

taking appropriate action. I will bring Articles of Impeachment if nobody else does.

And finally, I will say more about this this evening. I should have 30 minutes of time. I will speak to a greater extent on the issue that I have called to Members' attention now.

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

#### ENRIQUE PADRON OP-ED REGARDING CUBAN SOCIALISM DANGERS

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

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, socialist Democrats advocate dictatorial and guaranteed-to-fail socialism over liberty and the free enterprise economic system that has created America's prosperity.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "evil" as "morally reprehensible," "causing harm," or "pernicious." By that definition, socialism is evil, and anyone in America who supports socialism supports evil.

Enrique Padron recently published an editorial in the New York Post entitled: "Hey, Democrats: Here's the price I paid for your Socialist dream." It is such a revealing test of the evils of socialism that today I read it in part into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

"American Democrats are pining ever more loudly for socialism these days, for 'free' education, 'free' health care and much else.

"Let me tell you about socialism as I lived it under the Fidel Castro regime.

"The house where I was born in Communist Cuba had a dirt floor, a bathroom hole in the ground, which we shared with six other families, and a zinc roof that left us unbearably hot in the summer and shivering in the winter.

"We had no running water, no refrigerator and no door in the back of the house. We cooked with charcoal. My mother raised four boys by herself in that 'house,' working 12 hours a day to earn 160 Cuban pesos, or approximately \$6, a month.

"Why didn't we fix it?

"In addition to the meager income, we had no access to hardware stores to buy nails or cement to fix our humble house. In fact, the local member of the national assembly was the only person authorized to approve whether we could buy a bag of cement or a roll of roof paper—if they were available.

"We couldn't buy these simple materials without that precious piece of paper.

"Can you imagine going to your congressional Representative to ask for permission to buy a box of nails? Or roof tiles? Or roof paper? It seems unthinkable in the United States. But in Cuba, where we lacked the necessities of life, we had to. And when we complained, the authorities scolded us to

be grateful for free education and free healthcare.

"In Cuba, it is illegal to speak against the government or complain about living conditions. We were prohibited from speaking with local media, but the journalists were state employees and wouldn't publish our stories anyway. We couldn't express our unmet needs and were reminded that we shouldn't complain anyway, because we were promised—you guessed it—free education and free healthcare.

"In Cuba, doctors make the equivalent of 25 cents an hour and teachers 21 cents an hour. Pharmacists earn eight cents an hour.

"In Cuba, there is no right to free speech and virtually no independent media. There are no free, fair, multiparty elections. In fact, there is just one political party, Communist, and only members of the Communist Party may run as candidates for any office. But we were told we couldn't object to this system, lest we lose our free education and free healthcare. . . .

"In Cuba, if you dare to yell something true, like 'Fidel and Raul are dictators,' you could spend many years in prison. Dictatorship is another price we had to pay for free education and free healthcare.

"I desperately needed something more than the promises of free education and free healthcare. I knew that I needed freedom—freedom to speak my mind and vote my conscience. It was worth the risk of being eaten by sharks than to continue living a life with no purpose and no freedom.

"On August 16, 1994, I decided to get into a boat with 20 other Cubans in search of a future.

"One of my two brothers followed me to the United States, also in a raft, nearly dying of thirst and hunger during the journey. My other brother is still awaiting the visa I filed for him. . . .

"After arriving in the United States, I worked as an international sales manager, owned a restaurant, hosted a radio program and authored two books. Today, I work for a Member of Congress. None of those opportunities would have been possible for me in socialist Cuba.

"I wish that one day I might have a conversation with some of these young American socialists who have no experience with actually existing socialism. They like to think they can have democracy and a socialist economy. But everywhere it's been implemented, public ownership of the means of production has led to political repression.

"Not least in my native Cuba, with its promises of 'free' cradle-to-grave services.

"I chose so much more than the promise of 'free.' I chose freedom."

