

policy, reflecting the consolidation of power by former security and military officers. Russia's constitutional court struck down key provisions of the law that banned journalists from making positive or negative observations about candidates or parties.

2006 October 7—Anna Politkovskaya, a journalist who exposed the corruption of the Russian army and its conduct in Chechnya, was shot and killed in the lobby of her apartment.

2006—Alexander Litvinenko is poisoned. Litvinenko was a former officer of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and KGB, who fled from court prosecution in Russia and received political asylum in the United Kingdom.

2008—Russia wages a war against Georgia. Today, thousands of Russian troops occupy Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region, which constitutes about 20% of Georgia's internationally recognized territory. Russia has never fulfilled its obligations under the Six-Point Cease-Fire Agreement (also known as the Sarkozy Plan) that ended the fighting.

2010: Polish Air Force Tu-154 Crash over Smolensk, Russia. Antoni Macierewicz (Poland's defense minister) claims the fatal crash which killed Poland's President Lech Kaczynski, the First Lady and 94 others in 2010 in Russia was preceded by two explosions on board. A previous Polish government concluded that pilot error was to blame for the crash, but Law and Justice ordered a new investigation which concluded this year that the plane was brought down by explosions on board. No international analysis was allowed by Russia.

2013—Putin signs law banning gay publications. "It officially declares that gays and lesbians are inferior beings," says Elena Klimova, a gay rights activist in Russia who was convicted under the law in 2014.

2014—Putin illegally invades Ukraine. More than 10,000 have been killed, and millions of Ukrainians have been displaced.

2014—Russia occupies Crimean Peninsula and nearly ten thousand Crimean Tatars are displaced from their homes. Russia under the Putin regime has violated UN human rights, and infringements of the Geneva Convention.

2014—Russian forces shoot down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over occupied Ukrainian territory, killing 298 innocent passengers. Russia attempts to use disinformation and propaganda to cover up obfuscate the truth of its brutality.

2014—Human rights abuses in Russia are more prevalent than ever. The LGBTQ+ community is targeted. Independent media report that 31 civilians were killed in the first nine months of 2014. Abduction-style detentions, torture, and enforced disappearances persisted in the North Caucasus, as did attacks against government critics, the report says, adding that the situation is particularly bad in Dagestan.

2014—Oleg Sentsov, Ukrainian filmmaker, is arrested under charges of running "terrorist organizations" in Crimea.

2015—Natalya Sharina, the director of the Ukrainian Literature Library in Moscow, was put under house arrest in 2015 under the charges of inciting ethnic hatred and spreading "anti-Russian propaganda."

2015—Journalist Boris Nemstov is shot and killed. Nemstov was planning on leading a rally to protest the war in Ukraine days before his killing.

2016—Russian authorities arrested Roman Sushchenko, a Ukrainian journalist with the state news service, Ukrinform, on dubious espionage charges.

2016—Russia attacks U.S. election. Wisconsin, Ohio, California and 10 other states said they were among 21 states that Russian government hackers targeted in an effort to sway the 2016 presidential election in favor

of Donald Trump though no votes were changed.

Federal and congressional intelligence groups that have stated that Russia interfered in the election: CIA, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, FBI, NSA, Justice Department, House Intelligence Committee, Senate Intelligence Committee.

2017: In December, the Central Election Commission banned opposition leader Aleksey Navalny from challenging Putin in the 2018 presidential election, removing from the contest the only credible opposition to have announced a campaign.

2017—Russian authorities banned the activities of the Jehovah's Witnesses, which was deemed an extremist group.

2017: Investigative journalist and Novy Peterburg cofounder Nikolay Andrushchenko died in April, weeks after he was severely beaten, and Dmitriy Popkov, editor of the investigative online outlet Ton-M, was shot to death in May.

2017—Workers on stadiums built for the 2017 FIFA Confederations Cup and 2018 World Cup reported exploitation, including non-provision of contracts, non-payment of wages, and retaliation for reporting abuses. The Building and Woodworkers International trade union reported at least 17 deaths on stadiums since construction began.

2017—By February 2017, the number of people imprisoned for extremist speech spiked to 94, from 54 in 2015.

