

out of his way to help family, friends, and the people who worked for him. He felt a constant need to give back to the community and to the world.

After the terror attacks of 9/11, he volunteered his services, representing the families of the victims. When Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast in Texas, he not only opened his wallet but donated his time, helping to get supplies to the people affected.

His firm has, for many years, sponsored the Respect Project in the San Antonio area, awarding monetary prizes to area elementary students based on essays regarding what it means to respect others.

He donated time and money to many other causes, such as halfway houses, women's shelters, and foundations providing a safe environment for children to reconnect with abusive parents.

For all of us, life is the final verdict. For the lawyer, there can be no better final verdict than that of his client, that he was a lawyer his client could always trust, that he was a lawyer his clients could always depend upon, that he was a lawyer his client always knew had his back. Without question, Tom Rhodes was that lawyer.

RECOGNIZING JONATHAN WALSH

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a conscientious young citizen in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who recently was named the Upper Bucks YMCA Role Model of the Year.

Jonathan Walsh of Quakertown received this award for his participation in the YMCA's Teen Fusion after-school program, where he stood out amongst his peers for his respect, his sense of responsibility, and his honesty. I commend Jonathan for this impressive achievement, and I look forward to seeing what this future leader will accomplish in the years ahead.

I also want to commend the Upper Bucks YMCA for recognizing Jonathan and wish this organization well as it celebrates its 50th year of service to the community. I would especially like to thank Upper Bucks YMCA Executive Director Pat Edwards and President of the Board of Directors Dale Westwood for all the work they do in our community.

RECOGNIZING JENNA RUFO AND TODD BAUER

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two education professionals in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, whose dedication to our community's students has led to their appointment as assistant superintendents for the North Penn School District.

Jenna Rufo and Todd Bauer were sworn in on July 9 at the Montgomery County courthouse and have recently accepted their new responsibilities.

Before becoming assistant superintendent, Jenna was the North Penn

School District's director of special education, while Todd served as principal of the North Penn High School. In their new roles, Jenna will focus primarily on school safety, mental health, professional development, and cultural issues; and Todd will focus on accountability, athletics, summer school, redistricting, and school board policies.

We commend these fine public servants for their work and wish them the best of luck as they begin this new chapter in their careers.

I also thank former Assistant Superintendent Diana Holben for her service as well and wish her all the best in her retirement.

RECOGNIZING MATT PHELAN

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a dedicated public servant in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. On July 3, Matt Phelan was officially sworn in as police chief of Tincicum Township by Magisterial District Judge Gary Gambardella. He had been serving as acting police chief since January, upon the appointment of James Sabath to chief of the Newtown Borough Police Department.

The Tincicum Township Police Department hired Chief Phelan in 1998 at the age of 22, after he studied at Bloomsburg University and graduated at the top of his class from Temple Police Academy.

His record of selflessness, courage, and professionalism speaks for itself. In 2015, then-Sergeant Phelan prevented an armed home invasion suspect from fleeing the crime scene, risking his life in the pursuit of justice.

We congratulate you, Chief Phelan, on this well-deserved appointment, and we are grateful for your service to our community, along with the entire Tincicum Police Department.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S COMMENTS IN HELSINKI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, viewing Monday's display in Helsinki as a devastating manner is not exaggeration. It is not hyperbole. It is not exaggerating.

Frankly, I think it is important for the Congress to adhere to its responsibilities in Article I, which indicates that all legislative powers herein are vested in this Congress.

We must do our job on behalf of the American people.

So let me read: "President Trump, you first. Just now, President Putin denied having anything to do with the election interference in 2016. Every U.S. intelligence agency has concluded that Russia did. My first question for you, sir, is: Who do you believe?"

This is a reporter from the AP.

"My second question is: Would you now, with the whole world watching, tell President Putin—would you denounce what happened in 2016, and would you warn him to never do it again?"

The answer of the President of the United States: "So let me just say that we have two thoughts. You have groups that are wondering why the FBI never took the server. Why haven't they taken the server? Why was the FBI told to leave the office of the Democratic National Committee? I've been wondering that, I've been asking that for months and months, and I've been tweeting it out and calling it out on social media. Where is the server? I want to know, where is the server, and what is the server saying? With that being said, all I can do is ask the question.

"My people came to me. Dan Coats came to me, and some others, and they said they think it's Russia. I have President Putin; he just said it's not Russia. I will say this: I don't see any reason why it would be.

"But I really do want to see the server. But I have confidence in both parties. I really believe that this will probably go on for a while, but I don't think it can go on without finding out what happened to the server."

□ 1030

He goes on to say:

So I have great confidence in my intelligence people, but I will tell you that President Putin was extremely strong and powerful in his denial today.

And what he did is an incredible offer.

He offered to have his people working with our people. Thank you.

In response, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, a POW, said these words: "Today's press conferences in Helsinki was one of the most disgraceful performances by an American President in memory. The damage inflicted by President Trump's naivete, egotism, false equivalence, and sympathy for autocrats is difficult to calculate. But it is clear that the summit in Helsinki was a tragic mistake."

"President Trump proved not only unable, but unwilling to stand up to Putin. He and Putin seem to be speaking from the same script, as the President made a conscious choice to defend a tyrant against the fair questions of a free press and to grant Putin an uncontested platform to spew propaganda and lies to the world."

Let me remind you that the question of the reporter was: My first question to you, sir, is, who do you believe, Mr. President? My second question is: Would you now, with the world watching, tell President Putin would you denounce what happened in 2016?

It is clear that the Russians invaded and altered the election of 2016. It has been stated by our intelligence community, Director Coats, that at least they invaded and impacted and that they are doing it now.

