

transportation, and airports is palatable.

As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, upgrading infrastructure with 21st century technology would benefit all Americans, and can be done in a bipartisan manner.

If we seek to sustain the economic growth witnessed these last 2 years or simply keep our citizenry safe, further expansion of infrastructure hubs is necessary, and we should no longer delay in investing in our future. It is time to build and time for Congress to get to work.

HONORING THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

(Mr. VAN DREW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VAN DREW. Madam Speaker, from the moment of their founding in 1882, the Knights of Columbus have made charity their first principle.

Their Liberty Council 1910, based at the parish of the Holy Cross in Bridgeton, New Jersey, is made up of a diverse group of men of the Catholic faith who are guided by the principles of charity, unity, fraternity, but particularly, by charity.

A short list of the good works they do includes: blood drives, planning and implementing youth activities, painting the parking lines in their churches, helping the homeless, advocating for the most vulnerable in our society, leading a diaper drive for new mothers in need of assistance, and helping with various fundraisers in the parish.

The Knights are committed to serving their parish, their community, and their country, and they do it without fanfare and without expecting thanks.

I want to thank the men of Liberty Council 1910 and all the local councils for their service to South Jersey, and the National Organization for its service to our great country, the United States of America.

IN RECOGNITION OF BILL DUNLAP

(Mr. STIVERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STIVERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding constituent of the 15th Congressional District, Mr. Bill Dunlap, as he retires from his role as deputy director of the Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board.

Madam Speaker, it is not news that we are facing a drug epidemic in this country. Families from Ohio to Oregon are torn apart by addiction, and we can't hope to overcome this crisis without outstanding individuals on the ground in each of those communities, without people who are compassionate and dedicated to their neighbors, without people like Bill Dunlap.

I have had a chance to see Mr. Dunlap's work firsthand over the

years. We have collaborated on drug task forces, and other community initiatives, and I can't say enough about his dedication and commitment to combating the drug crisis.

I can say without a doubt, Athens, Hocking and Vinton Counties—and truly, all of southeastern Ohio—are better and healthier places as a result of his efforts.

Madam Speaker, I am incredibly grateful for Bill's service and his leadership. I wish him the best in his next chapter.

ENSURING RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

(Mr. LIPINSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, all Americans deserve equal treatment under the law and should have these rights protected, including individuals in the LGBT community.

They should be able to compete equally for jobs, be assured equal opportunity in education, housing, financial, and judicial settings.

At the same time, the free exercise of religious beliefs is a core ideal of our country, protected in the Constitution and through Federal law.

The Equality Act explicitly prevents application of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, RFRA. This law was passed nearly unanimously in 1993 by a Democratic House, Senate, and White House.

Congress has never passed a law that shrinks or exempts itself from RFRA. It is critical to ensuring that religious freedom stands a chance of being fully lived out and fairly treated in court.

This week, I will vote for the Equality Act for the broader goals. But before it becomes law, we must do more to ensure religious liberty.

THE EQUALITY ACT ENDGAME

(Mr. FULCHER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FULCHER. Madam Speaker, usually it is easy to identify the endgame for bad policy.

Those who want open borders are looking for more votes. Those who support things like the Green New Deal want to eliminate fossil fuels and American energy strength along with it.

But here is the endgame for the Equality Act, or H.R. 5. It would flip our moral, social, legal, and religious fabric of this Nation upside down.

By erasing the recognition of gender from Federal law, the traditional family, laws, religious beliefs, morality and/or identity gets erased with it.

Madam Speaker, every man and woman in this body are special, and they should vote "no" on H.R. 5.

□ 1630

THE MUELLER REPORT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to lead a reading of parts of the Mueller report, otherwise called the "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election." As I said, it is more commonly known as the Mueller report. It documents widespread and effective foreign intervention to target voters and influence the outcome of the 2016 election.

This operation, led by Russian agents, was a direct attack on our democracy. The report has not been taken seriously by the administration. Even worse, it has been ignored for fear it would somehow minimize President Trump's electoral college victory and bruise his ego.

It is critical that we set the record straight and work to address an ongoing threat that Russia poses to our future elections.

