

Today the House will vote on the SHIELD Act, adding further transparency in campaigns, stiffer penalties for voter deception, and further restrictions against foreign interference, including making campaigns mandatory reporters if there is any offer of foreign assistance in those campaigns.

Madam Speaker, I urge others to join me in voting to protect the vote of the American people.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

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

Mr. RUIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today because seniors in my district are walking out of the pharmacy without their medications after they look at the out-of-pocket price and say to themselves, "I can't afford this." They are not taking the medications they need, which jeopardizes their lives, and this is unacceptable.

It is their health—their very lives—that are on the line. That is why, when we are talking about prescription drugs, we must focus on lowering the out-of-pocket costs for seniors.

That is why I support H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, because it requires Medicare to negotiate drug prices so that my constituents can get a fair and affordable price for their medication. It also caps the annual out-of-pocket costs for those seniors who require many medications or expensive medication.

No one should have to choose between buying groceries to eat or getting medications they need, and H.R. 3 will lower costs so seniors don't have to make that decision.

BRIDGETON VFW

(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, today I want to show my appreciation for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post of Bridgeton in south Jersey. This community provides a space for veterans to come together and connect with others, and these are other folks who understand the hardships and the rewards of serving our Nation.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars meet monthly to share their experiences and bond with one another in Bridgeton. They also organize special services for holidays, like Memorial Day and Veterans Day, so the members can commemorate these days together.

In addition, the VFW reaches out to the greater Bridgeton community by hosting barbecues, community dinners, and other festivals to connect with their neighbors and sometimes raise funds for important charitable causes.

I would like to thank the brave veterans of the Bridgeton VFW. Their service to our Nation is tremendous. I

am overjoyed that this community has given them a safe place to remember their service together.

Madam Speaker, they are our best; they are our shining stars; and they are our heroes.

May God bless them.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 23, 2019.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on October 23, 2019, at 9:21 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 1590.
With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

CHERYL L. JOHNSON.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4617, STOPPING HARMFUL INTERFERENCE IN ELECTIONS FOR A LASTING DEMOCRACY ACT

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 650 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 650

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4617) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to clarify the obligation to report acts of foreign election influence and require implementation of compliance and reporting systems by Federal campaigns to detect and report such acts, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on House Administration. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on House Administration now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 116-35 modified by the amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed

in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

□ 1230

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), my friend, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 650, providing for consideration of H.R. 4617, the Stopping Harmful Interference in Elections for a Lasting Democracy, better known as the SHIELD Act, under a structured rule.

The rule provides 1 hour of debate, equally divided and controlled by the Chair and ranking member of the Committee on House Administration. The rule also executes a manager's amendment from Chairwoman LOFGREN, makes in order 14 amendments, and provides one motion to recommit on the bill.

Madam Speaker, it is going to be interesting to watch my Republican friends twist pretzel-like today to convince themselves that voting against a bill that will protect the sanctity of our electoral process from foreign interference is the right thing to do for the American people.

Through today's rule, the Democrats bring to the floor a bill that states that those campaigns that are offered assistance from foreign actors should be required to report such attempts at assistance.

Sadly, I predict that my Republican friends will vote against such protections.

We, as Democrats, say that foreign governments should not be allowed to buy political advertisements in a clear and ongoing attempt to spread conspiracy theories and sow discord among the American electorate.

I predict that for reasons undecipherable, the Republicans will still vote against today's bill.

In fact, let us pause here for a moment. The use of social media platforms by maligned actors to undermine our democracy is not only historical, but is happening today, as we speak. An article that appeared in yesterday's Washington Post outlines how Russia's intelligence apparatus through the Internet Research Agency continues to use Facebook and Facebook's photo-sharing app, Instagram, to sow discord among the American people.

With alarming precision, they target our vulnerabilities, our fears, our baser instincts in hopes of tearing asunder the fabric of our democracy.

As it turns out, past is indeed prologue, and unless we want Facebook and others to be left to play an ongoing game of whack-a-mole against Russian, and now apparently Iranian, and potentially other intelligence agencies, we in Congress need to provide the needed support that any platform can fully meet the threat posed by these nefarious actors.

