

Donald Trump refuses to release his tax returns, unlike every other President since Gerald Ford, Republicans and Democrats.

What is the President hiding?

We can't figure it out. And apparently for the other side, that is not enough.

The Deputy Attorney General, Sally Yates, was fired by the President shortly after she went to the White House and revealed her suspicion that Michael Flynn may be a Russian asset. But apparently that was not enough.

The President fired Preet Bharara, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, shortly after it was publically revealed that his office was investigating one of Trump's Cabinet Secretaries and close allies at FOX News. But for my Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle, that was not enough.

The former FBI Director revealed that the Trump campaign was under criminal investigation for possible collusion with the Russians. But for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, even that was not enough.

Then the President fires the FBI Director who is leading the investigation into his campaign after it appears he urged the FBI Director to drop the case against his buddy Michael Flynn. But even for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, that is not enough.

Mr. Speaker, there is a cloud of corruption hanging over 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. We are in the midst of a constitutional crisis. It is time for the Speaker to get his head out of the sand. It is time for House Republicans to do the right thing. Support our demand for a special prosecutor. Support our legislation for an independent commission. It is time for House Republicans to put their country ahead of their party.

SAUK RAPIDS' CITIZEN OF THE YEAR, JODI SPEICHER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sauk Rapids' Citizen of the Year, Jodi Speicher.

The Sauk Rapids Chamber of Commerce started this award in 1986 to recognize individuals who have influenced the community for the better.

Jodi, a resident of Sauk Rapids over the past 15 years, is known for her many contributions to this wonderful community. Whether she is striving for economic prosperity by working with the Sauk Rapids Chamber of Commerce, fighting to end disease through her work with the Alzheimer's Association and the Walk to End Alzheimer's, helping to put on St. Cloud's Expo for Seniors, or advocating for our children by serving on the Community Education board for the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District, Jodi is always putting her community first.

It takes a very special person to dedicate so much of their time to helping

and supporting others. I am proud to recognize that kind of accomplishment here today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Jodi for all she does for our community. She is truly deserving of this award. Keep up the great work.

TEACHING LIFE LESSONS THROUGH ART

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate an educator in my district who was recently named Minnesota's Middle Level Art Teacher of the Year by the Art Educators of Minnesota.

Pam Schwandt began her teaching career 31 years ago at Lincoln Elementary School for the Arts in Anoka, Minnesota, where she was a favorite teacher of one of my staffers. After 13 years in Anoka, Pam moved to Roosevelt Middle School, where she has been for the past 18 years.

While Pam recognizes that not all of her students will become artists, she believes many life lessons can be taught through art. Pam has been helping students learn how to find joy, in addition to nurturing their creative thinking and problem-solving skills through art.

Mr. Speaker, I speak for all Minnesotans when I say: Thank you, Pam.

The best teachers are the ones who go above and beyond just teaching a subject. The best teachers are the ones like Pam, who teach lessons and skills that our students will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Pam's award is well deserved.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise the strength and resolve of Forest Lake Patrol Officer Troy Meyer for not only overcoming adversity over the past 3 years, but for his amazing perseverance.

Troy has escaped death not just once, not twice, but three times by overcoming a severe brain infection, a lung infection, and a double lung transplant a year later. He also had surgery to repair a hole in his heart just 6 months after that.

Despite his challenges, Troy always moved ahead, determined to live life to the fullest and to help as many people as possible. He has done that by returning to his job on the police force only 13 months after his third surgery.

Mr. Speaker, Officer Meyer is an example of the resiliency of the human spirit. We are so thankful that he has made a full and miraculous recovery. Forest Lake, the police department, and the State of Minnesota are fortunate to have an individual like Troy Meyer in our community.

SERVING TO SERVE OTHERS

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend several police officers in my district for receiving the U.S. Department of Defense's Patriot Award.

Police Chief Todd Schwieger and Police Reserve Captain Richard Johnson both received the distinguished Employer Support of the Guard and Re-

serve's Patriot Award for their efforts helping an Active-Duty soldier work in their department while continuing his service to our country through the Army Reserve.

Created in 1972, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve was created to help employers understand the obligations of their Active-Duty employees and how to meet any challenges that may arise for those employees.

St. Francis Reserve Officer and Army Reserve Staff Sergeant Richard Sieber, whom they had been helping, nominated Chief Schwieger and Captain Johnson for this award. Serving in our Nation's Armed Forces is one of the most noble ways one can assist our Nation, and it is imperative that we help the brave individuals who choose to serve our country in any way that we can.

Mr. Speaker, I thank both Todd Schwieger and Richard Johnson for their dedication to our servicemembers, as well as their own service to our community through their work in the St. Francis Police Department. Their work hasn't gone unnoticed.

WE CANNOT "LET THIS GO"

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, this is a very troubling time in American history. Our national security is endangered, the very future of our democracy is at stake, and without the continued engagement of millions of people across this country, this troubling time could become much worse.

There is an old adage: "Loose lips sink ships." But it is also true that when it comes to the abuse of Presidential power, sealed lips can sink a democracy.

We have gone through a period where it would appear that some of our Republican colleagues are in a witness protection program because they have been unable to come forward with any words to comment on the continued abuse of power that we see played out each day, with one being more incredible than the one before.

All United States intelligence services agree that the Russians interfered in our last election. Russia deserves sanctions, not secrets, not rewards. A President of the United States invited Putin's gang right into the Oval Office. We don't know what they left behind to listen to the rest of the conversations, although they may not need to learn them surreptitiously since President Trump, in such a cavalier way, proceeded to share secrets with them.

At long last we wonder, what will awaken these Republicans from their partisan stupor? We need them to speak out as well.

