeRoy Johnson on being selected as a finalist for the 2018 Wyoming Jefferson Award. He deserves to be very proud of this prestigious recognition.

The Jefferson Award is the most revered award for public service in Wyoming. It was created with the goal of honoring individuals who enrich the communities and may otherwise go unnoticed. The award emphasizes the importance of serving local communities and that one person can indeed make a difference. In Wyoming, a panel of five judges independently score nominated individuals and determine four finalists, including one winner.

LeRoy Johnson has dedicated the past 27 years of his life to serving his community. After retiring in 1991, LeRoy and his wife, Inez, moved to Sheridan, Wyoming and immediately started to volunteer around the community. He first got involved in the Trinity Lutheran Church and the Sheridan Senior Center. He started as a driver for the Home Delivered Meals Program when he moved, and has been delivering meals every week since then. He also volunteers at the VA Hospital, where he connects with his fellow veterans while making coffee and visiting with them and their families.

LeRoy is respected by the community and has touched the lives of many in it. Although he is 90 years old now, he has never stopped helping others. Whether he is ringing the bell for the Salvation Army at Christmas, helping his children, or promoting stewardship and agriculture education, LeRoy is always striving to improve his community.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate LeRoy Johnson for being selected as a finalist for the 2018 Wyoming Jefferson Award and thank him for his countless contributions to his community. He and his family deserve to be extremely proud of all his hard work and of this recognition.

IN OPPOSITION TO AMENDMENT
NO. 147 TO H.R. 4 FAA REAU-
THORIZATION ACT OF 2018

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to Amendment No. 147 to H.R. 4, the "FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018," the intent of which is to direct nonstop flights from Reagan National Airport (DCA) to San Antonio, Texas.

I oppose the amendment for several reasons.

First, Amendment 147 would arbitrarily alter the number of flights that are permitted to go beyond the federally mandated 1,250 mile perimeter rule around Reagan National Airport (DCA) that was created by Congress in the 1980s.

Second, Amendment 147 would allow four new beyond perimeter exemptions to each carrier that commits to swap an inside perimeter slot to a large-hub airport to serve an airport within 25 miles of a military medical center that does not currently have service, exemptions that apply only to airports in San Antonio and San Diego.

Third, Amendment 147 would politicize the slot and perimeter rules at Reagan National Airport (DCA) by earmarking slots that can only be used to serve limited destinations that are predetermined by Congress.

Last, Amendment 147 sets a dangerous precedent of carving out predetermined markets for beyond perimeter exemptions, removing free-market business decisions from the carriers and placing the decision on which routes should be served in the hands of legislators.

The High-Density ("Slot") or Perimeter Rules governing flight operations at DCA are designed to both manage congestion at DCA and also balance traffic between DCA and IAD, the two airports in a single airport system.

Although the intent of Amendment 147 may be well-meaning, the amendment as currently drafted adversely affects communities with current service to DCA, as well as Dulles International Airport and the populations it serves.

This is because changes to the High-Density ("Slot") or Perimeter Rules governing flight operations at DCA will lead to secondary and tertiary effects on flight operations at airports around the nation.

For these reasons Amendment 147 is opposed by both International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the largest airline union in the nation; and by American Airlines, one of the largest air carriers in the world.

I include in the RECORD a letter from the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, and urge all Members to join me in voting against Amendment 147 to H.R. 4.

APRIL 26, 2018.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, we strongly urge you to vote "NO" to the Cuellar No. 147 amendment to the FAA Reauthorization Act, H.R. 4 when it's considered. As the largest Airline Union in the United States, we believe this amendment will have a negative impact on the thousands of airline workers that we proudly represent in the local metropolitan Washington D.C. area. We oppose any changes to the perimeter rules governing flight operations at National Airport ("DCA") that could have a negative impact on our airline membership.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding our position, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Sincerely,

HASAN SOLOMON,
National Legislative Director.