Madam Speaker, on this side of the aisle, we say that we should strengthen the ban against foreign nationals and foreign governments spending money in our elections, and we have put pen to paper in today's bill to ensure that we do, indeed, strengthen such a ban.

Again, I predict that many, if not all, of my colleagues across the aisle will vote against today's bill, and, therefore, against the notion that foreign governments ought not to be spending money in our elections.

Today's bill is a direct rebuke of the Trump campaign's sharing of nonpublic polling information with Russian intelligence in the hopes that this information would make it to Moscow in order to help with their beyond well-documented campaign to interfere with the 2016 Presidential election.

Simply put, this bill treats the behavior engaged in by the Trump campaign as an illegal solicitation of support. Why? Because that is what it was.

Again, I say to the American people, watch today's vote. I once again predict that you will see Republicans vote against making such behavior illegal, and that is sad.

Finally—and this one is personal—today's bill incorporates language that will punish those who seek to intimidate, misinform, or maliciously misdirect those who simply wish to exercise that great American pastime: casting a ballot.

Attempts to dissuade voters from going to the polls, whether through violence or other means, have been part of this country's history for far too long.

We now know that in addition to homegrown efforts to keep voters away

from the polls on election day, the Russians also engaged in voter suppression tactics, including the malicious dissemination of misinformation in a brazen attempt to sow confusion in the electorate in 2016. I might add, that three Florida counties had their elections offices compromised by Russian hackers.

A vote for today's rule is a vote to bring forth a bill that will work to put an end to these dastardly deeds. Unfortunately, for reasons unfathomable, Republicans will stand brick-wall-like against such reform.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I rise to exercise the time that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), my good friend, has extended to me.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida, my very good friend, the distinguished vice-chairman of the Rules Committee, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I would be the first to admit that there are some good things in this bill. But to say also to my good friend, at the end of the day it is a very easy no. And that is sad.

Frankly, we could have had an opportunity to work together in a bipartisan fashion and actually produce a product that would be effective and one in which every Member of this Chamber could vote for. But my friends have chosen not to do that.

Madam Speaker, we are here on another attempt by the majority to push deeply partisan measures to change America's electoral system in response to the 2016 Presidential election.

Earlier this year, the majority pushed through H.R. 1, which they gave the misnomer of the, "For the People Act." The reality was that H.R. 1 was completely misnamed. It was not "for the people," it was for the Democratic majority, by the Democratic majority in hopes of maintaining the Democratic majority for many years to come.

Similarly today, we are considering H.R. 4617, yet another misnamed and misguided bill aimed at changing America's election laws. The majority has called H.R. 4617 the SHIELD Act. Unfortunately, this bill shields us from exactly nothing. It expands the power of the Federal Government, limits freedom of speech, and reduces the ability of the American people to participate in their own elections, all while failing to protect our democracy from foreign interference.

Before I talk about the problems with the SHIELD Act, I think we should be clear: Republicans stand ready and willing to work with Democrats on bipartisan solutions to reform our election system and protect it from foreign influence.

My good friend from Illinois, Ranking Member RODNEY DAVIS, has proposed such a bill that would do exactly

that. H.R. 4736, the Honest Elections Act updates existing election laws in a fair way. It strengthens the Foreign Agents Registration Act to combat election interference, modernizes online political ad disclosure, increases monitoring of spending by foreign nationals in our elections, and bans the practice of ballot harvesting.

These are the kinds of bipartisan solutions Republicans and Democrats should be able to come together on. But instead, the majority is once again proposing a partisan bill that fails to put forward real solutions to these problems.

Let's take a look at just a few of those provisions in H.R. 4617:

First, H.R. 4617 imposes draconian limitations on online political advertising that will only make it harder for Americans to participate in our elections. It applies a model of regulation designed for TV ads to online ads, which are two very different media. And it requires the same four-second disclosures for online ads as they currently require for TV ads, even though online ads are generally significantly shorter.

