

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Our outdated marijuana policies have turned everyday Americans into criminals, strained our criminal justice system, cost taxpayers tremendously, and torn families apart,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Our Federal policy should be based on actual science and fact, not misplaced stigma and outdated myths.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.

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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

need convincing. They are seeing the results firsthand. Our Nation is, without question, better off now, and we will continue our work to improve the lives of all Americans.

I am proud to introduce my friend and fellow committee member on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Congressman BUDDY CARTER from the First District of Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in discussing how Americans are better off now.

Two years ago, I told the First District of Georgia about our Better Way Agenda, our bold agenda to tackle some of our Nation's greatest challenges and improve the lives of everyday Americans.

Now, 2 years later, I am thrilled Americans are experiencing the results. We have instituted sound, progrowth policies, and the economy is booming.

Now people are no longer asking: Where are the jobs? Instead, thanks to tax reform, rolling back burdensome regulations, and more, we have more job openings than job seekers.

Just last week, I visited a local business called Game Changers, with locations in Richmond Hill and Savannah. While there, I learned their revenue is up at both of their locations. They are hiring new employees at both locations, and they have increased wages and given bonuses to their employees.

It is incredible to hear these stories of how local small businesses and hardworking Georgians are thriving again.

That is not all. As the proud Representative of every branch of the military, I have been fighting for our troops, veterans, and military families because they deserve better. Republicans have taken historic actions to rebuild our military and fix the VA.

After years of neglect, we have provided new investments in training, equipment, and personnel to reverse the damage of the last decade. Members of our military put their lives on the line for our country, and we are working to provide the support to ensure they are the most well-prepared and well-equipped force on the planet.

Finally, we have made major strides to make our communities safer, including fighting the opioid epidemic. The House has passed more than 50 bills combating this crisis that is killing 115 Americans every day.

The list goes on and on. House Republicans are fighting every day for Americans in Washington to deliver results, not rhetoric. I hear it from small businesses, big businesses, and citizens in the First District all the time. Americans are truly better off now.

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), who sits on the House Commit-

tees on Education and the Workforce and Oversight and Government Reform. VIRGINIA FOXX is the Congresswoman who represents North Carolina's Fifth District.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman WALTERS, and I appreciate her leading this Special Order tonight to bring to the attention of the American people the fact that they are better off now than they were 2 years ago. This is an important message for us to share with the American people. Many of us are doing it individually, but we appreciate the gentlewoman's leadership on this.

Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, House Republicans promised to replace our broken Tax Code and rein in the runaway administrative state that stifled our economy and made it harder for businesses to create jobs and grow.

We proposed a better way to grow the economy with solutions for hardworking Americans who were being chewed up by our system and struggling to get by. This Congress, we have delivered on our promises, and I am pleased to say that North Carolinians are better off now.

We passed the most significant tax reform in over 30 years, and everyday Americans are already reaping the benefits. According to the Tax Foundation, the average increase in take-home pay for a family of four in the Fifth District is \$1,843. I would like to say that again, Mr. Speaker: \$1,843. Those are hard-earned wages being kept in paychecks and not sent to Washington to finance inefficient government bureaucracy.

Speaking of bureaucracy, Mr. Speaker, this Congress has also enacted historic regulatory relief, with 16 Congressional Review Act resolutions becoming law. Five of those resolutions came out of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, which I chair, and I was able to get a sixth enacted that I sponsored that came through another committee.

We have rolled back some of the most burdensome Obama-era regulations concocted by Washington bureaucrats who thought they knew better than American farmers and business owners. But Republicans did not agree with them.

North Carolina's economy is evidence that Republicans' policies are working for the American people. Just compare the North Carolina Department of Commerce's figures from June of last year to this year and you will see that our State now stands 100,000 jobs ahead. There is still work to be done, but thanks to tax and regulatory relief, North Carolinians are better off now.

Again, I want to thank Congresswoman MIMI WALTERS for leading this Special Order tonight, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to introduce the chairwoman of the House Republican Conference.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS).

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague for yielding and for hosting us this evening in a Special Order to talk more about Americans who are better off now because of our hard work over this Congress. I want to just join in sharing why Americans and their families are better off, and it is because Republicans have provided a better way and results that work.

After years of struggling to get ahead, hardworking men and women are now seeing jobs, opportunity, and confidence come roaring back. This is the comeback story that was made possible at the beginning through our Better Way Agenda. Over the past 2 years, we have worked hard to deliver on that agenda.

Mr. Speaker, at better.gov, you can check out the promises that we have kept and why, as a result, America is stronger at home and abroad with a booming economy, safer communities, and a revived military.

After historic tax reform and our work to rein in Obama-era regulations, unemployment is at a historic low, job openings at a record high, paychecks are growing, and wages are rising right along with consumer confidence.

In my home State of Washington, the average wage increase just hit a 10-year high, and those increases are benefiting rural communities as well, like Garfield County.

Garfield County is in my district. It is the smallest county in the State of Washington, and the average wage increase has been 8.7 percent in the last year.

Asotin County is another small, rural county, and they have seen a 6.6 percent increase in the last year. For other rural counties, unemployment rates are dropping sharply.

Pend Oreille County is in my district. They have seen a 3.2 percent drop in their unemployment rate.

For families and small businesses that are no longer overtaxed and overregulated, they have confidence again that they can achieve a better life and reach their full potential. That is what I am most excited about. I am excited about the hope and the optimism that it is bringing to people in eastern Washington and across this country.

