

RECOGNIZING ANGELINA PETRA RESENDIZ

(Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, Brownsville native Seaman Angelina Petra Resendiz was tragically murdered while serving our Nation at Naval Station Norfolk.

Angelina was a culinary specialist whose life and service to our country was cut short.

Despite many warnings from her friends and family of her disappearance, the U.S. Navy mislabeled her as an "unauthorized absence" instead of the "duty status whereabouts unknown."

This was tragic. I was proud to honor Seaman Resendiz by securing language in this year's NDAA to conduct oversight of the Department's application of designations in cases involving missing servicemembers who are later found deceased. This is an important step towards ensuring that any servicemembers who go missing receive a proper classification and investigatory response to assure their life has every shot of living.

Today, I ask us to continue looking out for our servicemembers at home and abroad to assure their safety and security.

REMEMBERING HAREGEWAIN MITIKU AYALEW

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

Mr. LICCARDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Ms. Haregewaine Mitiku Ayalew, a beloved community member from San Jose, California, who passed away in November.

Ms. Ayalew's life was defined by service, generosity, humility, and an unwavering commitment to uplifting the vulnerable.

Ms. Ayalew dedicated her professional life to caring for those made vulnerable by illness, age, or circumstance. As a certified home care aide and home health aide, she provided essential care for our aging neighbors.

Guided by her faith and deep compassion, her service reached across continents as she organized aid and support programs for families in her native Ethiopia, including raising funds to build a facility for elders and individuals living with disabilities and illness.

Her volunteer energy and time commitment to the Mekane Rama Saint Gabriel Church was extraordinary and deeply appreciated by an entire community.

I recall visiting that very church when I attended her memorial and was moved by the sight of more than 1,000

neighbors who came out to pay their respects and pay homage to this remarkable woman.

May Ms. Ayalew's memory be a blessing. Her life's work and values live on through her two daughters, Aden Kassaye and Rebekah Kassaye, and in the countless lives she uplifted through her compassion and service.

DEADLINE TO RELEASE EPSTEIN FILES

(Mr. KHANNA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow at midnight is the deadline for Pam Bondi to release the Epstein files. That is what THOMAS MASSIE's and my bill calls for. It passed this body 427-1, passed the Senate 100-0, and the President signed it. Now, three Federal judges have ordered the release of all of these files from Maxwell's and Epstein's grand jury.

Here is the reality. Any Justice Department official who does not comply with this law will be subject to prosecution for obstruction of justice. If Pam Bondi does not comply with the law, she will be held either in inherent contempt of Congress or subject to impeachment.

We will not rest until the law is complied with and justice is served.

□ 1540

CONSTITUENT OF THE WEEK: CHRISTINE CULBERSON

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

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Christine Culberson of Spotsylvania County as Virginia's Seventh District Constituent of the Week.

Christine was recently named Teacher of the Year by the Virginia Technology and Engineering Education Association for good reason. She was recognized for her unwavering passion of career and technical education. This work has enriched the learning experience for students across Spotsylvania County Public Schools.

Educators like Christine take the time to invest in our students and inspire a lifelong learning, restoring quality education of our children.

Christine's recognition isn't just a personal achievement, it reflects the innovation flourishing in Spotsylvania County Schools. Her efforts uplift her colleagues and elevate the entire CTE community.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Christine for everything she has done for public education, and I am proud to honor her today.

URGING THE RELEASE OF EKREM IMAMOGLU

(Mr. RASKIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, many of us in Congress are calling for the immediate release of Mr. Ekrem Imamoglu, who is the mayor of Istanbul, Turkey.

Istanbul is Turkey's largest city. It is one of the world's great cities where 16 million people live and stand strong for democracy. They elected Mr. Imamoglu as their mayor three different times, and he is focused on improving public infrastructure and serving nutrition and health to the millions of kids who live in that city.

He was detained in March 2025, along with 106 other leaders in Istanbul. The Turkish Government has now seized his family business, suspended his Twitter account, revoked his college diploma, and banned any public images or posters of him.

I want to tell Mayor Imamoglu that he has many people in the United States Congress closely following this outrage against democracy and the rule of law. We are wishing his family happy holidays, and we are working and demanding to see that he be released.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MS. NORMA MOYE

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

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Ms. Norma Moye who passed earlier this week at the young age of 92.

As a fourth-generation resident, Norma was Paso Robles, California, in the 19th Congressional District. She served her community in many ways: being on the boards for the Pioneer Day, the Historical Society, and, of course, as a leader in the Chamber of Commerce. However, where she was most impactful was due to her work as the founder and executive director of the Paso Robles Main Street Association.

Under her leadership, downtown Paso Robles transformed from vacant storefronts to a bustling hub of community. She was a champion for local businesses, supporting her neighbors, helping them thrive, and transforming the local economy.

Thanks to her commitment to service, she lives on in every person who visits downtown in the community and the energy that is Paso Robles.

As we mourn her loss, let us celebrate Norma Moye, her legacy of service, and let us do that by enjoying the town of Paso Robles.

LIBERTY VERSUS TYRANNY

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Ms. KAPTUR of Ohio was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, tonight it is a great honor to gather with our

dear colleagues to focus on a modern-day conflict that will have major implications for this country and the world in the days and years to come.

