

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to honor the remarkable life and legacy of Mrs. Juanita Abernathy, a selfless leader in the struggle for civil rights whose direction and tireless engagement was an integral part in the movement of civil rights and voting rights in America. She, sadly, passed earlier this month.

From the Montgomery bus boycott to the marches from Selma to Montgomery and onward to Washington, D.C., and beyond, Mrs. Abernathy played a key role in our Nation's proudest instance of civic engagement. She fought boldly alongside her husband, Reverend Dr. Ralph Abernathy, and her dear friends and fellow architects of the movement, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mrs. Coretta Scott King.

While many male leaders of the civil rights movement have rightfully become household names, the women of the movement, whose struggles and sacrifices were equal and whose participation was necessary, have not enjoyed the same recognition. Mrs. Juanita Abernathy was a brilliant, courageous leader in her own right, and today, we recognize her remarkable and distinct contributions.

Mrs. Abernathy was born on December 1, 1931, in Uniontown, Alabama. She was the youngest of eight children born to Alexander and Ella Gilmore Jones. In the ninth grade, she met her future husband, Reverend Dr. Ralph Abernathy, who wrote in his memoir that he was impressed by her audacious spirit and her inherent dignity. In 1952, after Mrs. Abernathy finished her B.S. in business education at Tennessee State University, she and Dr. Ralph Abernathy were married.

Mrs. and Reverend Abernathy moved to Montgomery, Alabama, where she became the secretary for the Alabama chapter of the NAACP and taught high school courses on business education while Reverend Abernathy became the pastor of the First Baptist Church on Ripley Street.

In 1955, around the family dining room table, Mrs. Abernathy wrote a business plan for the Montgomery bus boycott, a plan that later served as a blueprint for the civil rights movement. Meant to last only 1 day, the Montgomery bus boycott went on for 381 days, eventually leading to the courts desegregating public transit.

In retaliation to the success of the Montgomery bus boycott, the Abernathy home was bombed. Reverend Abernathy was in Atlanta at the time, but it was said that Mrs. Abernathy and her children only survived because the bomb landed off by 2 feet.

Over the years, Mrs. Abernathy endured terror, harassment, and unbridled hatred from white supremacists in her community and beyond. Yet, in the face of unimaginable threats, she maintained her innate dignity and bravery.

In 1961, Mrs. Abernathy and her husband moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where

she worked closely with the King family to integrate Atlanta's public schools.

At this same time, understanding the link between race and economic inequality in this country, Mrs. Abernathy fought to establish a national food stamp program for low-income families and a national free meal program for public schoolchildren.

A true servant leader, Mrs. Abernathy's brilliant mind, full heart, and resilient spirit should remind all of us of what constitutes a full and wonderful life.

On a personal note, I was honored to get to know Mrs. Abernathy during her many pilgrimages to my hometown of Selma, Alabama, for the annual commemoration of Bloody Sunday and the Selma to Montgomery marches.

She was a powerful voice for change and a proud product of Alabama's Black Belt who passionately protected the legacy of her husband and their lifelong work together to advance civil rights.

Mrs. Abernathy graciously encouraged me to run for Congress and honored me with her presence in my hometown of Selma on election night when I won in November 2010. I saw in her face that night the pride she felt witnessing the election of Alabama's first Black Congresswoman. I prevailed because of her personal courage and sacrifice that paved the way for future generations of Black children like me to succeed.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute and honor to Alabama native Mrs. Juanita Jones Abernathy on the passing of this civil rights icon and true American heroine, whose tremendous efforts helped propel our Nation toward a more perfect Union.

SPEAKER'S ACTIONS HAVE EMBARRASSED CONGRESS

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

Mr. GAETZ. Madam Speaker, the transcript has now been released of the phone conversation between President Trump and President Zelensky.