2017—In the first six months of 2017 alone, the number of people administratively punished by Russian authorities for supposedly violating the country's regulations on public gatherings was two-and-a-half times higher than throughout 2016.

2017—Denis Voronenkov, a onetime Communist member of Russia's lower house of parliament, dies after being shot outside a hotel in Kyiv. President Poroshenko calls the shooting a "Russian state terrorist act." Voronenkov, who fled to Ukraine in 2016, is the latest in a string of Putin and Russia's critics who were killed or injured under mysterious circumstances.

2017—Russia interferes in the French election between opponents Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen. The Macron presidential campaign accused the Kremlin of election meddling, saying that servers belonging to the team were hacked by a group likely to be associated with Russia.

2018—Father and daughter Sergei and Yulia Skripal are poisoned. British foreign secretary Boris Johnson said on 16 March that it was "overwhelmingly likely" that the poisoning had been ordered directly by Russian president Putin, which marked the first time the British government accused Vladimir Putin of personally ordering the poisoning.

2018: Donald Trump accepts Putin's lies on Russian interference in U.S. elections over statement from U.S. Intelligence Community: "My people came to me, Dan Coats came to me and some others, they think it's Russia. I have President Putin, he just said it's not Russia. I will say this; I don't see any reason why it would be. I have great confidence in my intelligence people, but I will tell you that President Putin was extremely strong and powerful in his denial today." —Trump, Helsinki Conference 2018

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I urge our President to see Putin for what he is: an enemy of liberty, not a competitor.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, human trafficking hurts women and children all around the world. Sadly, the United States is no exception.

As many as 300,000 American children are at risk of child sexual exploitation. It is happening in every community around the country. Every weekend in Minnesota, as many as 45 Minnesota girls are sold for sex.

But there is good news. The Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act, a new law which was passed with bipartisan support earlier this year to crack down on websites that facilitate trafficking, is making a difference. Backpage.com, the single largest online source of sex trafficking has now been shut down by Federal law enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, July 30 marks World Day against Trafficking in Persons. It is another opportunity to raise awareness and also redouble our efforts in the fight against traffickers and helping victims.

UPHOLD OUR COMMITMENT TO NATO ALLIANCE

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to discuss the importance of NATO to our Nation and to Europe.

In 1949, the United States and 11 other countries created NATO. Today, 29 countries make up this alliance.

At the heart of NATO is article 5, which says that an attack on one ally is attack on all allies.

On September 12, 2001, for the first time ever, article 5 was invoked. 9/11, an attack on America, was an attack on all.

Most recently, the country of Montenegro joined the NATO Alliance. And last week, sadly, the President expressed doubt that the U.S. should come to Montenegro's defense. This is disturbing.

The only time article 5 has been invoked has been for America. When our Nation was at its most vulnerable point, NATO stepped up and had our back. We must uphold our commitment to this critical alliance.

PERMANENTLY REPEAL MEDICAL DEVICE EXCISE TAX

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 184, the Protect Medical Innovation Act.

Many medical device manufacturers in North Carolina's Fifth District have reported how the medical device excise tax hinders medical innovation, costs jobs, decreases research and development, and slows capital expansion.

A fundamentally flawed policy enacted under ObamaCare, the medical

device excise tax was intended to spare taxpayers healthcare costs. Instead, it burdens those taxpayers, and innovators are the backbone of our economy.

According to the Tax Foundation, the medical device tax cost approximately 21,800 jobs from 2013 to 2015. Furthermore, the tax is hidden from consumers at purchase and passed off to them in higher prices.

Congress has suspended this tax twice before, and as an original cosponsor of this legislation, I urge my colleagues to vote for its permanent repeal with the Protect Medical Innovation Act this week.

MARIJUANA DATA COLLECTION

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, for decades, bad data and misinformation have fueled the failed war on drugs that has wasted billions of taxpayer dollars, incarcerating Americans for nonviolent marijuana charges.

Our outdated marijuana policies have turned everyday Americans into criminals, strained our criminal justice system, cost taxpayers tremendously, and torn families apart, all for a substance that is proven to be far less harmful and dangerous than alcohol.