Mr. Speaker, Enrique Padron has shared his firsthand experience with the suffering, depravity, and evils of socialism in Cuba. Americans should heed his words.

Free enterprise is about liberty and freedom. Socialism is about poverty and slavery through the ruling class.

#### PROTECTING INDIVIDUALS WITH PREEXISTING CONDITIONS

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about healthcare and to ask that my colleagues join me in support of protecting individuals in America who have preexisting conditions.

We can, and we must do a better job in reducing costs and improving access to healthcare in America. Since the Affordable Care Act was signed into law in 2010, no provision has had a more significant impact on the health of Americans than protecting those with preexisting conditions.

In my district in 2010 in San Joaquin Valley in California, almost 25 percent of my constituents had no healthcare insurance whatsoever, and 17 percent were uninsured. Today, 9 years later, 10 percent of my constituents do not have healthcare insurance, and the ability to provide insurance for those who were underinsured has much improved.

Before the ACA, insurers could deny health coverage to many health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or cancer.

How many of our families have preexisting conditions in those areas?

I submit most of us do. These denials often force families into decisions between paying for a loved one's treatment or keeping the lights on in their house. No family should be faced with such a choice.

Protections for preexisting conditions remain one of the popular parts of the ACA. These protections should not be weakened due to partisan politics. Working together in a bipartisan fashion is the only way we are going to get something enacted that will work for all Americans.

We can do better for the American people, and we should. That is what the folks in my 16th Congressional District in the San Joaquin Valley want me to do. They want me to help improve their healthcare.

#### WILDFIRE AWARENESS

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss the importance of wildfire awareness. No State knows more about how important the subject is than California.

There is no longer a fire season in California. It suffers from fires, sadly, year-round resulting from many factors, including climate change.

Just last year California saw the deadliest wildfire in its history. The town of Paradise was decimated with more than 14,000 homes destroyed, and 85 people lost their lives. God bless them and their families.

There have been other fires in Santa Barbara, Mendocino, and the Yosemite Rim fire right in my own district's backyard.

We need to do more. For the first time in its 110-year history, the Forest Service says they will now dedicate more than half their budget to wildfire suppression efforts, which we have directed as a result of the farm bill last year.

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To begin with, this requires better managing and caring for our forests.

This week, we will vote on an emergency supplemental to help communities affected by wildfires. I ask my colleagues to vote with me and pass this important legislation.

Let's do the right thing and help our fellow Americans rebuild their lives and their communities. At the same time, let's be more responsible stewards of our forests.

We know how to do it. Let's get started with our States, local governments, and the private sector.

Future generations deserve better management of forests throughout our country. I think we can do it if we work together.

#### CONGRATULATING BALD EAGLE AREA HIGH SCHOOL UNIFIED BOCCIE TEAM ON STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Bald Eagle Area High School unified bocce team, which recently brought home a State championship.

It is only the unified bocce team's second season, and they have already been crowned the best in the State.

The unified bocce team is made up of four students, four with intellectual disabilities and four without. This winter sport allows students with and without disabilities to participate in a competitive environment that promotes physical activity, sportsmanship, and socialization. Teams are made up of students with intellectual disabilities, known as athletes, and regular education students, known as partners.

I am so proud of my alma mater for adopting the unified bocce team, which operates in conjunction with Special Olympics. In fact, multiple high schools in the region have unified bocce teams, including State College and Bellefonte in Centre County and Clearfield Area High School in Clearfield County.

Bocce has become so popular at Bald Eagle Area that it started the season with two teams, a blue team and a gold team. The two met in the regional championship, with the gold advancing to states.

The gold team's eight members include Chelsea Butterworth, Alyssa Packer, Nick Zink, Josh Zink, Fay Shaheen, Emily Gardner, Jordan Bonsell, and Bridget Esenwine.