My fellow Members and I will be reading excerpts taken directly from the report, documenting the Russian campaign to secure a Trump Presidency.

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HECK), to read his quote.

Mr. HECK. Madam Speaker, from volume I, page 14, section 2, entitled: "Russian 'Active Measures' Social Media Campaign," it read as follows:

"The IRA"—which was a Russian troll farm. "The IRA and its employees began operations targeting the United States as early as 2014. Using fictitious U.S. personas, IRA employees operated social media accounts and group pages designed to attract U.S. audiences. These groups and accounts, which addressed divisive U.S. political and social issues, falsely claimed to be controlled by U.S. activists. Over time, the social media accounts became a means to reach large U.S. audiences. IRA employees traveled to the United States in mid-2014 on an intelligence-gathering mission to obtain information and photographs for use in their social media posts."

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for coming.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) to read a quote from the Mueller report.

Ms. MOORE. Madam Speaker, of course I am reading from volume I, pages 22 through 24, inclusive.

"Dozens of IRA employees were responsible for operating accounts and personas on different U.S. social media platforms. The IRA referred to employees assigned to operate the social

media accounts as ‘specialists.’ Starting as early as 2014, the IRA’s U.S. operations included social media specialists focusing on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. The IRA later added specialists who operated on Tumblr and Instagram accounts.

“Initially, the IRA created social media accounts that pretended to be the personal accounts of U.S. persons. By early 2015, the IRA began to create larger social media groups, or public social media pages that claimed (falsely) to be affiliated with the U.S. political and grassroots organizations. In certain cases, the IRA created accounts that mimicked real U.S. organizations. For example, one IRA-controlled Twitter account, @TEN—GOP, purported to be connected to the Tennessee Republican Party. More commonly, the IRA created accounts in the name of fictitious U.S. organizations and grassroots groups and used these accounts to pose as anti-immigration groups, Tea Party activists, Black Lives Matter protesters, and other U.S. social and political activists.

“The IRA closely monitored the activity of the social media accounts—redacted. By February 2016, internal IRA documents referred to support for the Trump campaign and opposition to candidate Clinton. For example,—redacted—directions to IRA operators—redacted. ‘Main idea: Use any opportunity to criticize Hillary Clinton and the rest, (except Sanders and Trump—we support them)’—redacted.

“The focus on the U.S. Presidential campaign continued throughout 2016. In—redacted—2016 internal—redacted—reviewing the IRA-controlled Facebook book ‘Secured Borders’ the author criticized the ‘lower number of posts dedicated to criticizing Hillary Clinton’ and reminded the Facebook specialist, ‘it is imperative to intensify criticizing Hillary Clinton.’ IRA employees also acknowledged that their work focused on influencing the U.S. Presidential election—redacted.”

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for reading.

Madam Speaker, I am going to read a quote from the Mueller reporter dealing with Russian interference.

“The first form of Russian election influence came principally from the Internet Research Agency”—and you will hear this evening, over and over again, the name IRA, and that is what it is—“the Internet Research Agency, LLC (IRA), a Russian organization, funded by Yevgeniy Viktorovich Prigozhin and companies he controlled, including Concord Management and Consulting LLC and Concord Catering, (collectively ‘Concord’). The IRA conducted social media operations targeted at large U.S. audiences with the goal of sowing discord in the U.S. political system. These operations constituted ‘active measures’”—and it is translated into Russian—“a term that typically refers to operations conducted by Russian security services aimed at influencing the course of international affairs.”

That is volume I, page 14.

I am going to read one more, and this is from volume I, pages 14 and 15.

“By the end of the 2016 U.S. election, the IRA”—that is that Russian organization that has influenced the media in the United States of America in our elections—“the IRA had the ability to reach millions of U.S. persons through their social media accounts. Multiple IRA-controlled Facebook groups and Instagram accounts had hundreds of thousands of U.S. participants. IRA-controlled Twitter accounts separately had tens of thousands of followers, including multiple U.S. political figures who retweeted IRA-created content. In November 2017, a Facebook representative testified that Facebook had identified 470 IRA-controlled Facebook accounts that collectively made 80,000 posts between January 2015 and August 2017. Facebook estimated the IRA reached as many as 126 million persons through its Facebook accounts. In January 2018, Twitter announced that it had identified 3,814 IRA-controlled Twitter accounts and notified approximately 1.4 million people Twitter believed may have been in contact with an IRA-controlled account.”