Last night we learned that Trump asked FBI Director James Comey, before firing him, to drop the investigation into National Security Advisor

Michael Flynn, whom Trump had been advised before he fired him that he was subject to being compromised by the Russians in his operations.

Our Republican colleagues need to decide whether they want to be accessories to Trump's obstruction of justice as he continues to endanger our national security.

Trump's firing of Director Comey is a shocking example of incredible duplicity that threatens the very fabric of the future of American democracy. It is a Nixonian dismissal that is designed to obstruct further inquiry into collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia.

Trump even said himself during his NBC interview with Lester Holt that, "regardless of the recommendation from the Department of Justice," he was prepared and planning to fire the FBI Director because of what he was doing with the Russian investigation.

And that is part of a pattern: he fired the U.S. Attorney in New York City, he fired Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, and he then fired Mr. Comey. If you are perceived as crossing the line with President Trump, it is like an episode out of that old TV series "The Apprentice." You are fired.

But this is not make-believe. This is the future of American democracy.

Every day we hear new coverage evidence. What could possibly explain the continued Republican silence, the callous indifference?

Well, Trump is the Republican's golden ticket to denying healthcare coverage to 24 million Americans and, at the same time, already showering, with a bill passed in this House, almost \$1 trillion of tax breaks to the superrich and a handful of special interests.

He is their winning ticket to awarding multinational tax dodgers more tax breaks while blowing a hole in the deficit that can change Medicare and Social Security forever.

Trump reportedly told Comey: "I hope you can let this go."

My fellow Americans, FBI Director Comey could not let it go; and now that he is gone. We cannot let this go. This is not business as usual. This is not just more tax breaks for the superrich, as Republicans are urging at a hearing tomorrow in this House. We cannot let this go.

History will be unkind to those who could not find their voice at this critical time in American history. I say it is time to truly put America first. Reject Putin. Reject partisanship. Help restore confidence in our democracy by supporting an independent special counsel and the type of independent, nonpartisan, nonpolitical inquiry that I have been calling for since last November into this Russian interference.

Mr. Speaker, too much is at stake to remain silent. We must join together to address this challenge to our future.

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

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of our Nation's teachers. Teachers change lives every day across our Nation and around the world, shaping our students and our communities.

Each of us can remember a teacher who made an impression on our life as an educator, a coach, or a mentor, often beyond the walls of the classroom.

Last week, in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week 2017, I had the opportunity to travel the Eighth District to see firsthand the amazing work that teachers do across Bucks and Montgomery Counties.

Throughout the week, I had the opportunity to read to preschool students at the Elbow Lane School in Warrington to discuss our national debt with eighth graders in Newtown Middle School, marked the Sanctuary Model accreditation of the Valley Day School in Morrisville, and held a student townhall with the AP government class students at Bensalem High School.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Teacher Appreciation Week, and I call on every American to carry out that appreciation for our teachers all year long.

□ 1030

MY CONSTITUENTS DESERVE ANSWERS

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because this week marks the 1-year anniversary since the EPA established the health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion to limit the lifetime exposure to perfluorinated compounds like PFOA and PFOS.

To some, these acronyms and this anniversary may mean nothing, but to me and my constituents—more than 70,000 Pennsylvanians in Bucks and Montgomery Counties—it has been a year of confusion, concern, and anger sparked by the rightful fear that their health has been endangered by these PFCs.

The use of firefighting foam at military bases in and around our district has contaminated dozens of public wells and over 140 private wells with these compounds, leaving many residents scared and municipalities and local governments looking for answers.

Mr. Speaker, every American deserves access to clean, safe drinking water. Yet, for too many of my constituents, these elevated levels of PFCs have put them and their families at risk.

While work has been done, there is still far more work to do; and I am pleased that the recent government funding measure included directions for the Secretary of Defense to continue addressing these pressing issues, specifically by requiring all military services to establish procedures for prompt and cost-effective remediation

of PFC contamination, and also by delivering a report to Congress by the end of the summer assessing the number of military installations across the country impacted and the effect on drinking water in the surrounding communities, as well as department-wide plans for community notification of contamination and procedures for timely remediation.

However, our work cannot stop here. Not only should a health study be executed to know if PFOS and PFOA have compromised my constituents' long-term health, other issues must be addressed, including interacting with the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding service-connected condition care for military veterans potentially impacted and finding ways to offset trickle-down costs for those forced to connect to public water in impacted areas.

After a year, my constituents deserve more answers, and we will give them to them. They demand action. I will fight for both.

QUESTIONS FOR PRESIDENT TRUMP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, let me raise several questions for President Donald Trump. The American people and Members of Congress would like to know the answers.

I am deeply concerned the President is compromising the national security of our Nation. Why would a President share intelligence information with the highest ranking operatives of Russia close to President Vladimir Putin?

Though the President's cavalier and, frankly, outrageous behavior conveniently sucked up the airwaves last week, Americans cannot be distracted from his simultaneous firing of FBI Director James Comey, an official who spent his life protecting and defending the Constitution of our country on liberty's behalf.

Let me ask: Why were no U.S. journalists allowed into the President's historic meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and Russia's Ambassador to the United States for many years, Ambassador Kislyak, one of probably the highest ranking intelligence officers as well as Ambassador from Russia to the United States? To my knowledge, no U.S. President has ever received officials from Russia in the Oval Office and then brought only Russian journalists with digital recording equipment into that office. Let me repeat that. We don't know who they were, but they brought equipment, digital recording equipment.

Think about that. Think about that.

Meanwhile, the President excluded American press. Not a single journalist from this country was allowed in. He replaced them with Russian state media operatives. Today, CNN reports that, how conveniently, President Vladimir Putin has now said he will