Our Federal policy should be based on actual science and fact, not misplaced stigma and outdated myths. However, the fact that marijuana is currently classified as a schedule I drug, the same category as heroin and cocaine, restricts and even discourages scientific research on marijuana, limiting our ability to create science-based policies.

I will be introducing the bipartisan Marijuana Data Collection Act with my colleague Congressman CARLOS CURBELO so that we can get studies to set the record straight. Our bill would authorize a nonpartisan evidence-based report that analyzes current marijuana policies across the country and their effects on our communities.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.

□ 1930

MILITARY SPOUSES

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, families who are veterans also sacrifice a great deal when their loved ones have been deployed and even when they come home. Current law, unfortunately, doesn't allow a spouse to be recognized by the VA-provided grave marker after that spouse has passed away.

Some veterans in the north State in my district recognized this issue and brought it to my attention. The VA even requested this change in this year's budget request. The budget requires a change in law by Congress.

That is why I introduced the Honoring Veterans' Families Act in order to correct this problem. Under the legislation, the VA will have the ability to replace the marker of a veteran to add an inscription about their spouse following the loss of that spouse.

Veterans certainly should have the option of including their spouse on their own tombstone if they so choose. This is a bill that, unfortunately, is needed to once again honor our veterans and the sacrifices of their families. Let's hope we can pass it.

THE AMERICAN DREAM IS ALIVE AT TONY'S PIZZA AND GRINDERS

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, the American Dream is alive and well in Texas-22. It is alive in the south loop Ellington area, and it is alive and thriving at Tony's Pizza and Grinders.

Tony's is a walking, talking American Dream. In 1996, the Canolli family left war-torn Kosovo. They started their life here in Michigan. But shortly, they saw the bright light of the Lone Star State and moved to Texas. That is where they started Tony's.

The Canollis are special because they care more about others than about making dollars. Through Hurricane Harvey, they gave free food to the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department so they could keep saving lives.

If you want the freshest and the best pizza in America, try the Mrs. Marie's. That is amore.

CELEBRATING LIEUTENANT TIMOTHY COREY

(Ms. TENNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, sometimes we don't even realize that we are surrounded by heroes. Today I rise to celebrate the courageous actions of a Yorkville resident, Lieutenant Timothy Corey from my district. He was recently honored with the New York State Senate Liberty Medal, one of the highest civilian honors in New York State.

While on vacation in North Myrtle Beach, Lieutenant Corey discovered a young boy stuck in an outdoor pool intake pipe. In an instant, he jumped into the water and rescued the young man and for 8 minutes breathed air into the drowning boy, ultimately saving his life. The young boy was released from the hospital just 6 days later.

The bravery displayed by Lieutenant Corey often goes unrecognized, so, Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to now recognize Lieutenant Timothy Corey as a true hero in our community.

A BETTER WAY AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, House Republicans made a promise to the American people that there was a better way forward under our leadership. Our Better Way Agenda outlined a pathway toward safer communities, a stronger military, and a robust economy. Since then, House Republicans have compiled a record of results, not rhetoric. Thanks to this progress, the American people are better off now.

Republicans started by moving bills that address some of the biggest issues plaguing cities and towns across the country:

We have passed over 50 bills to put an end to the opioid epidemic in our communities.

FOSTA, which will dismantle the online sex trafficking industry, was signed into law.

We are also keeping our children safe by providing additional funding and resources for school safety programs.

We are rebuilding our military, ensuring our troops have the tools, training, and equipment they need to carry out their missions and keep us safe both at home and abroad. Our brave men and women in uniform received their largest pay raise in nearly 10 years.

We are keeping our promise to provide our veterans with the care they have earned by overhauling the VA and ensuring that they have access to reliable, quality care.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has undoubtedly had the most significant positive effect on the daily lives of Americans. Tax reform has led to unprecedented economic growth across our Nation. Americans are keeping more of their hard-earned paychecks, while companies in all 50 States are creating jobs and opportunity for all.

At home in Orange County, the unemployment rate has dropped to a near 20-year low, while pay and benefits continue to rise. Nationally, jobless claims have fallen to their lowest levels since 1969, and economic confidence is soaring.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on about the numerous accomplishments House Republicans have achieved in the last 18 months, but the American people don't