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It wasn't that long ago, in 2010, unemployment was at 9.9 percent. Our policies have unleashed economic growth. It is now at 4 percent. More Americans are coming off the sidelines and into the workforce. Just last month, there were 600,000 Americans. I am proud to say that it includes people with disabilities.

As The Washington Post recently reported, the jobless rate for workers with disabilities has fallen at a faster rate than the general population. This is great news because Washington State is getting ready to launch our ABLE accounts. I was proud to lead efforts in tax reform to provide a way for

those with disabilities to explore work, get a part-time job or an internship, and take that money and put it back into their ABLE account.

Today, 50,000 people in my State will be eligible for ABLE accounts. It will help them find a job that gives them independence, dignity, and purpose. We all recognize that a job is a foundation for a better life.

A booming economy isn't the only reason why Americans are better off. We have also made significant investments to combat the opioid crisis and human trafficking, target dangerous criminals, and make schools safer.

After the Obama administration left our Armed Forces depleted, we have made good on promises to revive and rebuild our military. In addition to giving our troops the biggest pay increase in almost a decade, we have provided for the largest increase in defense in 15 years. Our troops, including those I have the privilege of representing at Fairchild Air Force Base, will now have additional resources to train, address the readiness crisis, and keep America secure.

Madam Speaker, the American people don't want rhetoric. They want results. After years of slow growth, lack of confidence, stagnant wages, and a stagnant economy, they asked for a better way. I am proud to have been a part of a group that has proven that we can get those results done. By putting people first and focusing on improving lives, we have delivered real results and a better way forward. That is why Americans are better off today. I invite everyone to learn more at better.gov.

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. FERGUSON), serving on the Committee on the Budget, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Committee on Education and the Workforce, representing the Third District of Georgia.

Mr. FERGUSON. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from California for leading this Special Order.

What a year and half it has been since I came to Congress. There have been a lot of positive things that have gone on, and I think Americans feel that they are better off now.

If you listen to the media and the rhetoric, you wouldn't know it. Every time I travel home and I talk to the folks in the Third District of Georgia, I get this sense of optimism, this reality that they are doing better. Their wages are up. There are more job opportunities. They are doing better. They feel safer, and they feel more secure.

In spite of what you might have heard on TV and in the other parts of the media, more than 177 bills have been signed into law in the 115th Congress. That is the most of any Congress at this point since 2008. The results are clear: Americans are better off.

I have heard from small businesses like Shred-X in Griffin, Georgia; Custom Truck and Body Works in

Woodbury, Georgia; and Emma Hill Manufacturing in LaGrange, Georgia. All of these businesses are making investments. They are expanding. They are being more productive. Most importantly, they are hiring more people, and they are investing in their people with higher wages and better training. Families are doing better throughout our district.

But these businesses are doing more than simply investing in their people and in their businesses. They are investing in their communities. So our communities are becoming more helpful.

All of this is a result of a tax reform bill, a better regulatory environment, and a changing attitude in education that ensures that people pursue their talents and not just a degree. They are involved in making sure that they are able to make a living in viable careers for a long period of time.

It is not just the economy that is making us more secure. We have invested heavily in our military, and we have fully funded our men and women serving this Nation. Most importantly, when they returned home, we have made the changes in the VA that, over time, will make sure that they have the benefits that they have earned and, quite candidly, that they deserve.

We have also made investments in many other areas. Think about what we have been able to accomplish with human trafficking. We are beginning to take steps to really change how we view addiction and the opioid crisis. We are making progress, and that is making Americans better.

So it is easy to get caught up in the news of the moment, to get clouded from the really good things that are happening. But we are here to remind America that things are better now because of the work that we have done in this House of Representatives.

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

TRUMP'S LIFELONG LEGACY: STACKING THE COURTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to anchor this CBC Special Order hour. I would like to thank the CBC chair, Chairman RICHMOND, for his leadership in this effort.

For the next 60 minutes, we have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people about issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus and many of the constituents we represent.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and ex-

tend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I am going to do something highly unusual today, because my colleague who is here from the District of Columbia knows an awful lot about this subject. I have watched her; I have observed her. She has taught a few classes and a few people on this subject matter, and she is an expert.

So I think the best way to start off is with a person who was a former law professor who teaches, who really understands what our Supreme Court means as the third element, with the legislative and the chief executive. I have heard her in Congressional Black Caucus meetings.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the District of Columbia, Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the kind words of my friend from Pennsylvania, and I certainly appreciate his leadership of this Special Order this evening. It is a subject of immense importance to the American people, none more so, Mr. Speaker, than people of color in the United States of America.

So I would like to begin this Special Order by speaking about President Trump's district and circuit court nominees and then about his Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, who serves on the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. That is the circuit of my own home district, the District of Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, long before I came to the House, I had the distinct honor of arguing and winning a case before the United States Supreme Court. That case was a free speech case where I represented plaintiffs with whom I profoundly disagreed. As we look at the President's nominees, especially to the Supreme Court, one wonders today how these nominees would rule.

Let's look first at President Trump's nominees so far to the circuit courts and the district court. This is an amazing, unprecedented figure for the 21st century. His nominees are 90.1 percent white, 2.3 percent African American.

Now, one way to look at this is to look at another Republican President. So I said to my staff: Find the racial makeup of President Bush's nominees.

Remember, African Americans don't expect a Republican President to offer anything like the number of nominees of, for example, President Barack Obama, not because he was African American, but because he was, after all, a Democrat. That is not the standard to which I am holding this President to is, by comparison, to Republican Presidents.