H.R. 4617 also attempts to add limitations on the ability of foreign nationals to buy online ads for electioneering communications. But I note this will likely have very little effect. The primary means by which Russia interfered in the 2016 election was through traditional social media posts and troll farms, which this bill will not impact.

What is worse, the bill also expands the definition of the term "electioneering communication" to include, "issues of national importance." This term is going to become so overinclusive that it will become meaningless. If a company wants to take out an advertisement talking about the need for jobs in their community, they may be shocked to learn that they have actually purchased an electioneering communication and are now subject to new rules of political advertisement.

This kind of overinclusive, ill-defined regulation will do nothing to protect our democracy, and will, instead, just simply make it harder for Americans to exercise their right to freedom of speech.

What is worse, the bill expands the power of the United States Attorney General—hardly a nonpartisan figure—by allowing that political official to interfere in State elections, by any means necessary. This unprecedented intervention ability would mean that the Congress is once again expanding the power of Washington at the expense of the States.

Madam Speaker, a bill this flawed should never have come before the Rules Committee and should not be coming to the floor. Republicans are ready and willing to work with Democrats on bipartisan solutions to prevent foreign interference and secure our elections, but instead, the majority is putting forward a deeply partisan product that will not secure our elections and will only make it harder for

Americans to participate in their own democracy.

And, frankly, they are putting forward a product that I think they have every confidence the Senate will not take up, and the President, I would predict, would almost certainly not sign.

We can and should do better than that. I look forward to when my friends decide they want to do better than that to actually working with them.

Madam Speaker, I urge opposition to the rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS), distinguished ranking member of the Committee on House Administration, and my good friend.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come to this great institution to talk about this piece of legislation. I thank the ranking member and also my colleague from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) for a great spirited debate last night in the Rules Committee, but I still, today, have to rise in opposition to the rule for consideration of H.R. 4617.

Last night at the Rules Committee meeting, there was bipartisan consensus that this bill has not gone through regular order. We did not have the opportunity to hold a single hearing addressing foreign political propaganda in the Committee on House Administration.

We are focusing on paid political advertisements, when the Senate Intel's bipartisan report stated that "paid advertisements were not key" to Russia's activity. Out of the \$1.4 billion spent on political advertisements in the 2016 election cycle on digital advertising, the Russians spent \$100,000 of that over 2 years on paid political Facebook ads.

This is relevant information. This should have been considered and discussed in a committee hearing before sidestepping process and rushing a bill to the floor that does not address key issues.

None of us had a chance to ask Facebook: "Why did you take a payment from Russia?"

"Was it in rubles?"

"Was it in dollars?"

"Why in the world did you take \$100,000 from Russia and put overtly political ads online?"

At some point, companies that participate in the political process, we need to have them in front of us to ask them why; ask them how. But we didn't get a chance to do that because the Committee on House Administration had zero hearings before rushing this bill to the floor.

We have a process here in the House for a reason, Madam Speaker. The process is set up to make sure what gets to the floor will address the problem at hand and will not harm the

rights of the American people. Instead, the language in this bill is so broad that it does little to stop foreign political propaganda and, instead, creates a chilling effect on America's free speech.

If the House had held hearings on this legislation, then we could have appropriately tailored language to address the real problem of foreign interference without affecting free speech.

In 2016, the Russians tampered in our elections and engaged in stunning misinformation campaigns in an effort to undermine our elections.

□ 1245

Much of what the Russians did was already illegal. If we want to stop this from happening in the future, then we should be strengthening existing laws and making sure law enforcement has the resources it needs to track down foreign nationals that are breaking the law by spreading propaganda.

Instead, this bill provides zero resources to help law enforcement enforce existing laws and, rather, imposes new regulations that will harm Americans' right to free speech.

The sweeping language in this bill will very likely silence the voices of honest American organizations and nonpolitical companies that wish to speak out on "issues of national importance."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. SHIELD's burdensome regulations will make it more difficult for Americans to be heard. Isn't that the goal of the Russians, to shut down our free and open society and silence the voices of Americans?

Madam Speaker, we should support our law enforcement to do their jobs, not make up new regulations that chill free speech.