The United States, for over a century, since our hard-fought victories with Allies during World Wars I and II learned the hard way: Isolation is not in our Nation's security interest.

Isolation is not in our Nation's security interest.

Our Nation is not the most populous nation on Earth, with 340 million people. However, in every era it seems the constellation of dictatorship begins to upset world order. These aggressors invade smaller nations first to conquer more territory and for their own narrow self-interest.

Dictatorships in today's world include Russia, with 140 million people; China, with 1.5 billion people; Iran, with 92 million people; and North Korea, with 26 million people.

This group of nations is a developing spiderweb of tyranny with four times the population of the United States. Thus, alliances with free nations matter. That is why Canada, Australia, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organizations matter. Only together with Allies can the free world offset predatory dictatorships.

Following World War I, slowly and at great cost, a constellation of Allies began to emerge. Leaders of surviving nations created what has come to be called the free world, but this alliance of liberty was very hard-fought, and it champions freedom, not dictatorship.

Foundational is the rule of law with institutions of justice, ensuring individual rights, not repression by dictators or conquest by aggressor, thugs, and murderers.

Our Nation did not seek to be leader of the free world. Rather, our forebears grew this association with the realization that cataclysmic wars were not in the interests of humanity nor the United States of America.

President Woodrow Wilson created the League of Nations after World War I, which three decades later transformed into the United Nations, an institution to collectively assemble world leaders to promote understanding and peace so as to avoid war.

Civil and political leaders of our Nation in both major political parties, though reluctant to assume leadership in such a daunting undertaking never before in the world, were determined to build a world of law, not conquest. The goal of lasting peace outweighed their own self-interest.

A short distance away from our Nation's Capitol rests the national World War II Memorial. It was dedicated in 2004 to the Allied victory in World War II. Over 100 million people, nearly one-third of our population, has now visited that hallowed site. This monument represents the 20th century's greatest achievement, the victory of liberty over tyranny.

The monument stands as a timeless reminder of the moral strength and

power that can flow when free people are united and bond together in the common, just cause of liberty itself.

Following the horrific great power wars of the 20th century, across Europe alone are lain the bodies of 500,000 U.S. veterans who rest in military cemeteries and fields from World Wars I and II. From Flanders Fields to Normandy, their enormous sacrifice, along with the millions of veterans who returned home, bequeathed to us the moment to build the umbrella of alliances to push back tyranny. Extending liberty and achieving democratic governance peacefully served as examples to other nations. What the World War I and II generations yielded for us has been the longest era of peacetime among great powers in the history of the world—until now.

Not only is Russia at war in Europe, but the United States of America is acting peculiarly and dangerously out of step with our forebears' resolve.

□ 1550

Let me just, for a moment, focus on Vladimir Putin and his evil aspirations as dictator of Russia. Let us recall Putin's imperative is to reconstitute the Soviet Union that collapsed in 1991 of its own criminality and dysfunction. Its border extended across 13 time zones then, all the way through most of Germany. Through force, Putin aspires to rewrite the structure of Europe again and end democratic practice across the Continent.

Meanwhile, the United States appears absent. Liberty is under threat, and America seems to be wavering on the sidelines, playing off liberty and dictatorship.

The increasingly collaborative coalition of Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China, the spider web of modern tyranny, are enemies of liberty. See it. They collude to upend American and global security.

Chancellor Merz of Germany, a NATO ally, recognized this reality when he recently stated: "The threats are real. We are not at war, but we no longer live in peacetime."

Ukraine has become the front line for liberty's fight in our time and generation. See it.

In 2014, Russian dictator Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine, an ally of the United States. Together with our European allies, we partnered to achieve Ukraine's accession to the European Union of free nations, and clearly Putin invaded Ukraine in 2014 just after Russia's puppet dictator who had become President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, was driven out of that nation after his treasonous betrayal of the democratic aspirations of the free people of Ukraine.

He stole millions and committed crimes against its freedom, and he found his way back to Moscow. Vladimir Putin knew his control of that puppet and of Ukraine had been thwarted, so he chose to invade Ukraine starting in 2014 against all

laws of diplomacy. Putin snuffed out liberty in his own country, and now he intends not just to end liberty in all of Europe, but he seeks to replace it with tyranny that traces its bloody lineage across centuries of Russian aggression and murder of innocents.

There can be no compromise with Putin. He violated the Budapest Memorandum, which allowed Ukraine to prosper, starting in 1991 after the fall of the Soviet Union, when it promised to let all nuclear weapons be removed from Ukraine with the promise that they would not be invaded, that others would protect them.

Russia signed that agreement. The United States signed that agreement. That agreement has been violated. Why should we trust Putin now, when he couldn't even keep his word on the Budapest Memorandum?

Let us not forget the great betrayal that allowed Putin to invade Ukraine in the first place. As the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, a newly independent Ukraine had become the third largest nuclear power in the world. However, as a responsible nation, Ukraine signed the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons at the behest of the United States of America and the demand of Russia. In exchange, the security of Ukraine was to be guaranteed under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum signed by our country, Russia, and Ukraine.

However, Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014 after his puppet was driven out. Russia always betrays its commitments. Look no further than the decades before when the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement during World War II was signed and then violated and Poland was invaded. We must not betray our commitment as leader of the free world to Ukraine's liberty.

