

unreported contact with Russian agents, who he also had business ties to.

Yesterday, you learned that the President had a contractor meet with Russian officials on his behalf to have a back channel to the Kremlin.

Where is the transparency from the White House? How is it that Meals on Wheels is the enemy, but you turn a blind eye to an attack on democracy by Vladimir Putin?

Russian spies have long attacked American businesses. Now they are attacking our freedom. You must investigate the Russian grip on our government. We must investigate swiftly and seriously.

Mr. Speaker, this is on your watch.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

CELEBRATING THE MASTERS

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, as you know, I have the honor of representing the 12th Congressional District of Georgia and the good people who live and work there.

This week, thousands will gather in Augusta to take part in a tradition unlike any other.

Beginning in 1934, the Masters, hosted by the Augusta National Golf Club, has become the most prestigious golf tournament in the world. Known for its lightning-fast greens and gorgeous azaleas, this tournament captivates the world for both the talent of those playing and its beauty. Since its inception, many legends have conquered the greens to prove their skill and earn the coveted green jacket.

This year will be a little somber, as we will deeply miss another of the great legends, four-time Masters champion Arnold Palmer. His presence will certainly be missed on that first tee as an honorary starter and throughout this great week.

I wish the best to all those competing in this truly remarkable event and invite those who are traveling from far and wide to experience and enjoy the wonderful hospitality of the 12th Congressional District of Georgia and my home, Augusta.

REJECT THE NEW HEALTHCARE BILL

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, word coming out of the White House and House Republicans is that there is a new healthcare bill, and this bill would obliterate the patient protections for preexisting conditions and eviscerate essential benefits and cost controls.

Under the new healthcare scam, insurance companies could opt out of all

consumer protections. In other words, insurance companies could write fake policies with big premiums and little or no coverage.

Mr. Speaker, under this plan, a parent of a kid who is struck with childhood cancer could still buy a policy, but the policy is worthless because the policy would not have to cover their children's cancer treatment.

This is how House Republicans and the insurance lobby plan to get out from under their obligation to cover preexisting conditions.

This means more power for the insurance companies and less protection for good people, the American people, who play by the rules. This plan should be rejected again. It is deceitful, cold, cruel, and wrong.

GORDIAN KNOT

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight legislation I recently introduced, the VA GORDIAN KNOT Act, which would help improve and reform the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In Greek mythology, the Gordian knot represents a complex problem that needs out-of-the-box thinking to solve, and that is exactly what we need.

The VA's Gordian knot is its repeated manipulation of key data and overall lack of accountability. The VA has been known to yield less-than-truthful information when it comes to collecting and reporting data about patient care, appointment wait times, and employee hiring and firing practices.

This behavior is an erosion of public trust and a disservice to our Nation's veterans, our true heroes. It also makes it difficult to properly address the VA's shortcomings and enhance its successes because there are successes as well.

The VA GORDIAN KNOT Act requires the VA to standardize its data collecting and reporting mechanisms and increases oversight of the integrity and accuracy of the information.

I believe this bill is absolutely necessary to reform the VA and assist in its mission to care for our true American heroes.

EQUAL PAY DAY

(Ms. ADAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, it is Equal Pay Day. I rise to support not only women but the American family and the economy.

Women drive our economy. We buy more goods. We own more small businesses, and we earn more degrees. Despite this, we still earn less than men. This should embarrass every lawmaker

in this Chamber and every person listening.

In 2017, Mr. Speaker, how can we justify underpaying women across this Nation? Women still earn 20 percent less than their male counterparts, and it is even worse for Black and Hispanic women.

Shortchanging women shortchanges our children and our economy. When women succeed, we all succeed. Women and our families demand paycheck fairness. We stand boldly united today embracing the words of Florynce Kennedy who said: We won't agonize. We will organize. We will show up and cut up until Molly earns the same pay as Billy.

As Susan B. Anthony said: "Men, their rights and nothing more. Women, their rights and nothing less."

I urge you to call your Representatives, demand that we support you by supporting the Paycheck Fairness Act.

RECOGNIZING SERVICE ACADEMY APPOINTEES

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

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize three outstanding young people from Florida's Second Congressional District who will be continuing their education serving our country next year at the Naval Academy and at West Point.

Sean Moriarty and Zachary Moser will be attending the United States Naval Academy. Sean plays football at Arnold High School, and Zac is on the swim team at Rutherford High School.

Shane Ferry will be attending the United States Military Academy, West Point. He attends Mosley High School and is a member of the wrestling team.

The bar is high and the competition is stiff to earn entry into our service academies, and it should be. I am confident that each of these young men possess the character, ability, and determination to excel at Annapolis and West Point and to earn the privilege to do extraordinary things for our Nation and for those who they will one day command.

As they join their Federal fellow cadets and midshipmen, they also have our support and our gratitude for choosing this life of service.

Thank you and good luck.

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INDEPENDENT COMMISSION NEEDED TO INVESTIGATE TRUMP'S TIES WITH RUSSIA

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, Republicans are now joining Democrats in calling for Chairman NUNES to recuse himself from the House Intelligence Committee's current investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election.

By working hand in glove with the White House around an investigation that centers on the President and his administration, the chairman has blown the integrity of this investigation. Through his actions, he has shown he cannot lead an impartial investigation. His actions demonstrate why Congress must establish a bipartisan, independent commission to investigate President Trump's political and personal business ties to Russia.