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE. “The IRA organized and promoted political rallies inside the United States while posing as U.S. grassroots activists. First, the IRA used one of its preexisting social media personas (Facebook groups and Twitter accounts, for example) to announce and promote the event. The IRA then sent a large number of direct messages to followers of its social media account asking them to attend the event. From those who responded with interest in attending, the IRA then sought a U.S. person to serve as the event’s coordinator. In most cases, the IRA account operator would tell the U.S. person that they personally could not attend the event due to some preexisting conflict or because they were somewhere else in the United States. The IRA then further promoted the event by contacting U.S. media about the event and directing them to speak with the coordinator. After the event, the IRA posted videos and photographs of the event to the IRA’s social media accounts.

“The office identified dozens of U.S. rallies organized by the IRA. The earliest evidence of a rally was a ‘confederate rally’ in November 2015. The IRA continued to organize rallies, even after the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. The attendance at rallies varied. Some rallies appear to have drawn few (if any) participants, while others drew hundreds. The reach and success of these rallies was closely monitored—redacted.”

“Redacted.”

“From June 2016 until the end of Presidential campaign, almost all the U.S. rallies organized by the IRA focused on the U.S. election, often promoting the Trump campaign and opposing the Clinton campaign. Pro-

Trump rallies included three in New York, a series of pro-Trump rallies in Florida in August 2016, and a series of pro-Trump rallies in October 2016 in Pennsylvania. The Florida rallies drew the attention of the Trump campaign, which posted about the Miami rally on candidate Trump’s Facebook account (as discussed below).

“Many of the same IRA employees who oversaw the IRA’s social media accounts also conducted the day-to-day recruiting for political rallies inside the United States.”

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, let me just remind everyone that the IRA stands for the organization that coordinated all of the online activities dealing with interference in the U.S. election.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) to read a quote.

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, this is from volume I, page 6.

“Summer 2016. Russian outreach to the Trump campaign continued into the summer of 2016, as candidate Trump was becoming the presumptive Republican nominee for President. On June 9, 2016, for example, a Russian lawyer met with senior Trump campaign officials Donald Trump, Jr., Jared Kushner, and campaign chairman Paul Manafort to deliver what the email proposing the meeting had described as ‘official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary.’”

□ 1645

“The materials were offered to Trump Jr. as ‘part of Russia and its government’s support for Mr. Trump.’ The written communications setting up the meeting showed that the campaign anticipated receiving information from Russia that could assist candidate Trump’s electoral prospects, but the Russian lawyer’s presentation did not provide such information.”

Testimony of Colin Stretch, the general counsel of Facebook. This is in volume I, page 15.

“We estimate that roughly 29 million people were served content in their news feeds directly from the IRA’s,” and that stands for the Internet Research Agency’s, “80,000 posts over the 2 years.”

The IRA is the Russian organization in which some 30 persons have been indicted.

“Posts from these pages were also shared, liked, and followed by people on Facebook, and, as a result, three times more people may have been exposed to a story that originated from the Russian operation. Our best estimate is that approximately 126 million people may have been served content from a page associated with the IRA at some point during the 2-year period.”

“The Facebook representative also testified that Facebook had identified 170 Instagram accounts that posted approximately 120,000 pieces of content during that time. Facebook did not

offer an estimate of the audience reached via Instagram.”

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Reading from volume I, page 33.

“The investigation identified two different forms of connections between the IRA and members of the Trump campaign. (The investigation identified no similar connections between the IRA and the Clinton campaign.) First, on multiple occasions, members and surrogates of the Trump campaign promoted—typically by linking, retweeting, or similar methods of reposting—pro-Trump or anti-Clinton content published by the IRA through IRA-controlled social media accounts. Additionally, in a few instances, IRA employees represented themselves as U.S. persons to communicate with members of the Trump campaign in an effort to seek assistance and coordination on IRA-organized political rallies inside the United States.”

