

minorities continue to face persecution, imprisonment, and even disappearance simply for expressing their beliefs or advocating for change.

The CCP continues its efforts to control the political discourse across the entire country and in every territory under its control. The crackdown in Hong Kong is one such example. The imposition of the draconian National Security Law in 2020 marked a turning point in the erosion of the city's autonomy and freedoms. Pro-democracy activists, journalists, and political figures have been arrested, charged, and silenced under the guise of national security, while Beijing tightens its grip on the former British colony. The passage of the Article 23 legislation, which further restricts basic freedoms of speech and assembly, will continue the erosion of the "one country, two systems" principle, undermining the aspirations of the people of Hong Kong and threatening the stability and prosperity of the entire region. For this reason, I, along with Congressman GUS BILIRAKIS, introduced a House Resolution that condemns the promulgation of the new Article 23 legislation and calls on other members of the international community to similarly condemn the process of undermining freedoms in Hong Kong.

While the total number of lives impacted by China's suppression of basic freedoms may never be fully known, I am honored to serve as an advocate for one person who has witnessed firsthand the brutality of the regime. Mr. Ding Jiaxi, a prominent human rights lawyer and democracy advocate was wrongfully imprisoned in 2019 for his peaceful activism and charged for the crime of "subversion of state power." Mr. Ding's courageous efforts to defend the lights of marginalized communities and promote greater government accountability made him a target of the regime's ruthless crackdown on dissent. His arbitrary detention, which included solitary confinement and physical abuse, serves as a stark reminder of the grave risks faced by those who dare to challenge the authoritarian rule of the CCP. Together with the Congressional Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission's Defending Freedoms Project, I am committed to advocating for his release and reunion with his family.

As we remember the victims of the Tiananmen Square massacre and honor their memory, we must reaffirm our commitment to the values of democracy, human rights, and freedom. We stand in solidarity with the people of China, Hong Kong, and all those around the world who continue to courageously resist oppression and dream of a better future. Let us continue to pursue a world where freedoms are protected, and people like Mr. Ding Jiaxi, are not wrongfully imprisoned and silenced, but instead honored for their work to improve society. The image of a single protestor who stood in the way of a column of tanks rolling through the streets of Beijing in June 1989 will continue to inspire those who will bravely face brute force for the sake of freedom. In confronting tyranny and injustice, we draw inspiration from the courage and resilience of those who have dared to challenge authoritarian rule. Their struggle is our struggle, and their cause is our cause.

HONORING BERNICE TROTTER

HON. KEVIN HERN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 3, 2024

Mr. HERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Bernice Trotter, a World War II veteran, and Tulsa native, who turned 100 years old yesterday.

Ms. Trotter was a member of the U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve from 1944 to 1946. She enlisted within a few weeks of her brother, Franklin, who was killed in action in Germany in 1945.

Ms. Trotter completed basic training at Camp Pendleton, California and she remained there to faithfully execute her duties driving a jeep for a Major she was assigned to. The only problem was that she didn't know how to drive. Ms. Trotter and the other 18,000 women that joined the Marine Corps Women's Reserve didn't make excuses, they learned, and did their jobs with honor.

Our Nation stands on the strong shoulders of courageous, determined, and resourceful women like Ms. Trotter who answered the call to serve our Nation in one of our greatest hours of need. Happy birthday to Miss Minnie. She has done Franklin, and this entire Nation proud.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROMOTING NATIONAL SERVICE AND REDUCING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 3, 2024

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Promoting National Service and Reducing Youth Unemployment Act to address one of the greatest workforce tragedies—our unemployed young people—while filling vacancies in the public sector. Youth unemployment is harming our young people and costing our country billions of dollars each year in lost productivity and tax revenue, among other costs. Although the total unemployment rate has reached a relative low (3.9 percent), the youth unemployment rate is 8.2 percent. These young people have not had a fair chance to use the high school or college education we strongly urged them to obtain.

By adding 500,000 new members to AmeriCorps, this bill would need no new administrative structure or bureaucracy, and would allow unemployed youth to earn a stipend, obtain work experience and develop a good work history to help secure future employment. This bill would significantly expand job opportunities for young people who have done what they could to get a job, but, despite their best efforts, remain unemployed. AmeriCorps participants receive a living allowance and are also eligible for an education award equal to the value of a Pell grant, school-loan forbearance, health care benefits and childcare assistance. By expanding AmeriCorps, we would reduce the number of unemployed young people, provide them work skills and experience and help understaffed state and local governments provide services.