This bill is a misinformation stunt to the American people. It sends a message to America that something is being done to stop what happened in 2016 when, in reality, it fails to address the actual threat. It is a Trojan horse from the majority.

Do we actually want to stop foreign interference, or do my colleagues simply want talking points?

Madam Speaker, you have a bill before you that will not stop meddling. I urge a "no" vote.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I would ask my friend Mr. DAVIS if he would stand by just a minute. I have a query of him.

Last night in the Rules Committee, our colleague ED PERLMUTTER offered the gentleman an opportunity to come today to ask Mr. Zuckerberg the questions that he put here. Is the gentleman availing himself of that opportunity?

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HASTINGS. I yield to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for reminding everybody here that I was offered a chance by my good friend ED PERLMUTTER, a Democrat from Colorado, to actually ask Facebook, ask Mark Zuckerberg, a question of why they took that payment.

The answer, Mr. HASTINGS, is yes. I went over to the Financial Services Committee. I specifically spoke with Mr. PERLMUTTER in the committee hearing room, where he told me that Chairwoman WATERS would allow Members who were not on the committee, like me, to ask questions, but I probably have to come back in about 5 hours.

I am hoping to do that. I am hoping to go back there later this afternoon and ask that question.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, in light of the process questions that the gentleman asked about hearings, I am proud of our Democratic majority's record when it comes to regular order.

At the beginning of this Congress, we instituted a rule to require hearings and markups for bills that come through the Rules Committee, and we have followed that rule.

In fact, the House Administration Committee, the primary committee of jurisdiction for this bill, held three hearings to develop the SHIELD Act. Those three hearings took place on February 14, May 8, and May 21, and they are clearly listed in the House Administration Committee's report.

Mr. Speaker, with that in mind, I include in the RECORD the House Administration Committee's report.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of section 103(i) of H. Res. 6 of the 116th Congress the following hearings were used to develop or consider H.R. 2722:

(1) On Wednesday, May 8, 2019 the Committee held a hearing titled "Election Security." The following witnesses testified: Mr. Larry Norden, Brennan Center for Justice; Ms. Marian Schneider, Verified Voting; Mr. Joseph Lorenzo Hall, Center for Democracy and Technology; The Honorable Jocelyn Benson, Secretary of State, State of Michigan; and The Honorable John Merrill, Secretary of State, State of Alabama.

(2) On Tuesday, May 21, 2019, the Committee held a hearing titled "Oversight of the Election Assistance Commission." The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Christy McCormick, Commissioner and Chairwoman, Election Assistance Commission, accompanied by The Honorable Benjamin Hovland, Commissioner and Vice Chair, Election Assistance Commission; The Honorable Don Palmer, Commissioner, Election Assistance Commission; and The Honorable Thomas Hicks, Commissioner, Election Assistance Commission.

(3) On Thursday, February 14, 2019, the Committee held a hearing titled "For the People: Our American Democracy." The following witnesses testified: Mr. Chiraag Bains, Director of Legal Strategies, Demos; Ms. Wendy Weiser, Director, Democracy Program, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law; Mr. Fred Wertheimer, President, Democracy 21; The Honorable Kim

Wyman, Secretary of State, State of Washington; Mr. Alejandro Rangel-Lopez, Senior at Dodge City High School, Dodge City Kansas, and plaintiff in LULAC & Rangel-Lopez v. Cox; Mr. Peter Earle, Wisconsin Civil Rights Trial Lawyer; Mr. Brandon A. Jessup, Data Science and Information Systems Professional; Executive Director, Michigan Forward; and David Keating, President, Institute for Free Speech.

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On Wednesday, October 16, 2019, the Committee met in open session and ordered the bill H.R. 4617 favorably reported with an amendment to the House, by a roll call vote of 6 to 1, a quorum being present. During consideration of the bill an amendment (Amendment No. 5) was offered by Mr. Davis of Illinois and was agreed to by voice vote:

An amendment (No. 5) offered by Mr. Davis of Illinois to amend section 201(b) of the amendment in the nature of a substitute to insert “labor organization” after “a corporation” and after “the corporation” each place that it appears.