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the great State of Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE. Madam Speaker, I will be reading now from volume I, page 36.

“Beginning in March 2016, units of the Russian Federation’s Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff (GRU) hacked the computers and email accounts of organizations, employees, and volunteers supporting the Clinton campaign, including the email account of campaign chairman John Podesta. Starting in April 2016, the GRU hacked into the computer networks of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) and the Democratic National Committee (DNC).

“The GRU targeted hundreds of email accounts used by Clinton campaign employees, advisers, and volunteers. In total, the GRU stole hundreds of thousands of documents from the compromised email accounts and networks. The GRU later released stolen Clinton campaign and DNC documents through online personas, ‘DCLeaks’ and ‘Guccifer 2.0,’ and later through the organization WikiLeaks. The release of the documents was designed and timed to interfere with the 2016 U.S. Presidential election and undermine the Clinton campaign.

“The Trump campaign showed interest in the WikiLeaks releases and, in the summer and fall of 2016—redacted. After—redacted—WikiLeaks’ first Clinton-related release—redacted—the Trump campaign stayed in contact—redacted—about WikiLeaks’ activities. The investigation was unable to resolve—redacted—WikiLeaks’ release of the stolen Podesta emails on October 7, 2016, the same day a video from years earlier was published of Trump using graphic language about women.”

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Volume I, page 35.

“Starting in June 2016, the IRA contacted different U.S. persons affiliated with the Trump campaign in an effort to coordinate pro-Trump IRA-organized rallies inside the United States.

In all cases, the IRA contacted the campaign while claiming to be U.S. political activists working on behalf of a conservative grassroots organization. The IRA’s contacts included requests for signs and other materials to use at rallies, as well as requests to promote the rallies and help coordinate logistics.

“While certain campaign volunteers agreed to provide the requested support (for example, agreeing to set aside a number of signs), the investigation has not identified evidence that any Trump campaign official understood the requests were coming from foreign nationals.”

Volume I, page 35.

“In sum, the investigation established that Russia interfered in the 2016 Presidential election through the ‘active measures’ social media campaign carried out by the IRA, an organization funded by Prigozhin and companies that he controlled. As explained further . . . the office concluded (and a grand jury has alleged) that Prigozhin, his companies, and IRA employees violated U.S. law through these operations, principally by undermining through deceptive acts the work of Federal agencies charged with regulating foreign influence in the U.S. elections.”

That is also volume I, page 35.

Volume I, pages 42 and 43.

“On June 14, 2016, the DNC and its cyber-response team announced the breach of the DNC network and suspected theft of DNC documents. In the statements, the cyber-response team alleged that Russian state-sponsored actors (which they referred to as ‘Fancy Bear’) were responsible for the breach.

“Apparently in response to that announcement, on June 15, 2016, GRU officers,” that is, the Russian spy agency officers, “using the persona Guccifer 2.0 created a WordPress blog. In the hours leading up to the launch of that WordPress blog, GRU officers logged into a Moscow-based server used and managed by Unit 74455 and searched for a number of specific words and phrases in English, including ‘some hundred sheets,’ ‘illuminati,’ and ‘worldwide known.’ Approximately 2 hours after the last of those searches, Guccifer 2.0 published its first post, attributing the DNC server hack to a lone Romanian hacker and using several of the unique English words and phrases that the GRU officers had searched for that day.

“That same day, June 15, 2016, the GRU also used the Guccifer 2.0 WordPress blog to begin releasing to the public documents stolen from the DNC and DCCC computer networks. The Guccifer 2.0 persona ultimately released thousands of documents stolen from the DNC and DCCC in a series of blog posts between June 15, 2016, and October 18, 2016.

“Released documents included opposition research performed by the DNC (including a memorandum analyzing potential criticisms of candidate

Trump), internal policy documents (such as recommendations on how to address politically sensitive issues), analyses of specific congressional races, and fundraising documents. Releases were organized around thematic issues, such as specific States (e.g., Florida and Pennsylvania) that were perceived as competitive in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election.”