Ukraine is fighting valiantly against Russia. It is holding the line at the front. The Ukrainian people have fought so astoundingly until the current President and his party here in Congress decided not to send the funds to allow Ukraine to procure the weapons it needs. There has been a pause during this year, which makes it harder, but the Ukrainians have held the front.

Ukraine has one time zone and encompasses a landmass less than 3 percent the size of Russia's vast territory which stretches across—are you ready?—11 time zones. They have enough. They ought to deal in their own country. Russia's population equals four times as many people as Ukraine's.

Putin was the aggressor. He invaded, as I said, in 2014, and he has kidnapped tens of thousands of Ukrainian children. Why? It is because in Russia, the birthrate is going down. He has murdered tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians. He has reinstituted the gulag system of prisons to torture Ukrainians. He has attacked religious communities and buildings, broken families apart, murdered and tortured scores of

hundreds of clergy, killed Jehovah's Witnesses and any other religion that attempts to prosper in that part of the world, and summarily executed prisoners of war and civilians alike.

This is what Putin promises the rest of Ukraine and our NATO allies, should we let him succeed in Ukraine. See it. See it for what it is. Russia's history is marked by repressive expansion and murder throughout the centuries. There is no liberty nor desire for any liberty. Russia kills at will.

Freedom advocate Alexei Navalny, a Russian, was imprisoned last year and left to die in a frozen Arctic prison. Putin's goons murdered a young Ukrainian journalist almost 30 years ago when Ukraine became free. Why? It is because Gongadze was telling the truth about the corruption and the underhandedness of Russia inside of the free Ukraine. He was killed and then buried with his head in the ground and his legs in the air right before people would enter the town just to be a lesson to behave yourself and don't ever, ever put a word in a publication against Vladimir Putin.

Putin murdered countless Catholics, Mormons, others who wanted to freely practice religion in that part of the world. Why were they murdered? It was because they weren't Russian Orthodox adherents.

If Putin is permitted to conquer Ukraine, he will not stop there. This is not speculation. This is history. We already see Russian troops concentrated at the borders with Baltic States. They are hitting the fly zone in Poland, the border, Finland, Russian violations of NATO airspace and territorial waters.

A Polish diplomat once advised me: If you pay no attention to foreign affairs, then foreign affairs will find you. What a true statement that is. Surely, the Poles know.

America has tried in the past to stick its head in the sand. That doesn't work. Isolation doesn't work. Partnership works. America can repeat the mistakes of the 1920s by withdrawing our support, but we have already lived through that. We don't want to go through that again. Inevitably, that myopia will force the free world to pay a higher price for freedom as tyranny deepens its roots in the world. On the other hand, America can take a stand now to provide further assistance for Ukraine to advance liberty for this new generation.

Remember, only 20 percent of the world is free now, according to Freedom House's Freedom Index. This means that 80 percent of the world lives under some form of tyranny. We are very privileged in our country if we can hold it.

In our privileged place in the world, America cannot forget that around our globe and throughout history, liberty is extremely rare and precious and utterly vulnerable.

The Trump administration is failing to meet the moment. My dear colleagues will talk about this in just a

moment, but what this administration is doing is just not ignoring the problem. They are actively complicit in tyranny's march across Europe.

□ 1600

This administration's new and adolescent national security manifesto, as they call it, is a retreat.

During his campaign, President Trump frequently repeated that he will end the war in Ukraine on day one. That surely didn't happen. One year into his return to office, the war in Ukraine rages on, and his actions have been favoring Russia's dictatorship.

In February and March, President Trump made his first real effort to negotiate, but what is he negotiating? Not liberty. Ukraine's President Zelenskyy came to the table and agreed to President Trump's mineral rights deal.

Trump responded to Russia's growing strikes but granted Putin several weeks' warning to end the shooting or face new sanctions. He did not implement the sanctions, even as Ukrainians were being murdered every day.

In August, President Trump literally rolled out the red carpet for dictator Putin to step foot in the land of the free during his visit to Anchorage, Alaska. Putin conceded nothing then; he concedes nothing now. Trump whined at Putin and again threatened sanctions.

Finally, in October, the President did sanction two large Russian oil firms, Lukoil and Rosneft, but then reinvigorated a negotiating process with several decidedly Kremlin-friendly provisions, even as Putin showed no signs of compromise.

Now, 4 months later, we are waiting on the Trump administration or Republicans in Congress to move additional sanctions. Up at the desk, we have a discharge petition to move a bill to enforce sanctions on Russia. We only need 2 more signatures to get to 218.

Where is the majority in this House? Two more signatures on the discharge petition to move Russian sanctions forward—liberty is calling. Can you see it? Can you hear it?

This October, the Trump administration started issuing Russia's threats to Ukraine for Putin. The Russian-drafted 28-point peace plan asked Ukraine not to negotiate peace but to capitulate.

They cited a recent corruption scandal in Ukraine, not for what it is—Russian interference and corruption in Ukraine through their emissaries—but as evidence that Ukraine is weak and must surrender.

This is a Russian infiltration of Ukrainian institutions that has been going on for centuries, and it has plagued Ukraine from the first day it became free, in 1991. Ukraine has had to build a nation on the corruption and infiltration of the corrupt, calculating, interfering Russian regime.