Mr. HASTINGS. In addition to those three hearings, the House Administration Committee held eight other election-related hearings this year.

I also want to point out that while it isn't the primary committee of jurisdiction for this bill, the Judiciary Committee held two hearings on election security.

The House Administration Committee also held a markup on H.R. 4617. Several amendments were offered, including an amendment by the gentleman who just spoke, my friend, Ranking Member DAVIS, that was adopted by the committee.

This is how the process is supposed to work, Mr. Speaker, and I am hopeful that that will help clarify some aspects of what was brought up about process.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), my good friend.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership. I thank the House Administration Committee, both the chairman and ranking member. I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for managing this rule.

I want to emphasize, particularly to the gentleman from Florida, for his recitation of the number of hearings that were held, but I want to emphasize that time is of the essence.

Right now, in many of our jurisdictions, there are local elections going on. In just a couple of weeks or more, many will begin to engage in either primaries or the signing up of candidates for the 2020 election. We have taken an oath to protect and serve and to uphold the Constitution of the United States.

Everyone knows what happened in 2016. Everywhere you go, local officials and State officials are asking us, the Federal Government: What are you doing to protect the sanctity of the 2020 election?

There is no doubt that, in volume 1, there is clarity of the number of Russian operatives contacting and interacting with the Trump campaign in 2016. There is no conflict or disagree-

ment with the bias of those that participated, Russian operatives, in this campaign, Russian bots.

Time is of the essence. One of the most important elements of this bill that I applaud is the inclusion of my language in H.R. 2353, Duty to Refuse and Report Foreign Interference in American Elections.

I don't think one American would disagree, not respecting any party affiliation, that if an operative from another country came to you to give you information, it is your responsibility to report it to the FBI under the Federal election laws, which was my bill, Duty to Refuse and Report Foreign Interference.

We don't disagree in that. I hope we don't disagree that it is inappropriate to seek foreign assistance for a campaign, because one of the things of the Founding Fathers that I think is very clear in the Constitution and is very clear in the papers that surround it—the Federalist Papers and the comments of Benjamin Franklin when the audience was waiting, wondering whether we had a monarchy or a republic, and he said a republic, if we can keep it—that is that this Constitution and this process of elections was supposed to be unfettered, one vote, one person.

That is why we have had to perfect it with the Voting Rights Act that we are trying to reauthorize, certain aspects of it. That is why we have written laws to protect voters and election laws wherein we protect voters—one vote, one person.

So, I support the underlying bill, H.R. 4617, Stopping Harmful Interference in Elections for a Lasting Democracy.

Remember, Benjamin Franklin said it is a republic, if we can keep it.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Rule for H.R. 4617, the “Stopping Harmful Interference in Elections for a Lasting Democracy Act,” or SHIELD Act and the underlying legislation.

I support this legislation introduced by my colleague, the Chairwoman of the Committee on House Administration, the gentlelady from California, Chairwoman LOFGREN, because it:

1. Creates a duty to report illicit offers of campaign assistance from foreign governments and their agents;
2. Helps prevent foreign interference in future elections by improving transparency of online political advertisements;
3. Closes loopholes that allow foreign nationals and foreign governments to spend in U.S. elections;
4. Restricts exchange of campaign information between candidates and foreign governments and their agents; and
5. Prohibits deceptive practices about voting procedures.

Madam Speaker, earlier this year FBI Director Christopher Wray testified before the Congress that foreign interference in our democracy is “a 365-day-a-year threat.”

This is outrageous; American elections are to be decided by Americans.

That is why I am particularly pleased that H.R. 4617 incorporates the key provisions of

H.R. 2353, the “Duty To Refuse And Report Foreign Interference In Elections Act” that I introduced in April of this year.

Madam Speaker, our friends across the aisle voted against Republicans voted against H.R. 1, the “For The People Act of 2019,” which, *inter alia*, would secure our elections, and then against H.R. 2722, the “Securing America's Federal Elections Act” or SAFE Act, which closes dangerous gaps in our voting security into the 21st Century.