This bill would also establish that the minimum wage for any AmeriCorps State and National member would be 200 percent of the federal poverty line, and would not allow for a decrease in that amount, as is allowed under current law. AmeriCorps members serve their country and gain skills, but we should increase the minimum wage for everybody, including national service members.

For some time, it has been clear that policies to address the most stubborn forms of unemployment need to be targeted in order to be effective. Without significant targeting, many young people will continue to face their first years as adults without jobs and with no way to acquire necessary work experience. They deserve a better start in life as adults.

I ask my colleagues to support this urgently needed, targeted assistance for our unemployed youth.

HONORING DR. BOBBY KALOTEE

HON. ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 3, 2024

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Bobby Kalotee, a distinguished civic leader on Long Island who has lived the American dream. He came here from India as an immigrant with a desire to serve the communities he now called home. For over four decades now, he either led or participated in a multitude of community projects, organizations and charitable work for the people of not just Nassau County but across New York State and beyond. Though he chaired several political parties, he never viewed politics as a sport for gain but as a vehicle for advocacy and civic duty. He sought to address the issues that afflicted countless lives regardless of their zip code or social status.

As a Major in the New York State Guard, Dr. Kalotee serves in the Division of Military and Naval Affairs and as a General in the United States Disaster Relief Command, which oversees operations that are vital to all Long Islanders. Here at home, Dr. Kalotee served as the Director and Vice Chair of the Counsel for Stony Brook University's Brookhaven National Labs and continues to serve on the board of the New York Institute of Technology. As the Chairman of the Nassau County Human Rights Commission, Dr. Kalotee has even personally witnessed many elections both here and abroad and has been invited to attend the inaugurations of several esteemed heads of state. As mentioned, Dr. Kalotee has also been involved in work overseas, having been appointed as a special liaison to South Asia and an advisor to the United Nations' Grenada Mission and providing medical services to over 7,000 people in cities across Central America. His humanitarian efforts and work with the UN even earned him the privilege to be a guest speaker before the General Assembly for multiple sessions.

Dr. Kalotee is an American with a passion to serve and look after his communities, a duty of which I understand and appreciate the importance. In the words of his organization's motto, "there is no better gift one can give to humanity than good health."

On behalf of myself and all Long Islanders, we give Bobby, my brother, our upmost gratitude for his service.

RECOGNIZING ROBERT M.
IAMELLO, AIA

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 3, 2024

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Robert (Bob) M. Iamello whose dedication to the Amerigo Vespucci Society and his Italian heritage will be recognized by the organization with its "Man of the Year" award on June 8, 2024.

Robert Iamello maintains his Italian heritage through his family and his involvement with the Amerigo Vespucci Society (AVS). Raised in West Long Branch, New Jersey, Mr. Iamello grew up in a household that embraced its Calabrian lineage. His parents and grandparents often conversed with each other in Italian, introducing Mr. Iamello to the language. In college, he studied abroad in Venice, and has visited Italy many times since. Together with Diane, his wife of nearly 45 years, he has two children and three grandchildren. He takes great pride in his family and heritage, sharing his experiences with other members of the AVS.

Mr. Iamello received his Associate Degree in Engineering for Architectural Engineering Technology from Wentworth Institute of Technology and his Bachelor in Architecture from the University of Kentucky. Throughout his 47-year career, he was employed by architectural firms in New York and New Jersey before opening Ocean Township-based Iamello Architectural Studio LLC with his daughter in 2014. Mr. Iamello is a member of several architectural organizations and has been recognized for his work.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mr. Robert Iamello as the recipient of the Amerigo Vespucci Society "Man of the Year" award. This honor is a testament to his hard work, dedication, and service to family and community.

HONORING MARY HENDERSON

HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 3, 2024

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a visionary advocate and leader in my state who, for decades, has worked to improve the lives of her fellow citizens. Over her influential career, Mary Henderson has worked as an attorney and co-founded a legal aid and economic justice nonprofit—among many other roles—to consistently address root causes of poverty.

Mary's advocacy for Maine people began at Pine Tree Legal Assistance, a nonprofit organization which provides free civil legal assistance. As a staff attorney, Mary tirelessly provided representation on a variety of cases. Under Mary's guidance, countless people were able to access government supports for which they were eligible but had previously been improperly denied.