Then, just last week, the Trump administration stood shoulder to shoulder

with the Russian dictatorship. Never in my life did I imagine I would live to see the day when the United States of America, as a founding member of NATO and the United Nations, would vote with the dictatorships of the world. This happened on December 10, 2025, when the United States joined the dictatorships of Russia, Belarus, China, North Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Niger in a 97-8 vote to oppose the United Nations resolution that aimed to strengthen international cooperation and coordination of efforts among nations.

This shameful vote of 97-8 does not express the values of the United States of America. It does not express the values of the American people, who place liberty above all. We value our closest allies, especially when Europe is at war. We don't side with the dictators.

The Trump administration publicly holds that the ultimate goal is peace. I agree. Everyone wants peace, except Putin. Do you not see it? Putin doesn't want peace. He wants Ukraine. The Ukrainians prove to us every day that liberty is worth fighting for. We best not forget that here in America.

Frankly, I haven't found anyone in the Trump family who has ever fought for the cause of liberty. There is no record of military service or public service in his family's history. In fact, Trump famously avoided service in Vietnam by faking bone spurs.

No one in my family ever had that luxury. They fought for over 100 years for this country, and we are proud of their service for liberty.

What seems clear to me is that too many people, like Putin, judge others by the weight of their wallet rather than the weight of their conviction for liberty.

As peace negotiations ensue this weekend in Miami, let us pray that the negotiation is not about squeezing every business deal out of Ukraine for The Trump Organization. That outcome is not in America's interest.

Steven Witkoff and Jared Kushner, two former real estate businessmen from New York, should negotiate peace and liberty, not business deals for themselves or the President they serve, business deals of a Russian-occupied Ukraine.

The free world must push back Russia's aggression and greed, or Putin's appetite will grow to spread Russian repression across all free peoples, which he has been trying to do since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Our late colleague John Lewis observed that freedom is not a state. It is an act. It does not sit on the floor but must be elevated by the steady diligence and attention of citizens who sacrifice to remain free. Liberty is not simply bestowed upon a people but fought for and defended.

History instructs us. In the 1770s and 1780s, a revolutionary generation of men and women rose up to secure liberty across 13 otherwise disconnected coastal Colonies here on the American continent.

Roughly 80 years later, a subsequent generation was called upon to fight and die in America's internal great war for liberty, the American Civil War, still our most costly war, with over 600,000 deaths. That generation ended the original sin of slavery and extended the hope of liberty across the American continent.

Then, in the 20th century, generations rose to the renewed call for sacrifice. Called the Greatest Generation, I call them the most unselfish generation. They fought, died, and successfully preserved and extended liberty here at home and to subjugated people around the world. They did it for us.

Americans believe that the history of their struggle against global tyranny ended with the defeat of Nazi Germany and the fall of the Communist Soviet Union, yet today, that history is still being written.

Free nations face not a new enemy but an old one. It is our turn now. Our free world must never play footsie with an axis of dictatorships like Russia, North Korea, Iran, and China to unleash their aggression on our world again. How not only stupid that would be, but how un-American.

America's foreign policy must promote liberty, not bow to tyranny. Free nations must support those who are willing to fight and die for liberty around our world, and Congress must ensure our Nation is always ready.

Our National Defense Authorization Act just passed, providing for military readiness for our Nation as well as assistance to Ukraine to ensure NATO's eastern flank is secure and Vladimir Putin moves back his troops inside his own country. He has plenty of it that he needs to attend to.

Congress can do more by passing a discharge petition that has been sitting in the well of this House since July. It would unlock the most significant legislation introduced in this Congress to place economic sanctions on Russia for its war crimes against Ukraine. Our petition needs only two more Member signatures to bring forward the vote to the floor. Every Democrat and two Republicans have signed thus far.

□ 1610

In our country, we must defend liberty first, last, and always, and it must never accommodate dictatorships.

We are reminded of this by this astounding visionary poet of Ukraine, who on Christmas, December 25, 1845, penned the following words about a country that, at that point, was only imagining through its greatest citizens a future that they could not live in their own lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, in closing my formal remarks tonight, I will quote the poet laureate of Ukraine, Taras Shevchenko, who said:

O bury me, then rise ye up
And break your heavy chains
And water with the tyrant's blood
The freedom you have gained.
And in the great new family,

The family of the free,
With softly spoken, kindly word,
Remember also me.

Mr. Speaker, he was so prescient. He was so prescient.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Speaker Emerita of the House of Representatives.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I salute MARCY KAPTUR and the Ukrainian Caucus for inviting Members to come together to raise concerns, to speak frankly about the need for strong sanctions on Russia, and to insist that any peace must be just, durable, and centered on the Ukrainian people themselves.

Mr. Speaker, for nearly 4 years, the people of Ukraine have stood on the front lines for freedom, defending their democracy, their sovereignty, and their right to live in peace on their own land. In fighting for democracy, they are fighting democracy writ large.

Congresswoman KAPTUR spoke beautifully, historically, geographically, and chronologically in every way about placing this conflict in time and place. I want to pick up on two parts of it in the time that I have.

In the conversation about peace, we hear people talk about Ukraine giving up land. What we are saying to Ukraine is that Russia came in, stole their children, as Congresswoman KAPTUR mentioned, tens of thousands of their children. They took them into Russia. Mr. Speaker, imagine if that ever happened to your family.

Secondly, they raped the women. They raped the women. Sometimes they did it in front of the children and sometimes in front of their parents.

