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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DESJARLAIS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC

May 17, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable SCOTT DESJARLAIS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

RECOGNIZING DYLAN RHEKER AS MACOMB COUNTY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize recently named Macomb County Volunteer of the Year, eighth-grader Dylan Rheker.

Dylan, age 14, volunteers at the Village of East Harbor senior living facility, at Francis A. Higgins Elementary School, at the Anna Mae Burdi Early Childhood Center, as well as Selfridge

Air National Guard Base and the Roseville Community Schools.

However, what is also impressive, in addition to Dylan's giving spirit, is his perseverance. You see, Dylan was born with neurofibromatosis, a condition which causes tumors to form in his brain, spinal cord, and nerves. Dylan was also diagnosed with cancer and has been undergoing chemotherapy for the past 4 years.

None of this deters the straight-A student as he helps people across the 10th Congressional District. In fact, Dylan recently set a school volunteer hour record, with 236 hours of volunteer service last year. When asked about his volunteerism, Dylan responds that he is "happy to help" and "always here if someone needs help."

Dylan is an outstanding young man, and I am extremely proud of all the work he does in our district to make the community a better place to live and work. I wish him the best of luck in the future, and I hope all of you will as well.

RECOGNIZING CARLA VILLALVAZO AS WINNER OF 2018 CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Carla Villalvazo, a high school student from Eisenhower High School in Shelby Township, Michigan. Carla is the winner of the 2018 Congressional Art Competition for my district. Her artwork titled "Forget Me Not" is a watercolor painting which will hang in the Cannon tunnel of the Capitol for the next year.

Importantly, it is not only wonderful artwork, it talks about the struggle the family has with a family member with Alzheimer's. It is great artwork, but it also touches my heart and, I think, many others.

I also recognize second-place finisher Stefanie Frontera, also from Eisenhower High School, and third-place finisher Christina Berels from Cardinal Mooney High School. These students all submitted wonderful pieces of art.

The second- and third-place winners will hang in my office.

I thank them all for their submission.

UNDERMINING OF OUR DEMOCRACY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. SUOZZI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, Russia has been working to undermine our democracy, as well as democracies throughout Europe, including Central and Eastern Europe.

Unfortunately, too many Americans and elected officials have been distracted from Russia's secret operations because of the pitched, partisan battle regarding Putin's involvement in the 2016 Presidential race.

The bottom line is this: Democrats and Republicans can't lose focus on Russia's worldwide treachery due to our hyperpartisanship here at home.

Instead, Democrats and Republicans in Congress must work together to expose Russia's worldwide plan to subvert democracy. We must face the reality that Russia is a strategic competitor of the United States that is using nontraditional, nonmilitary weapons in a hybrid warfare to undermine democracies in countries that are ill-equipped to combat their malign efforts.

Instead of focusing on Russia's activities during the 2016 election, I have introduced a bipartisan bill, the Russia Anti-Corruption Act, with 13 Republicans and 10 Democratic cosponsors, to expose and thwart Putin and his cronies' illicit activities in Eastern Europe and Europe as a whole.

Whether bribing politicians, cyber attacks, manipulating social media networks, buying media outlets to promote propaganda, or purchasing power plants to control energy supplies to gain leverage over unstable governments, we must define, document, and

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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disrupt the corruption flowing from Moscow, which imperils the democratic foundations of our U.S. allies.

Our legislation would establish within the State Department an office of anticorruption relating to illicit Russian financial activities in Europe which would analyze Russia's financial meddling in strategic European sectors, including real estate, energy, media, and infrastructure.

The office will collaborate with the Treasury Department to train U.S. diplomats to work with foreign partners to uncover and prosecute illegal Russian financial activity. This office will also work with our NATO allies to elevate anticorruption operations as part of NATO's readiness action plan.

Oligarchs connected to Vladimir Putin are malevolent allies in the Russian President's hybrid warfare scheme. They flood Europe with dirty money, bribing politicians and purchasing key assets to subvert democracy. The Panama Papers found a trail of \$2 billion that leads back to the Russian President. Such money has gone to support fringe political parties in France, Germany, Austria, and elsewhere.

Well-funded Russian media outlets also play a key role in this hybrid warfare. They spread lies and weaken faith in European governments. Our allies in Central and Eastern Europe have accused Russia of a campaign of bribery meant to undermine the transatlantic alliance.

All of this, of course, complements Russia's more overt tactics, from its military aggression in the Ukraine to its campaign of assassinations on European soil. As Putin and his cronies work to discredit open societies, the dark and dangerous sphere of Moscow's influence grows and grows and grows. That is how democracies can die.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about President Trump, and it is not about Democrats versus Republicans. Members of Congress must work together to find solutions to the very serious threats posed by Russia the world over.