That is volume I, pages 42 and 43.

This is now volume I, pages 49 and 50.

“Unit 26165 officers also hacked into a DNC account hosted on a cloud-computing service—redacted. On September 20, 2016, the GRU began to generate copies of the DNC data using—redacted—function designed to allow users to produce backups of databases (referred to—redacted—as ‘snapshots’). The GRU then stole those snapshots by moving them to—redacted—account that they controlled; from there, the copies were moved to GRU-controlled computers. The GRU stole approximately 300 gigabytes of data from the DNC cloud-based account.”

That was volume I, pages 49 and 50.

This is volume I, page 50.

“In addition to targeting individuals involved in the Clinton campaign, GRU officers also targeted individuals and entities involved in the administration of the elections. Victims included U.S. State and local entities, such as State boards of elections (SBOEs), secretaries of state, and county governments, as well as individuals who worked for those entities. The GRU also targeted private technology firms responsible for manufacturing and administering election-related software and hardware, such as voter registration software and electronic polling stations.”

□ 1700

“The GRU continued to target these victims through the elections in November 2016. While the investigation identified evidence that the GRU targeted these individuals and entities, the office did not investigate further. The office did not, for instance, obtain or examine servers or other relevant items belonging to these victims. The office understands that the FBI, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the States have separately investigated that activity.”

This is volume I, pages 51 and 52.

“The Trump campaign showed interest in WikiLeaks’ releases of hacked materials throughout the summer and fall of 2016—redacted.

“On June 12, 2016, Assange claimed in a televised interview to ‘have emails relating to Hillary Clinton which are pending publication,’ but provided no additional context.

“In debriefings with the office, former Deputy Campaign Chairman Rick Gates said that,—redacted. Gates recalled candidate Trump being generally frustrated that the Clinton emails had not been found.”

“Gates recalled candidate Trump being generally frustrated”—again it

says—“that the Clinton emails had not been found.”

Again, that is volume I, pages 51 and 52.

I am hoping that some more Members come down, but if not, I am going to read just a couple more things.

“Many IRA operations used Facebook accounts created and operated by its specialists—redacted.

“IRA Facebook groups active during the 2016 campaign covered a range of political issues and included purported conservative groups (with names such as ‘Being Patriotic,’ ‘Stop All Immigrants,’ ‘Secured Borders,’ and ‘Tea Party News,’), purported Black social justice groups (‘Black Matters,’ ‘Blacktivist,’ and ‘Don’t Shoot Us’), LGBTQ groups (‘LGBT United’), and religious groups (‘United Muslims of America.’)

“Throughout 2016, IRA accounts published an increasing number of materials supporting the Trump campaign and opposing the Clinton campaign. For example, on May 31, 2016, the operational account ‘Matt Skiber’ began to privately message dozens of pro-Trump Facebook groups asking them to help plan a ‘pro-Trump rally near Trump Tower.’

“To reach larger U.S. audiences, the IRA purchased advertisements from Facebook that promoted the IRA groups on the news feeds of U.S. audience members. According to Facebook, the IRA purchased over 3,500 advertisements and the expenditures totaled approximately \$100,000.

“During the U.S. Presidential campaign, many IRA-purchased advertisements explicitly supported or opposed a Presidential candidate or promoted U.S. rallies organized by the IRA (discussed below). As early as March 2016, the IRA purchased advertisements that overtly opposed the Clinton campaign. For example, on March 18, 2016, the IRA purchased an advertisement depicting candidate Clinton and a caption that read in part, ‘If one day God lets this liar enter the White House as a President—that day would be a real national tragedy.’”

That was a quote from the ad that they paid for.

“Similarly, on April 6, 2016, the IRA purchased advertisements for its account ‘Black Matters’ calling for a ‘flash mob’ of U.S. persons to ‘take a photo with #HillaryClintonForPrison2016 or #noHillary2016.’ IRA-purchased advertisements featuring Clinton were, with very few exceptions, negative.”

Again, this is a Russian agency, Russian corporation.