I said to some Russian friends: Isn't it sad how the Russian troops have become brutes and are raping women as a weapon of war to demoralize the people of the country?

They said: Make sure you understand one thing. Russian soldiers follow orders. They are doing that because that is what they are told to do.

In addition to that, we have seen evidence of their killing families in front of family members in such a brutal way. What a ridiculous request: Kidnap our children, rape our women, kill civilian families, and ask us to give you land in return.

The other thing we sometimes hear people say in our country is: Why should we pay all that money when, in fact, we have needs in our own country? I don't think people realize that 90 percent of the security that we send to Ukraine is spent—of the 100 percent, 90 percent is spent in the United States, creating jobs in our country.

Secondly, there are other forms of humanitarian assistance. Across the board at least 60 percent of all that we spend on Ukraine is spent in the United States of America, creating jobs.

Again, Congresswoman KAPTUR spelled it out. I mean, some things bear repeating. She said it so beautifully. This is awful. Mr. Speaker, who do you trust? Who do you trust?

The Congresswoman spelled out very clearly the ridiculous notion that Ukraine should trust us—the Russians after the Budapest Agreement. Give up your nuclear weapons, and we will come to your aid, should you need that.

Forget about it now. Ukraine has been treated with great disrespect. Its people have just been subjected to such horror, and they have fought valiantly. The least we can do is the sanctions. What we should be doing in this House, which has overwhelming bipartisan support in support of the people of Ukraine, is to get some more people to sign the discharge petition.

I thank Congresswoman KAPTUR for her relentless, persistent, dissatisfied advocacy for Ukraine and the fact is we know, those of us who have visited there: If Putin takes Ukraine, what country is next? That is what we hear, the fear we hear from people in the region.

Do they trust Putin? The only person who trusted Putin was President Trump. I don't know what that is about. I know I had a picture, coming out of one of his Cabinet meetings, I pointed to the President, and I said: I am leaving this meeting because, Mr. President, with you, all roads lead to Putin.

Mr. Speaker, this is awful. They say Putin is the richest man in the world. He is a villainous person and somebody who uses rape, kidnapping, and family killings in order to demoralize a country.

He hasn't succeeded, and he is a loser because he thought he was going to win the first week of this war. It is now 4 years later.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Speaker Emerita NANCY PELOSI for her unrelenting support for liberty and the people Ukraine. May God bless them and may in our lifetime we see their consequential victory. We must not abandon them.

Ms. PELOSI. One more thing: Right before Christmas a few years ago, when President Zelenskyy came here and spoke, this body just rose up in support. We need more than applause, though. We need a discharge petition.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congresswoman for joining us tonight with all of her duties.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the very distinguished former and future majority leader of our caucus who has distinguished himself in his career with a total commitment to our alliances globally, including our precious European colleagues. We thank him so very much for joining us here this evening from the State of Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman who heads the Ukrainian Caucus and has ties to Ukraine. She is deeply tied to America, to democracy, liberty, and freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I adopt her remarks as my own. I will add to that, but it will be surplusage because we could repeat

everything she said and all the dangers she referred to and all the atrocities of the Russians.

As I was sitting here, with the exception of Mr. VINDMAN, who is a young man, it occurred to me that the speakers who have spoken so far are of a generation who were children at the time of the Soviet Union. They understood the viciousness of the bear, and they understood the enslavement of the Russian people and the captive nations.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the people of Ukraine, for the people of America, for the people of Europe, for the people of Asia and Africa, South America, and Australia because all of us are at risk if dictators like Putin prevail.

For Ukraine, the question is: Will America and this Congress allow it to become a nation betrayed? I have said it before, and I will say it again. President Trump, Vice President Vance, Secretary Rubio, Negotiator Witkoff, Secretary of Defense Hegseth, and others have done everything to express support for Vladimir Putin's and Russia's position and to exonerate them from the aggression and from their war crimes.

Earlier this year, Trump said that the Russians have all the cards. Mr. Speaker, someone ought to remind our President—and I do so tonight—that NATO has a combined defense expenditure of \$1.58 trillion. Together, we field 3.5 million troops. Our combined GDP is 25 times more than Russia's. Europe holds some \$246 billion in frozen Russian assets.

□ 1620

I suggest to all of us, to the President, and to the world at large: Those are a lot of cards, but we need to play them.

As long as they are in the deck, they won't make a difference. Every day we do not, we look weaker in the eyes of the world. That is a danger for us and a danger for the international community.

Every day, Russia slaughters more Ukrainians. At least 43,000 Ukrainian soldiers have already given their lives in defense of democracy, and many more have been wounded.

The Ukrainians will continue to fight valiantly, as the gentlewoman pointed out, with or without our support. However, our decision will determine whether their fight is in vain or will prevail.

The other day, a Ukrainian soldier on the front lines told a reporter: "They kept withholding military aid, couldn't agree on how to respond, and we keep paying for their indecisiveness with our blood, the blood of our children."

He was referring, of course, not just to the United States but to the world at large. Ukraine may be paying the price for our negligence today, but we, the free world, will ultimately bear the cost if we let Putin prevail.

When we fail to show our strength, our adversaries doubt our resolve. When our adversaries doubt our re-

solve, they are assuredly more likely to test our might.