Today our Republican colleagues have another chance to demonstrate that they take seriously their oath to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign or domestic.

Madam Speaker, on January 6, 2017, representatives of the Intelligence Community advised the President-Elect that the Russian Federation conducted a sophisticated campaign to subvert our democracy with the goal of electing Donald Trump and defeating Hillary Clinton.

The Report issued by Special Counsel Robert Mueller on March 22, 2019 revealed that the Russians effectuated their goals by selectively disseminating stolen emails, with the end of maximizing the adverse impact this would have on Secretary Clinton's electoral prospects.

The Mueller Report further indicated that Russia's misinformation efforts also included the proliferation of fake online profiles on social media platforms, with the goal of echoing and amplifying politically divisive messages, so as to sow discord within the electorate and suppress the vote for Secretary Clinton.

As the Mueller Report lays bare, the Trump Campaign knew what Russia was doing and welcomed that assistance, did nothing to discourage it, did not report it, denied its existence and knowingly and happily accepted the benefits of the hostile foreign interference.

While some may tolerate this as awful but lawful conduct, none of the bill's sponsors or supporters do because it is deeply corrosive of our democracy.

In April of this year I introduced H.R. 2353, the “Duty to Refuse and Report Foreign Interference in American Elections Act of 2019,” to impose an affirmative duty to refuse any offer of election campaign assistance from any agent or entity acting on behalf or in the interest of a foreign government and to report to the Federal Bureau of Investigation any such offer of assistance from an agent or entity acting on behalf or in the interest of a foreign government.

This duty to refuse and report applies to candidates and any person working for, or volunteering with, a candidate for election to federal office.

The legislation also requires the Federal Election Commission to require that a candidate for election to federal office must certify quarterly that he or she is compliance with the above requirements on penalty of not more than 5 years in prison and a fine of not more than \$250,000.

Madam Speaker, the threat to our country is real, as documented in detail in the report issued by Special Counsel Mueller, confirmed by the unanimous assessment of our nation's Intelligence Community, and affirmed most recently by FBI Director Wray who testified in Congress that foreign interference in our democracy is “a 365-day-a-year threat.”

It is past time to write into the books of law the sensible and self-protective principle that

American elections are to be decided only by American citizens, and not influenced by foreign adversaries.

I encourage all members to join me in voting to keep Americans in control of our electoral process and elections by voting to pass H.R. 4716, the SHIELD Act.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Just quickly, to respond to a couple of points my friends made, first, let's remember, in 2016, President Obama was the President of the United States when a lot of the activity that my friends are concerned about took place. In 2018, when President Trump was President, we don't have accusations of foreign interference. As a matter of fact, it was a pretty good election cycle for my friends, and I congratulate them on that.

So, I suspect this administration has done a better job than the last administration in dealing with these issues. But I agree there are some things we can and should work on to improve our system, and we have offered—Mr. DAVIS chief among them—a variety of areas where we can cooperate and where we, frankly, agree.

In the areas where we can't agree, let's set them aside and have our disagreements. But where we can, let's put things together that we all agree on and at least get those things passed. That would be my recommended choice.

Madam Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to immediately suspend the House's impeachment inquiry until the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 and the Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2020 are law.

Madam Speaker, Congress has failed to meet the deadline for one of our most crucial responsibilities, to pass the authorization act and the appropriations bill for our national defense prior to the start of the fiscal year. We did not succeed in getting either of these bills into law by September 30, and now the Department of Defense is operating under a continuing resolution, which in no way adequately supports and funds our military.

Instead of pushing forward, the House is distracted by an unprecedented and unauthorized impeachment inquiry, which is remarkable mostly for the complete lack of transparency the majority has adopted. Republicans have been repeatedly denied their reasonable requests to attend depositions with witnesses and even to review transcripts and other documents. Moreover, the House is proceeding in this inquiry without ever taking a vote to authorize it or establish the parameters and ensure due process.