In 1996, Mary co-founded Maine Equal Justice, a nonprofit civil legal aid and economic justice organization. In her role as Executive Director, Mary assisted in the acquisition of a

location and the securing of funds to create a sustainable and reliable resource for Maine's most vulnerable populations. Through her defense of government programs for public healthcare, education access, and housing and food security, Mary's work has improved the lives of thousands of Maine people.

Since leaving Maine Equal Justice, Mary has brought her expertise and unwavering dedication to the Office of Substance Abuse, Maine Department of Labor, Office of Maine Care Services, National Academy for State Health Policy, Maine Children's Alliance, and Preble Street Resource Center. In each of her roles, Mary has intentionally centered the voices and experiences of the people of Maine who are served by these critical government and anti-poverty programs.

I had the great pleasure of working with Mary during my years in the State House and was able to see firsthand how the State of Maine benefitted from her knowledge, skills, and advocacy. I am very proud to represent her and the State of Maine in Congress. I wish Mary continued success, and I wholeheartedly thank her for her many years of influential work.

APPRECIATING BULGARIA

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 3, 2024

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I am grateful to recognize the 120th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Bulgaria.

September 19, 2023, marks the 120th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Bulgaria. The first United States Diplomatic Agent to Bulgaria, John B. Jackson, presented his credentials on September 19, 1903. The first Special Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary of Bulgaria to the United States, Stefan Panaretov, presented his credentials to President Woodrow Wilson on December 22, 1914. Today Bulgaria is well represented in Washington by Ambassador Georgi Aanayotov who also was an election observer for the South Carolina Presidential Primary in the tradition of former Ambassador Elena Poptodorova.

The enduring ties between the two nations are exemplified by the founding of the American College of Sofia, dating back to a school opened by American missionaries in Bulgaria in 1860. On September 25, 2023, the United States and Bulgaria held the second high-level Strategic Dialogue to advance their bilateral, regional, and global agenda and to further enhance cooperation as friends, Allies, and partners.

The United States and Bulgaria stand together as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Allies, determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage, and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law, seeking to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area. They have signed numerous important documents in key areas, including defense and security cooperation, 5G security, civil nuclear cooperation, science and

technology, and combating foreign disinformation and propaganda.

The United States and Bulgaria stand united against aggression and terror, condemning in the strongest possible terms Russia's brutal and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, and the heinous attacks on the Israeli people by the terrorist organization Hamas. Bulgaria remains committed to the collective defense, as exemplified by hosting a NATO battlegroup with United States participation, and by establishing a NATO littoral countries mine countermeasures task force to secure freedom of navigation in the Black Sea. Prior to becoming a NATO member and subsequently, as an ally, Bulgaria participated in the United States-led and NATO missions and operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Kosovo, and the Mediterranean.

Bulgaria was among the very first countries to denounce terrorism and pledge active support to the United States in the fight against terrorism following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Bulgaria provided overflight and basing rights at the town of Bourgas for Operation Enduring Freedom, representing the first stationing of foreign forces in Bulgaria since World War II, and Bulgaria deployed a nuclear, biological, and chemical protection detachment to Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The United States and Bulgaria recognize that Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has only underscored the geostrategic importance of the Black Sea region, and the need to ensure that the region remains free and secure from threats posed by Russia and other malign actors.

The bilateral Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) was signed in 2006, regulating the status of forces, allowing for joint United States-Bulgarian military facilities, providing for bilateral and multilateral exercises, and facilitating the movement and temporary stationing of aircraft and vessels. Bulgaria continues to invest in defense capabilities, interoperability, and the development of a credible defense posture in cooperation with the United States, as exemplified by the purchase of sixteen F-16 Block 70 fighter jets from the United States, and intending to purchase United States Stryker combat vehicles.

The United States and Bulgaria share the understanding that energy security is crucial component of national security, and Bulgaria has made significant progress in reducing its dependency on Russian energy resources and in diversifying its energy sector in collaboration with the United States. The two nations acknowledge the significance of intensifying their cooperation in innovations, research, and emerging technologies. The people-to-people exchanges between the United States and Bulgaria are vital for bolstering the bilateral relationship and Bulgaria has made progress towards meeting criteria for visa-free travel of Bulgarian citizens to the United States. The shared commitment to counter disinformation and hybrid threats was demonstrated by the signing of a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding on Countering Foreign Information Manipulation on September 25, 2023.

The year 2023 marks the 80th anniversary of the historic rescue of 50,000 Bulgarian Jews during the World War II. It is acknowledged with regret and sadness that 11,343 Jews were deported to Nazi concentration camps from Macedonia, Thrace, and Pirot, territories administered by Bulgaria at that time.