The majority of the American people favor an independent commission, outside of Congress, according to polling done by the Associated Press. This is a serious matter. Our democracy is at stake. Our national security is at stake.

Congress must call a bipartisan, independent commission to investigate these troubling connections between President Trump and Russia.

HONORING STEPHEN P. COUNIHAN

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of Stephen P. Counihan, and I rise with my colleagues all around the greater Boston area, as we seek to raise the spirits of Stephen, who is currently battling cancer. "Coughni," as he is affectionately known, is currently the tennis coach at Suffolk University, where he has led four championship teams to great renown in the greater Boston area. But it was in the 1970s, as a standout defenseman at Bowdoin College where Counihan got the name "Coughni-Orr" because of his remarkable presence on the ice and his cool capacity under pressure.

Now, Stephen is facing one of the great challenges of his life, as he deals not only with the chemotherapy, but the potential surgery that we are looking at in the month of April ahead.

Coughni, I want you to know that all of your colleagues from Beta Theta Pi, from Bowdoin College hockey team, from the greater Bowdoin community, in fact, the entire Boston area, stand with you today. Win one more championship for us, Coughni, so we can all celebrate together when we have you back collectively.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA: NCAA CHAMPIONS

(Mr. PRICE of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's men's basketball team for winning the 2017 NCAA Division I National Championship, in the face of a spirited challenge from Gonzaga University.

As a proud alumnus of UNC-Chapel Hill, the Nation's first public university, I was delighted to cheer on the en-

tire team—players, coaches, and staff—during their outstanding performance yesterday in the Nation's most competitive and most popular collegiate athletic tournament.

The Tar Heels have now played in a record 20 NCAA Final Four games, the most of all time, and last night marked their sixth NCAA National Championship and seventh overall National Championship. The years 1957, 1982, 1993, 2005, and 2009 are seared in the minds of North Carolina basketball fans, and I know I speak for our entire State when I say how delighted we are to add 2017 to that list!

The teamwork, camaraderie, and determination of this year's team were evident throughout the entire season as they struggled to overcome their heartbreaking defeat in the last seconds of the 2016 National Championship game. While their tournament finishes may have been a little closer than we wished, the team managed six wins against a formidable slate of opponents. These 15 young men played hard, played smart, and played together.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the names of the players, coaches, and staff.

UNC MEN'S BASKETBALL ROSTER

Nate Britt, Upper Marlboro, Md.; Theo Pinson, Greensboro, N.C.; Joel Berry, II, Apopka, Fla.; Kennedy Meeke, Charlotte, N.C.; Isaiah Hicks, Oxford, N.C.; Tony Bradley, Bartow, Fla.; Shea Rush, Fairway, Kan.; Kanler Coker, Gainesville, Ga.; Brandon Robinson, Douglasville, Ga.; Seventh Woods, Columbia, S.C.; Aaron Rohlman, Gastonia, N.C.; Stilman White, Wilmington, N.C.; Luke Maye, Huntersville, N.C.; Justin Jackson, Tomball, Texas; Roy Williams, Head Coach; Steve Robinson, Assistant Coach; Hubert Davis, Assistant Coach; C.B. McGrath, Assistant Coach; Brad Frederick, Director of Basketball Operations; Sean May, Director of Player Personnel; Jonas Sahratian, Strength & Conditioning Coordinator; Eric Hoots, Director of Player Development.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, we could not be prouder of our team's victory last night.

To paraphrase the greatest basketball player of all time and a fellow UNC alumnus, Michael Jordan, who was perhaps channeling Yogi Berra, "The ceiling truly is the roof."

Hark the sound, and Go Heels!

THANKING SNAPa

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I will meet with leaders from the School Nutrition Association of Pennsylvania, commonly called SNAPa, which is a state-wide organization of school nutrition professionals.

SNAPa works to advance quality child nutrition programs through education and advocacy. Organized in 1955, SNAPa is an all-volunteer board of directors elected by its member, which currently stands at more than 2,300 individuals.

As chairman of the Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition and a senior member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, I know the essential services that SNAPa works to provide. Students throughout the Commonwealth receive high-quality, low-cost meals thanks to SNAPa.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to remember that, for some students, the only meal that they receive is at school. This organization works to keep our children healthy and ensure that they have healthy food options through school meal programs. SNAPa is recognized as the authority on school nutrition in Pennsylvania.

I sincerely thank SNAPa for advancing the availability, quality, and acceptance of school nutrition programs as an essential part of education in Pennsylvania for more than 60 years.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF HENRY HALGREN

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to recognize the achievement of Henry Halgren from Fort Collins, Colorado. Henry is a sixth grader at Liberty Common School, a middle school, a public charter school that is very high-performing in my district. He is the victor from all of Colorado in the National Geographic Bee this last week.

He competed against over 100 kids at the University of Denver, and he was able to answer as a sixth grader the following question: Altamira Cave, known for its prehistoric paintings, is found in the province of Cantabria in the north part of what European country?

Henry knew that the answer was Spain. He got it right. He won a \$30,000 scholarship to CU, some prize money, and an atlas.

I am proud to say he will be coming here to Washington, D.C., to represent the Second Congressional District of Colorado in May. And if he is able to win against the competitors from other States, the prize for that is a \$50,000 scholarship and a family tour to the Galapagos Islands.

Congratulations not only to Henry, but to all the participants who showed such a keen interest in learning about the world around them and about our planet.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Henry and his family and everybody who participates in furthering the knowledge about geography.

RECOGNIZING MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of April as the Month of the Military Child. I have the