That is the mistake that Neville Chamberlain made. That is the mistake that America and the United Kingdom made when we did not honor the Budapest Memorandum when Putin annexed Crimea.

In my view, Crimea is the mother of this war. The failure to act decisively in the face of that war crime, of that theft, and of that international law that was broken led Putin to believe that he could do this, the invasion of Ukraine, with impunity.

That is a mistake that Donald Trump is making now. This Congress must not do the same, and the good news is that this Congress has not done the same. There were 12 votes between 2022 and July of 2025.

Mr. Speaker, the good news is that, on both sides of the aisle, the overwhelming majority of Members voted to support Ukraine. Mostly, it was unanimous on this side, but it was also unanimous on the Republican side, save 1 vote, and then it was 110 to 117, just a small minority.

Those votes average 80 percent of the Members of Congress voting to support Ukraine. It is not as if there is division in this House. As the gentlewoman said, there is a discharge petition, which lays in that desk behind me.

Mr. Speaker, 214 Democrats have signed it, and 2 Republicans have signed it. There are 216 signatures in all now. We need 2 more to say to Ukraine, to say to the world, and to say "yes" to our administration that we are in support of liberty over tyranny; we are in support of a people who have shown extraordinary courage.

Fortunately, we have a winning card to play. Ranking Member MEEKS and I have that bipartisan discharge petition to force on the Ukraine support, and two Republicans have signed that. That means there are another 100 who support Ukraine, and all they need to do is sign that petition, and we will vote in January on that bill that says that we are going to support Ukraine, freedom, democracy, liberty, and international law.

Every House Democrat and two Republicans, I say, have signed. Our legislation includes both sanctions to undermine Russia's war economy and direct financial and military aid for Ukraine's defense and reconstruction.

There were 80 United States Senators who have signed onto a bill imposing sanctions on Russia some 6 months ago, and it has not moved. What do you think that does to the psychology of Ukraine, Ukrainians, and their soldiers?

If we report out this bill, in my view, it will change this war not only materially but psychologically. It doesn't matter how many concessions you give to Putin—and this administration has given him many—he will keep fighting this war so long as he thinks he can outlast the free world.

This is an issue of resolve. I mentioned how much superiority we have

with respect to Russia in size, in money, and in resources.

Mr. Speaker, I know we can do this. Since the Russian invasion in 2022, the House has had at least 12 votes, and I mentioned them, and 80 percent of our people have supported them.

Mr. Speaker, now is not the time to fold. Now is the time to call. If we play our hand correctly, we can still ensure that Putin suffers a defeat that will make other dictators around the world think twice before violating international law and creating war crimes.

Mr. Speaker, we must because make no mistake: Vladimir Putin is playing for keeps and for empire. Our European allies know that to be the case because they have been at the point of the enemy's spear when Chamberlain said that we were buying peace in our time. We then had World War II.

Let us act.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican colleagues and friends who have signed on and voted for supporting Ukraine to sign this discharge petition.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), Fifth District, for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Ohio has 17 minutes remaining.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA), the really extraordinary Congressman from District 21, who has just been unwavering as a freedom fighter here not just for our country but for countries around the world that are trying to liberate themselves from the type of tyranny that Ukraine is facing. Congressman COSTA.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the chairman of the Ukraine Caucus, Ms. KAPTUR, for her leadership, and for my other colleagues who have spoken this afternoon: Speaker Emeritus PELOSI and Representative STENY HOYER.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the ongoing threat that Russia poses to Ukraine, to Europe, to the United States, and to the broader international order.

On February 24, 2022—I think all of us can remember—Russia, preplanned and unprovoked, attacked Ukraine. At that time, there was broad consensus among Republicans and Democrats about what we needed to do. That was to stand up for democracy.

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM said it quite well at the time that this was about good versus evil.

□ 1630

I submit to you today that it is still about good versus evil.

Since that day, Russia has continued its assault on the rules-based international order. From the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has shown a blatant disregard for international law, national sovereignty, and fundamental human rights.

Sadly, I believe that modern-day Russia is a syndicate masquerading as a country with a mob boss called Putin. That is Russia today.

President Putin has violated, as any mob boss would, every international agreement he has ever signed, period. That is why a peace deal must be backed up by strong military deterrence and strong commitments from Europe and the United States to back Ukraine with NATO-like defense guarantees. It is very clear. Otherwise, Putin has no intention of keeping any agreement.

This is not a conventional war. It is a hybrid conflict, combining military force with cyberattacks at all different levels and fronts, disinformation campaigns, and economic warfare, alongside deliberate efforts to weaken NATO and undermine democratic institutions. They go on attacking civilian neighborhoods, bombing schools, hospitals, and churches. Clearly, Putin is a war criminal.

When the United States hesitates or sends mixed signals, we do not create stability; we invite aggression. Let's be clear about that. History is replete with examples of those who hesitate or send mixed signals. Therefore, American leadership remains the cornerstone of global security.

To President Trump, Putin respects one thing and one thing only, and that is strength. By supporting Ukraine, the United States is sending a clear message: authoritarian regimes cannot invade their neighbors without consequences. I ask the President of the United States to be strong and stand by the brave people of Ukraine and our allies.

Any sustainable resolution to this conflict must include Ukraine at the negotiating table. How else could you reach a peace agreement? The country under attack must have a decisive voice in shaping its own future and determining the terms of peace—otherwise, it is illogical—ensuring that agreements respect its sovereignty and the will of its people.