At a time when threats are continuing to emerge around the world, and our constituents want us to tackle important issues impacting their everyday lives, the House can ill afford the distraction this inquiry is causing.

Consequently, my amendment will require us to suspend the impeachment

inquiry until such time as both the NDAA and the Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2020 have been enacted.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON LEE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY), my good friend, the distinguished ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and join him in opposing the previous question so that Congress can meet its most fundamental responsibilities under the Constitution.

Article I, Section 8 says that it is Congress' responsibility to "raise and support," "provide and maintain" for the military forces of the United States.

Congress is failing in that responsibility. Not only have we missed the October 1 deadline, but we are currently operating under a stopgap funding measure that prevents our military from adapting to a volatile world, and even that expires in less than a month.

In this debate today, we have heard a lot about Russian attempts to interfere in our elections. Well, who is on the front lines of protecting the country in cyberspace as well as the other domains? It is the American military. It is the Cyber Command that is funded for less than a month.

It seems to me that we ought to start with the first responsibility of providing for our military, which is on the front lines of defending us, yes, in cyberspace as well as all the other domains of warfare.

While this House and Washington in general are consumed by secret impeachment proceedings, adversaries are looking to take advantage of this Washington dysfunction.

Who gets caught in the middle of all this political squabbling? It is our troops, the very men and women who volunteer to risk their lives to protect us. They are the ones who suffer the most.

There are dozens of programs in every military service that cannot begin under the current stopgap funding measure. There are dozens of programs in every service where we need to do more of something, but we can't do more under the current continuing resolution.

There are many programs we need to hire good people to work on. You can't do that under the current stopgap funding measure.

Instead, what we get is political squabbling.

Now, I know there will be people who say: Well, the House has passed these

bills. It is the Senate's fault. It is Trump's fault. It is somebody else's fault.

We have enough of that squabbling, finger-pointing, and blame. What we need are results. Results will require the leadership of this House to focus on getting first things done first, and that means we need to get these essential defense bills signed into law. To get them signed into law, they have to be done in a bipartisan way.

Madam Speaker, I am absolutely convinced that, given the chaos and volatility of this world, the United States is going to be tested severely in the weeks to come. The best thing this Congress can do is put aside the political squabbling and focus on support for those people who are defending us, the American military.

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Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, through you, I would advise my friend that I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close if he is.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER), the distinguished ranking Republican Member of the Committee on Appropriations, my good friend.

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" and defeat the previous question.

The House should focus on our constitutional responsibility to fund the government and provide for our national defense.

Current government funding runs out in 29 days. But instead of finalizing the National Defense Authorization Act or Defense appropriations bill, we are debating partisan messaging bills and distracted by an impeachment process that lacks any semblance of transparency.

Last year, Republicans made defense their highest priority. The Defense appropriations bill was law before the end of the fiscal year, and the NDAA was signed in August. This year, the NDAA has been in conference for more than a month, and the House last acted on Defense appropriations in June.

China and Russia aren't slowing down their defense buildup. Why should we handicap our own military and allow our enemies to take advantage of our distraction? This is dangerous and shortsighted.

Our highest priority must be keeping the government functioning and the Defense Department fully funded. This House must focus on providing for our national defense and work with our colleagues in the Senate and the White House.

In order to achieve this goal, I urge a "no" vote on the previous question, a "no" vote on the rule, and a "no" vote on the underlying measure.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, very briefly, the last three speakers, including my good friend from Oklahoma, have mentioned the ongoing impeachment inquiry here in the House of Representatives, and they speak of it as being a lack of transparency. It is almost as if the Republicans are not in the hearings that are going on in this inquiry.

In my understanding, although I am not a member of either of the committees of jurisdiction, I have spoken with and have heard publicly the person who is the responsible person for ongoing matters at this time say that the other side is there. Their lawyers are asking questions. Members, if they choose, are asking questions.

So I don't understand what they are talking about about a lack of transparency, particularly when the previous impeachments that were done were done by special prosecutors. This is a solemn process.