It is time for the Congress to ask or subpoena the translator's notes. It is time for us to have a detailed relaying to the Congress, in a classified manner, what were the contents, what were the discussions, what were the agenda items, what was said in the meeting singularly by our President and President Putin. Then we must pass legislation for extreme sanctions on anyone

that even thinks of interfering with the elections of 2018 and those who interfered with 2016.

Finally, I believe it is important for a full-throated apology of the White House to the intelligence community and the American people. I remind you that I do not stand here singularly by myself. I stand here standing on a constitutional democracy which is the United States of America.

Article I powers of this Congress is that we must act. We cannot correct it with a typographical correction—wouldn't over would. The reporter directly asked: Who do you believe? It was never answered that it was the American people in the intelligence community, Mr. Speaker. It was indicated that Mr. Putin gave a strong response of denial, and it was implied in that, that I believe Mr. Putin, and I am not going to answer the question to say that I believe my intelligence community. Therefore, I would indicate it is time for the Congress to act.

SECURITY CLEARANCES FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

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

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, this week's stunning betrayal by President Trump, choosing Russian President Vladimir Putin over our own intelligence agencies, begs questions that we should never have to ask about an American President: What does Putin have on President Trump? Is he literally being blackmailed? Do we have a Manchurian candidate as our President?

It is difficult to imagine any other explanation for Trump's constant bowing and scraping at the feet of the Russian dictator or of his refusal to hold Putin accountable for his election interference, even after numerous indictments, including 12 Russian military officials, and even after the arrest of a Russian national who was caught trying to use the NRA as a tool to change U.S. policy toward Russia.

And it is hard to find any other explanation for Trump's constantly calling Special Counsel Mueller's investigation a "witch hunt," even after so many indictments and multiple guilty pleas.

On Monday, our security interests of this country demanded that our President speak out and seek accountability from the foreign adversary who attacked it. But instead, the American people witnessed a Manchurian moment, exposing that President Trump is so deeply compromised on Russia that he is willing to alienate our European allies, to blame our country for the strains in the relationship with Russia, and to betray our intelligence and law enforcement communities by casting doubt on their conclusions and accepting Putin's self-serving denials.

And so the world wonders: What does Putin have over Trump? Now, it could

be some compromising or embarrassing financial information, which would explain Trump's refusal to release his tax returns.

Now, let's remember, candidate Donald Trump promised, if elected, promised unequivocally that he would publicly release his tax returns just like every other modern President. We are still waiting. But Trump's position has evolved to an outright refusal, making him the only President in modern history to refuse to share this information with the American people.

Now, it could also be his nefarious dealings with Russia that Trump wants to keep secret. Now, we know Trump and his family and his campaign had a web of contacts with Russia going back several years. The degree of collusion in the 2016 election is still unknown, but we know that, at the very least, they explored receiving illegal foreign election assistance, and we know that assistance was actually provided by Russia.

Or it could be more straightforward blackmail. We know about the reports that Russia had compromising information on Trump that includes not just financial entanglements, but a sex tape.

Now, I am confident that whatever President Trump is hiding, Special Counsel Mueller's investigation will get to the bottom of it. And that is why I have joined my colleagues here on the floor to demand that the Mueller investigation be protected from political interference and that we let the special counsel's office do its job.

But we should also think about how we got into this surreal situation in the first place. How did a Presidential candidate with such potentially disqualifying baggage slide through the process without a way for voters to know about it? There is a clear public interest in ensuring that Presidential candidates are not deeply compromised or vulnerable to blackmail.

And that is why today I introduce the Protecting Access to Classified Information in Elections Act. It is a new bill designed to protect the national security of our country by allowing Presidential candidates to voluntarily undergo a national security clearance investigation well before the election. Candidates who are granted a security clearance would have the option of publicly disclosing that fact on a website maintained by the director of national intelligence.

Current law doesn't work that way. Presidential candidates start getting classified briefings before they take office, but it is based on an informal grant of access by the sitting President, and voters may assume that candidates have security clearances, but they don't actually have to get one and not all of them do.

By providing an early security clearance process, candidates can provide a real assurance to the American people that there is nothing in their back-

ground, such as financial or personal vulnerabilities, that should prevent them from receiving our Nation's top secret information. And if a candidate chooses not to seek that security clearance, voters can consider that fact, too, when they cast their vote.

An early security clearance would also virtually rule out the possibility that a Presidential candidate is vulnerable to foreign coercion, compromise, or manipulation, because among the things scrutinized by background investigators are tax returns and financial dealings. Investigators would learn if an applicant has been accused of sexual misconduct.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support to this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President of the United States.

A CALL TO ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call this body to action. Two days ago, we watched, the world watched in horror in Finland as our President took Putin's side instead of our intelligence community's side. Our intelligence community told us, told him that Russia attacked our democracy and attacked our elections. For whatever reason, President Trump seems unable to clearly state that he agrees with intelligence.

Just yesterday, when he said he misspoke, he then shifted and went back to it could be others. Why? We have to ask ourselves why. The Republican majority has been determined to do absolutely nothing in response when it is clear that there is much that we can and must do. Why?

They have declined to pass additional legislation to serve as a deterrent to Russia and that would sanction Russia if they attacked our elections again. Why? Especially when we have been warned that Russia intends to interfere with our elections in just a few months.

They have this whole Congress, but still Republicans have not passed any legislation to strengthen our election security system to mitigate this threat. Instead, congressional Republicans are trying to cut—this is unbelievable—trying to cut election security grants by hundreds of millions of dollars. Why? Don't they at least want to protect us going into the future?

They have blocked votes to force the President to release his tax returns so we can know whether his business deals are affecting his decisions in the office of the Presidency. Why?

And, most importantly, they have consistently refused to vote to protect Special Counsel Mueller's investigation. Why?

Speaker RYAN controls the floor. Republicans are the ones who put all of