Therefore, we must continue to strengthen our alliance, develop agile and region-specific strategies, and ensure that we are prepared to respond across all domains, including cyberspace, information warfare, and economic coercion, because economic sanctions can work.

The President has the leverage, with continued military support, economic support, and sanctions using the sovereign wealth of Russia to pay for the damage and the harm that they have created, with our European allies. We have the leverage.

We cannot allow this aggression to go unanswered. We must stand firmly with Ukraine and defend the democracy and international order that we helped create. It has created prosperity since World War II, economic prosperity that democratic nations have shared because America stood strong.

That same order has brought peace and economic prosperity—think about

it—throughout the world for 80 years for democratic nations. Therefore, this is a seminal moment in American and world history that we are facing.

I urge my colleagues to act as we have—as Representative STENY HOYER indicated, 12 times in an overwhelming bipartisan fashion—to stand up for America's values, to stand up for human rights, to act collectively in a bipartisan fashion. Why? Because our security and the security of free nations everywhere depend on it.

My colleagues, my friends, the world is watching and looking for American leadership. This is the test of our time. "Glory to Ukraine"; "Slava Ukraini."

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman COSTA for his fervent leadership on every level and for all he has done to continue negotiations with our closest allies that fight at our side and push back the edge of tyranny wherever it exists.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Ohio has 8 minutes remaining.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. VINDMAN), a great patriot from Virginia's Seventh District.

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reaffirm my commitment to peace in Ukraine, a peace that acknowledges the massive sacrifice of the Ukrainian people and that secures perpetual sovereignty, not just a temporary reprieve that the Russians will use to rearm and reattack.

We must continue to stand firmly with the Ukrainian people in their fight for freedom and sovereignty. I have traveled to Ukraine extensively since this major phase of the war started in February 2022, 15 trips, the first 14 between June 2022 and October 2023, investigating war crimes and trying to help the Ukrainian people. The last one was the only bipartisan House delegation visit to Ukraine this year. Frankly, I think that is a shameful statistic, that only Congressman MIKE TURNER and I managed to make it to Ukraine this year, a year the Ukrainians faced enormous pressure.

In those trips, I visited places like Bucha, Irpin, Hostomel, places where Russian soldiers brutally executed civilians, places where Russians attacked Ukrainian infrastructure, attempting to freeze and starve the Ukrainian population.

I tell you that what I saw was a war crime, and those crimes are perpetuated almost daily by Russians, including attacks on and killing of POWs.

It is in the United States' national security interest to secure peace between Russia and Ukraine, but only when that peace comes with dignity and security for the Ukrainian people.

We have seen Russia's playbook. They use time. They buy time to rearm so they can attack. They sow discord throughout the neighborhood, in Moldova, Transnistria, Georgia, and Ukraine.

True peace will never be achieved by the world by appeasing Putin. That is why we must stand together. This peace proposal that we have recently seen, the 28-points, Dmitriev, who is the leader of the sovereign wealth fund, and Witkoff, a real estate investor—I call it the Dim-Wit peace proposal.

This Dim-Wit peace proposal is nothing more than a giveaway to Vladimir Putin. It does nothing to achieve peace. Frankly, it would have made Prime Minister Chamberlain blush after Munich, that level of weakness and appeasement.

Let me be clear. A just and lasting peace in Ukraine could not be achieved by the United States alone. It could not be achieved without transatlantic unity. It could not be achieved without European support.

We must stand with the Ukrainian people. We must stand on the right side of history and not support a shameful and weak appeasement deal.

"Glory to Ukraine"; "Slava Ukraini."

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman VINDMAN for his service to our country and also to the cause of liberty globally.

□ 1640

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LANDSMAN), who represents Ohio's First District in the greater Cincinnati area. Let's be kind to him. He has been waiting a long time.

Mr. LANDSMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congresswoman for her incredible leadership and remarkable remarks.

I rise today on behalf of the children of Ukraine. More than 35,000 children from Ukraine have been stolen by Vladimir Putin. These children are being hidden in Russia and being sent to indoctrination camps. Some are even being trained as soldiers to fight against their own country.

We can't wait for a peace agreement to reunite these children with their families. They are not bargaining chips, and Putin must release them now.

As the father of two, I can't imagine the terror of having a child taken from our family, from our home.

Earlier this year, we uncovered a State Department program to track these abducted children had been terminated. We were able to get it back up and running.

Our bill, the Abducted Ukrainian Kids Recovery and Accountability Act, will restart this program so that we can keep tracking every single child. This bill was included in the NDAA and will be signed into law tonight. We can't stop until these children are back where they belong, which is home.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LANDSMAN. He is such an outstanding Member. I thank him for being here.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your deference and ability to allow us to speak.

I just want to end this evening by saying that this Special Order is not really just about this generation but those to come, and for our children, for our grandchildren, the kind of world that we leave them. We simply cannot appease dictators, because we will leave a very ugly world to them in the future.

The last thing I wish to place on the RECORD, if you would allow me just a couple of seconds here, in 2014, when the Olympics were going on in Sochi, for the first time in Russia in modern history, Vladimir Putin used the Olympics, when most people were distracted, to cover up the fact that he was going to invade Ukraine, which he did. The Olympics were the shield from a public relations standpoint, but what had just happened was that his stooge who was the head of Ukraine then, Viktor Yanukovich, had to flee the country because he was such a crook and was totally a tool of Putin.