And while I agree with my colleagues about the National Defense Authorization measure, the simple fact of the matter is that we also have a constitutional responsibility to ensure that the executive branch of this government functions in an appropriate manner and does not do as they are doing: failing to respond to the oversight responsibilities of the Article I House of Representatives.

I rather suspect that that is just talk when they say that there is no transparency. I suggest to them to stick around. They are going to see some transparency real soon.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to begin by thanking my very good friend from Florida for what we always get, which is always a thoughtful debate, always professional, always civil. And even when we disagree, I always enjoy the exchange, so I thank my friend for that.

I will disagree vehemently, though, that the process in terms of impeachment that we are going through right now is remotely transparent. The American people can't get in there. And, frankly, I can tell you, Members, under the rules of the Intelligence Committee, all of us, as long as it is not classified, are supposed to be able to get transcripts. We haven't been able to get those things. So we will watch as this unfolds.

But my friends would have been far better to do what has been done in previous impeachments; that is, to hold a formal vote, to set up a process.

I do remind my friend, when we went through this during the Clinton years, the President, President Clinton, had the right to have counsel there, the right to cross-examine witnesses, the right to subpoena witnesses. Our friends who were then in the minority had the right to subpoena witnesses.

None of that exists now. There is no process. It is very one-sided, very opaque, very obscure, and extremely partisan.

But back to the legislation at hand.

The tragedy here is that we could work together on a variety of things that we both agree would make good law. My good friend, the ranking—excuse me—the chairwoman on the House Administration Committee, Ms. LOFGREN, mentioned that last night.

There are actually elements in this bill which, I agree with my friend, are things we could work on together. There are other things that, whether we are right or wrong, my friend knows we will disagree with and we will not accept and, frankly, the United States Senate will not accept and the President will not accept.

So it is a classic legislative dilemma: What do you want to do? Do you want to make a point or do you want to make law?

If you want to make law, you get to the things that you agree on and that can pass the other Chamber and be signed by the President. So far in this area of election security, I think my friends have been more interested in making a point than actually in making law.

So I urge opposition to the rule on H.R. 4617 because it is deeply flawed and a partisan bill that will not solve the underlying problems. It will not prevent foreign interference in our elections. It will only make it harder for Americans to participate in their own democracy.

It applies inappropriate regulatory schemes to online advertisement. It applies overly inclusive definitions that could make almost any advertisement a political advertisement and expands the power of the Attorney General at the expense of the States.

My friends seemed, over and over, to want to federalize State elections. We don't want to do that. That is a big mistake. One of the best securities we have is that we have multiple jurisdictions, and the people close to the people make the laws under which our elections occur.

We can work together in a bipartisan manner and find real solutions to real problems, and I hope and I believe some day we will, Madam Speaker. But in the interim, I urge the House to reject both this rule and this bill so that we can actually advance, together, on something that can pass and become law.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the previous question, "no" on the rule, and "no" on the underlying legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I do agree with my good friend from Oklahoma that our exchanges are civil; and although we have respectable disagreement, the simple fact of the matter is that each of us discharges our responsibilities in a responsible way.

Madam Speaker, after exiting the Constitutional Convention in 1787, Ben-

jamin Franklin, when approached, was asked what form of government had been agreed upon; his response: "A Republic, if you can keep it."

We come here today to keep it, to not only keep it, but make more perfect that Union which we have all taken an oath to protect, not just for us and our children, but for generations unborn, so that they may know and benefit from the greatest experiment ever known to humankind, the democratic Republic we call the United States of America.

To do this, to protect our democracy from enemies foreign and domestic, we must put country over party. Indeed, there have been more than a few times in our history when it was imperative that the partisan give way to the patriotic. This is undoubtedly one of those times and one of those paramount issues.

Madam Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote on the rule and a "yes" vote on the previous question.

The material previously referred to by Mr. COLE is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 650

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution, the Committees on the Judiciary, Ways and Means, Financial Services, Oversight and Reform, and Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence shall suspend pursuing matters referred to by the Speaker in her announcement of September 24, 2019, until such time as the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 and the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2020 are signed into law.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SCHRIER). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

DEBBIE SMITH REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2019

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the