Mr. Speaker, Special Olympics Pennsylvania also hosted its third annual Unified Bocce Government Challenge on Monday in the east rotunda of the Pennsylvania State Capitol in Harrisburg. The challenge paired various local organizational leaders, government officials, and legislative leaders with Special Olympics athletes for a fun, competitive, and social experience.

I am so proud of our athletes, our partners, and everyone in the community who has supported the unified bocce team and the inclusion movement.

The team had a hero's welcome home from Hershey in March when they won the State championship. About 100 teachers, parents, and students greeted the team when they arrived back at the school, with a fire truck escort leading the way.

Congratulations to our State champs, the unified bocce team. Go Eagles!

#### AFTER MUELLER: THE WORK TO BE DONE

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, 45 years ago this summer, the Watergate scandal, which had preoccupied the Nation for 2 years, culminated with the resignation of President Richard Nixon and touched off a period of activism and reform on Capitol Hill.

In the years that followed, Congress worked to ensure transparency and prevent the abuse of executive power, informed not only by the work of two special prosecutors but also by the good investigative work of multiple House and Senate committees.

The Watergate investigations exposed an array of abuses of power by a craven President and his associates.

In response to illegal campaign contributions, the Congress enacted the Federal Election Commission, required disclosure, and placed limits on how much candidates could raise and spend.

When Congress discovered that private information held by the IRS and other agencies had been used for political purposes, Congress passed the Privacy Act, restricting government use of Americans' private data.

The Watergate era bears more than a passing resemblance to the tumult of the last 3 years, and today, as in the 1970s, Congress has a responsibility to act to fortify our democracy and our institutions.

Even in redacted form, the Mueller report has illuminated serious gaps in laws intended to protect our Nation's electoral and political process. The investigation, moreover, exposed weaknesses in the way our government tracks and responds to foreign influence efforts.

Like other committees, the House Intelligence Committee is undertaking a close review of the report to develop necessary legislative reforms to pro-

tect our Nation moving forward. But to fully assess the legislative implications, it is imperative that Congress, including our committee, receive the full, unredacted report, as well as crucial underlying evidence.

The report makes clear that the special counsel's mandate did not extend to broader foreign influence activities. The Intelligence Committee, therefore, is undertaking an investigation and related oversight work focused on efforts by Russia and other foreign actors to influence our political process before, during, and since the 2016 election.

A core component is to understand how Russia and other foreign powers used financial leverage to further their geopolitical goals and whether and to what extent financial entanglements exist and may have been used to influence or compromise Americans, including President Trump, his family, and associates.

Working with the Financial Services Committee, the Intelligence Committee has requested information from financial institutions, information that will be vital to fully identify the scope of this threat, the financial means and methods that foreign adversaries use, and the counterintelligence vulnerabilities of U.S. officials and institutions.

The committee's ongoing investigation and oversight, along with other committee investigations, will inform a wide range of legislation and appropriations decisions, including to:

Require financial transparency so that politicians can never again hide significant financial vulnerabilities from the American people;

Strengthen legal authorities and capabilities for our intelligence and law enforcement agencies to better track illicit financial flows;

Deter Presidential abuses of power by instituting constraints on the corrupt misuse of the Presidency, such as legislation I have introduced to rein in the abuse of the pardon power;

Toughen foreign agent registration to prohibit tactics used by our foreign adversaries' unofficial surrogates;

Ensure that campaign finance laws prohibit a campaign from taking help from foreign actors and require reporting to law enforcement of nefarious outreach from foreign powers;

Regulate Presidential transitions and inaugurations to prevent foreign powers from exercising undue influence;

Counter covert active measures campaigns by enhancing cybersecurity to combat hacking; and,

Reform security clearance processes to help prevent compromised individuals from receiving access to our Nation's most sensitive secrets.

For nearly 250 years, the durability of our Republic has rested on our capacity to adapt to changing times and circumstances and to learn from our mistakes. In this effort, Congress has played the leading role and must do so here as well.

We are prepared to do the difficult work required, but we need all the information we seek to ensure that we get it right.