I now yield to my friend and colleague, Mr. FRENCH HILL, the original cosponsor of the Russia Anti-Corruption Act and a real leader on this critical issue.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from New York for yielding and compliment him for his leadership on this topic.

Just like rebuilding our transatlantic relationship on NATO and our partners for military work and just like our work in exporting energy now, natural gas and oil, to Europe to offset the Russian dominance, this work, this political work, is essential. I thank my friend from New York, and I was proud to be an original cosponsor on this legislation.

I want to tell you, on a recent visit in the last few months I had to Krakow, Poland, I was with the Kosciuszko Institute there in Krakow, which has studied Russian cyber attacks throughout Central Europe extensively.

They were telling all of us that they are the front line of propaganda, cyber attack, testing and training for what we have seen in the United States and around the world.

The institute cited Estonia in 2007, Georgia in 2008, the Ukraine in 2011, and the 2013 Energetic Bear attack as well-known public examples of how Russia is using Central Europe to perfect their strategies before deploying to other Western countries, including what we witnessed here in the United States.

By the Congress addressing and passing Mr. SUOZZI's bill, we can help Europeans on the front lines of the fight against the Russian corruption, propaganda, and cyber intrusion machine.

I thank my friend for the time he so generously gave to me.

HONORING LIEUTENANT AARON CROOK OF THE BLUEFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, as our Nation honors National Police Week, I rise today to remember a fallen officer, Lieutenant Aaron Crook of the Bluefield Police Department.

This week, the name of Officer Crook, along with 359 of his fallen brothers and sisters in blue, will be added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial here in Washington. As our Nation honors our police officers for their sacrifices, we give thanks to the life of Officer Crook, whom we sadly lost last May.

Lieutenant Crook was born in Summers County, graduated from Bluefield State College, and proudly served in the United States Marine Corps Reserve for 6 years. After serving his Nation, he exchanged his Marine uniform for that of the Bluefield Police Department in 2008.

Lieutenant Crook was an outstanding police officer and devoted family man. He loved the outdoors and would never pass up an opportunity to go fishing. In fact, the city of Bluefield is planning to rename a lake in his honor so his legacy can carry on through one of his favorite pastimes.

His memory is kept alive by his wife, Whitney; his kids, Brycen and Paislee; his extended family; the Bluefield Police Department; and so many others.

He will never be forgotten. Our State and country lost a good man, and Officer Crook is missed each and every day. May he rest in peace.

MEMORIALIZING OFFICERS LOST IN THE LINE OF DUTY

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to speak on the House floor today in

recognition of National Police Week and to memorialize the officers lost in the line of duty.

For me and for the communities that I represent, it is personal. Just 2 years ago, Officers Lesley Zerebny and Gil Vega from the Palm Springs Police Department were shot and killed in the line of duty, responding to what appeared to be a routine domestic disturbance.

In the wake of this tragedy, our communities came together to remember Officers Zerebny and Vega and to do more for the entire law enforcement community.

Over the past year, I have worked with law enforcement, firefighters, and other local and national public safety officer leaders to draft the Heroes Lesley Zerebny and Gil Vega First Responder Survivors Support Act, legislation that honors those who have passed by serving the living.

We developed this bill with one central idea in mind: that those who risk their lives for our community deserve the peace of mind to know that if something happened to them their family would be okay—that they would be able to pay off their debt, put their kids through college, and have a fair shot of making it in the world.

So we did the math, looking at the existing Public Safety Officer Benefit Program to see if it achieved these principles, and we found that families of fallen first responders, those who gave their all to protect us, are being shortchanged and don't even have enough to pay off their debt and pay for the rising cost of an education.

Families of fallen public safety officers are still struggling. My bipartisan bill will correct this and provide needed relief for those who sacrifice so much. It will increase the Public Safety Officer Benefit from \$350,000 to \$500,000 in order to pay off the calculated national average debt most families have. It will increase the monthly education benefit from \$1,024 per month to \$2,000 per month to ensure they can afford the actual rising cost of an education. And it will fix a bureaucratic loophole that costs families tens of thousands of dollars for no fault of their own.

Right now, our men and women who risk their lives in order to save our lives are being shortchanged. I urge all Members of Congress to do the right thing, to follow words with action and actually do something pragmatic that will improve the lives of fallen first responders' families.

I hope that all Members will cosponsor and support my bipartisan Heroes Lesley Zerebny and Gil Vega First Responder Survivors Support Act, and I urge the Speaker to bring it up for a vote immediately. Let's support this bill and stand up for these families that have sacrificed so much for us.

□ 1015

HONORING CHRISTOPHER'S CLUBHOUSE

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to honor an incredible organization in my