What the American people need to understand is, Ukraine had to dig itself out from under decades, centuries of Russian imposition and corrupt leaders that held down the ability of this country to flower into a free nation.

What we are fighting for is for the ability of people to have liberty first, last, and always, in the place, in the world where Stalin killed more people than anywhere else in the history of the world.

God bless America.

“Glory to Ukraine,” “Slava Ukraini.”

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

CHANGING HEALTH INSURANCE MARKET

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. HARIDOPOLOS of Florida was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.)

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to be here this afternoon as we talk about the need to promote accountability, flexibility, choice, and to allow small businesses to galvanize together to find the best options for their employees in the changing health insurance market.

I will start today by ceding some time to my friend from the State of Montana, Representative DOWNING, who has great experience in working with the marketplace in his home State of Montana.

I yield to the gentleman from Montana (Mr. DOWNING).

Mr. DOWNING. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Florida, Mr. HARIDOPOLOS, so much.

I rise today to discuss or to comment on what I see is the biggest fraud this body has ever put upon the American people.

Let's go back to the beginning of the unaffordable care act, ObamaCare. How was this sold to the American people? You can keep your doctor if you like them. You can keep your plan. Your insurance premiums are going to go down.

I will tell you, all of that—I will tell you; this is one time that both the Republicans and Democrats agree, that it did not deliver on that.

The Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, has been one of the biggest drivers in increasing not just the cost of health insurance but the cost of healthcare.

To continue this deception, it was clear that this plan would not work. You don't have to be a Ph.D. in mathematics to understand why. As you start to add things—the essential health benefits that you added onto these policies, these required benefits, as you started to add things that had to be covered—and I am not saying whether those were good or bad. But if you add expenses, you can't make prices go down. It would be like saying if you went to a fast food restaurant and ordered a soda and the price is going to go down but they have to give you a free cheeseburger as well. It just doesn't make common sense. It doesn't make mathematical sense. So to further this deception, they realized that it only worked by subsidizing it. You had to levy a tax to subsidize it.

The architects on the other side of the aisle who put this together realized that the American people would rebel against this if they were given a tax to pay for it. How did they hide that? Well, let's just tax the payers, let's tax the insurance companies, and then they can pass those expenses down to the American people through higher premiums. That is exactly what happened.

Then let's look at another phenomenon. As these prices start going up, people start to question whether they are getting value for what they are paying for. For some folks, the answer was no. They didn't want to pay those higher rates, and so some folks came off.

As we see, the people who come off tend to be the people who least need services. So the healthy, younger people tend to be the ones that come off. As they do that, that concentrates the risk. That makes the prices go higher for the insurance companies, for the payers.

As that happens and you get into the next policy year, they have to raise the rates again. As they raise the rates again, you lose more subscribers to those policies. You further concentrate the risk. This is known as adverse selection.

What happens in adverse selection, every time you see that raise, those prices rise, you start to see more people come off. They look for alternatives like healthcare sharing ministries, they look for something else, or they go uninsured. You start this endless cycle of these prices going up.

There is another thing I want to point out. This is kind of economics 101. The more money you put into a system, the more expensive things get. We have seen that in so many different areas. We have seen that in subprime lending. We have seen that in student loans. You put money into a system, and it starts to push prices up.

One of the other contributors we have is not just adverse selection, which is concentrating the risk and making it more expensive for the insurance companies, but we put so much money in the system that we are seeing rises in actual healthcare.

It is important to make the distinction between the rising cost of healthcare and the related rising cost of health insurance. So we just come to this death spiral of this becoming more and more and more unaffordable. In my personal opinion, this entire system is going to collapse under its own weight, and you have got two solutions.

The other side thinks that we should just write a blank check from the Federal Government, no matter how big that check is going to be, so that we can hide the fact that this is failing.

Let's face it. This is seen as a landmark piece of legislation that the Democrats have pushed over the last couple of decades. It is important to them to protect this landmark legislation. I am sorry, but the emperor is not wearing clothes. In order to hide that, they are doing these smoke screens with these increased subsidies.

Now, let's look at the subsidies that have really gotten a lot of attention, these ObamaCare subsidies that we have been talking about that the Democrats brought in response to COVID. These are subsidies to folks who are on the individual market.

It is important to note that the individual market is a small percentage of the insureds. This is not the entire market. This is not a small group. This is not a large group. This is a small percentage of folks who are on the individual marketplace, who get their health insurance through healthcare.gov or through one of the exchanges. It is a very small part.

□ 1650

When the Democrats first put this, it was a reaction to the chaos during COVID, and it was, by their intent and by their architecture, a temporary solution for a temporary problem. So it was designed to expire. It had a sunset.

Then, when it was coming up to a sunset, when the Democrats still had control and had the ability to make this permanent, they still put an expiration date on it. These enhanced premium tax credits, or these ObamaCare credits, were designed to expire at the end of this year. Essentially, January 1 is when they were designed to expire.

It is entirely policy brought by the Democrats. This was not Republican policy, it was a smokescreen. There are estimates it will cost between \$300 and \$400 billion to pay for it over the next