

July is Parks and Recreation Month, and I urge everyone across this great country to visit our parks and recreational areas. It is great for our families and for all of us. Share in something that reflects America at our best.

Let us also remember that wildfires are a regular threat to our parks during this season. Fires are, sadly, burning as we speak today near Yosemite National Park and throughout the West.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those brave men and women fighting those fires, and their families, while protecting some of America's most precious resources.

RUSSIAN ENERGY INTERESTS IN EUROPE

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, control of energy equals national security. I rise to warn how Russia, through hybrid warfare, seeks to destabilize and divide our closest European allies through control of their energy supply.

As Americans well know, whoever controls the energy spigot controls the function of a nation. Russia uses its growing dominance of energy in Europe as its primary pressure point to destabilize the West and our allies. That is why I was floored that President Trump inserted himself so haphazardly into Europe's energy debate.

Nord Stream II poses new, troubling dependency threats by Russia on Europe's energy security and boosts undemocratic Russia's claw hold on the European continent. Russia is weaponizing energy in countries across Europe, including Germany and Ukraine, creating a dangerous new dependency by those recipient nations.

The fight for Ukraine's liberty depends on its energy independence in the future, and the free world must help Europe and Ukraine reduce their economic reliance on Russian gas.

Risking alienation of nations that share freedom's values is counterproductive and aids and abets our enemies.

Mr. Speaker, I will include in the RECORD President Trump's and President Putin's comments on this topic.

SPENDING BILL WILL DAMAGE OUR ENVIRONMENT

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, later today the House will vote on a spending bill for the Department of the Interior. This bill is a travesty that will do enormous damage to our environment. It cuts critical funding that keeps our air clean and our water safe.

This bill eliminates \$100 million in funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, \$65 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund,

and \$150 million from both the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. It will make it more difficult to protect some bodies of water from pollution and endangered species from extinction.

Perhaps most troubling of all, it actually eliminates protections that help keep lead out of our water.

A vote for this bill is a vote to make our air more dangerous to breathe and our water less safe to drink. It is a reckless bill that should be opposed by all Members of this body.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" and to oppose this and to protect the quality of our air, our water, and our environment. Our constituents are depending upon us.

CONGRESS TO ELIMINATE FUNDING FOR THE ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I, along with so many Americans, looked on with great shock as we saw the President capitulate to Vladimir Putin. It was truly a stunning and worrisome moment for me.

In fact, in that European trip, the President insulted our allies and then openly embraced a man who attacked our democracy, invaded and annexed other countries, and authorized lethal attacks on his political enemies and other countries.

Yet the President still embraced him.

It is a moment of alarm for the whole Nation, but it is important to note that there is something we can do about it, as the President has also urged the U.S. Congress to eliminate funding for the Election Assistance Commission.

This is very serious because we know that Russia assisted in the hacking and attack of over 21 States' election systems. The President may not be concerned, but Congress ought to be.

Unfortunately, today we expect to have a vote in which we are voting on a bill that eliminates the funding of the Election Assistance Commission. This should be rejected, as we should reject the President's failure to stand up for our values.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S LATEST TWEETS

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, well, the latest tweets from the President:

"So many people at the higher ends of intelligence loved my press conference performance in Helsinki."

Obviously, he is referring to Putin, because there are not many people in the United States who saw that press conference as a success. In fact, it was an unmitigated disaster.

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats said, "The red lights are blinking." Our election process, our critical infrastructure, is being attacked by Russia, and what is the House of Representatives doing today? Eliminating funding to protect our election process.

Obviously, those who vote for this reduction in funding are not at the higher levels of intelligence.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DEFEND AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

(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, earlier this week, the President put the "hel" and the "sink" back in "Helsinki" because our Republic is sinking under the weight of his radical actions in capitulating to Vladimir Putin in the eyes of the world.

Now, some of my colleagues have called this appeasement. I want to correct that. Appeasement is a misguided policy where you give concessions in order to try to make peace and stability with a dangerous, aggressive foreign power.

This was not appeasement. This was simple surrender. The President wasn't trying to make peace with a hostile power. He was trying to capitulate and have us go over to the other side of the hostile power.

The President has sided with authoritarianism, with every kleptocrat, dictator, despot, and tyrant on the planet Earth today.

We the people of the United States and we in Congress have a responsibility now to defend American constitutional democracy. We must invest in our elections and fortify our elections so we can begin to restore the principles we have lost under the terrible leadership of Donald Trump.

□ 1230

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 18, 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on July 18, 2018, at 11:28 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without an amendment H.R. 6042.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.