“IRA-purchased advertisements referencing candidate Trump largely supported his campaign. The first known IRA advertisement explicitly endorsing the Trump campaign was purchased on April 19, 2016. The IRA bought an advertisement for its Instagram account ‘Tea Party News’ asking U.S. persons to help them ‘make a patriotic team of young Trump supporters’”—I will say

that again: “make a patriotic team of young Trump supporters”—“by uploading photos with the hashtag #KIDS4TRUMP. In subsequent months, the IRA purchased dozens of advertisements supporting the Trump campaign, predominantly through the Facebook groups ‘Being Patriotic,’ ‘Stop All Invaders’ and ‘Secured Borders.’

“Collectively, the IRA’s social media accounts reached tens of millions of U.S. persons. Individual IRA social media accounts attracted hundreds of thousands of followers. For example, at the time they were deactivated by Facebook in mid-2017, the IRA’s ‘United Muslims of America’ Facebook group had over 300,000 followers, the ‘Don’t Shoot Us’ Facebook group had over 250,000 followers, the ‘Being Patriotic’ Facebook group had over 200,000 followers, and the ‘Secured Borders’ Facebook group had over 130,000 followers. According to Facebook, in total the IRA-controlled accounts made over 80,000 posts before their deactivation in August 2017, and these posts reached at least 29 million U.S. persons and ‘may have reached an estimated 126 million people.’”

That is Volume I, pages 24 to 26.

Madam Speaker, I am going to yield back my time.

I think it is worth people taking a look at the Mueller report. You can get it in book form. You can also download it for free. It can be downloaded for free from—I think it is the Justice Department, isn’t it? The Justice Department website.

I think, seeing the extent and reading the words that talk about the extent of Russian interference in our elections is really important, especially as we head into a new election cycle where Americans want to have confidence that their vote really matters, that the messages that they are getting are legitimate ones from inside the United States of America, and that Russian or any other foreign influence is not using the internet, using names that are supposed to sound like they are American organizations and American websites and American Facebook pages.

I think it is very important for people to learn about that. It is worth the read.

Actually, if you consider all the redactions, it is not as long a read as you might think. And then all of us would be informed.

About 3 percent of Americans have read the Mueller report, and I would certainly encourage more.

One of our colleagues, MARY GAY SCANLON, I know, is going to begin at noon tomorrow with a full reading. It is going to be done in one of the House rooms here, upstairs in the Rules Committee, a reading of the Mueller report.

Otherwise, I think people have misguided information about what is in it and the idea that there is really nothing at all that is important.

Those Americans who are interested in the sanctity of our elections, I would

very much encourage. You could even watch the reading that is going on starting at noon tomorrow of the full Mueller report. And consider the threat to our elections and that we have to do everything we can to make sure that there is no outside interference.

Madam Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BANKS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BANKS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BANKS. Madam Speaker, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mike Mullen, called our national debt “the single biggest threat to national security.”

Since then, we have added more than \$7 trillion more in red ink. Our national debt today stands at \$22 trillion, and it is only getting worse.

The Congressional Budget Office is projecting trillion-dollar deficits in perpetuity. These deficits will leave future generations like my daughter’s generation saddled with higher taxes, stagnant growth, and a lower standard of living. This is simply unacceptable.

Thankfully, pro-growth policies implemented by President Trump and congressional Republicans have led to a booming economy with 3.2 percent GDP growth and unemployment below 4 percent.

Our strong economy provides Congress a unique opportunity to tackle this problem, but bold leadership is required to do so.

Unfortunately, it is clear that there will be no such leadership from the Democrats. The Democrats have failed to perform the most basic function of government, which is passing a budget. In fact, they have not even bothered to bring a budget to the floor for a vote. Why, you might ask? Because the radical left is now in control of the Democratic agenda and demanding trillions of dollars in additional spending for programs like the Green New Deal, which aims to eliminate everything from air travel to requiring every single building in the United States to be rebuilt or upgraded, banning farting cows, and will cost upwards of \$92 trillion to implement; or, another budget-busting initiative like Medicare-for-all, which would increase government spending by \$32 trillion over the next decade.

□ 1715

Think about that for a moment. The Democrats look at \$22 trillion in debt,