The evidence is clear, unfortunately, that the Speaker of the House of Representatives has been functionally catfished into a politically fatal impeachment proceeding based on rumors, based on faulty evidence, and based on a bloodlust for the President, politically, that does not serve our Nation well.

Let me give you the high points. There is no quid pro quo between President Trump and President Zelensky for anything, much less military aid. There is no eight times a reference to Joe Biden. I think The Wall Street Journal will have a good deal of retracting to do today. In fact, President Zelensky, himself, identifies the rooting out of corruption as the reason for his election.

Early on in the conversation between President Trump and President Zelensky, President Zelensky says: We, here in Ukraine, are trying to drain the swamp much in the way you are working to drain the swamp in the United States of America.

This wasn't a call about leverage. This wasn't a call about threats. This was a mutually appreciative and mutually laudatory call between two leaders who are trying to clean up some of the garbage in their respective countries that has polluted politics.

Now, the President does ask for a favor from President Zelensky, but the favor is on behalf of our Nation. The favor we seek is cooperation between the Zelensky government and Attorney General Bill Barr as we work to determine what activities in Ukraine may have been in any way involved in the 2016—not 2020, but 2016—efforts to interfere with the United States election.

The President even references CrowdStrike, attempting to get to the bottom of these improper actions, which, again, may have emanated from Ukraine. John Solomon with The Hill has a great deal of reporting on that very question.

Zelensky ran against corruption. Thus, it would be only appropriate that, in a conversation about that election victory, they would discuss and reference what are, obviously, mutual goals between the United States and Ukraine to have the world safer for democracy.

The President also mentions Mayor Rudy Giuliani. Let me be clear about this: Mayor Giuliani has every right to go to Ukraine to try to ascertain whether or not activities in that country were harming his client as a result of the corrupt connections that may have existed between the DNC and some elements in Ukraine.

I feel like we have been here before. House Democrats told us it was all about collusion. We had to wait for the Mueller report. Well, when the Mueller report falls flat on collusion, then it is all about obstruction of justice. Until Robert Mueller testifies and that falls flat, then it is all about abuse of power. Until the Democrats go to court and are unable to make the case in court that there has been an abuse of power. Now, lo and behold, it is all about Ukraine.

Do you know what? I saw this movie as it related to Russia. I didn't like it very much, and I doubt I am going to enjoy the cheap Ukrainian knockoff.

The Speaker has embraced these concerns. I fear that her embrace of impeachment does great damage to the House of Representatives. There may be a time where we have to solemnly exercise our impeachment powers because there is true crime or corruption, and the Speaker's actions have embarrassed the United States Congress and harm our entire country.

President Zelensky, in this call, indicates that he will conduct an investigation into corruption. It is a promise

not only that he made to President Trump but that he made to his own citizens. In that promise, President Zelensky says that any investigation will be both open and candid, open and candid investigations of corruption of election meddling. I sure would like to see that level of candidness and openness in our House of Representatives.

Certainly, my greatest hope is that the Attorney General's investigation into the corrupt origins of the efforts to smear the President of the United States will be exposed and those responsible will go to jail.

That is how we restore honor to this House. That is how we solve and heal some of the great wounds that were inflicted on this body by the Speaker yesterday. Maybe next time the radical left will wait for the facts before engaging in a reflexive, fact-free impeachment.

SUPPORT UKRAINIAN PEOPLE BY ROOTING OUT CORRUPTION

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, as co-chair of the House Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, I rise to provide some background on why the conversations between President Donald Trump and the newly elected President of Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelensky, are so vitally important to liberty and our Nation's national security.

There is no more important strategic alliance for liberty and with our military than America's membership with European allies in NATO, our dependable transatlantic allies who stood at our side through so many battles for the values we share. The blood lands of Europe directly influence the very founding of our Republic, our fundamental ideals of democracy. NATO, today, stands ready every hour of every day to defend our liberty.

Ukraine, today, is the scrimmage line for liberty for its defense on the European Continent. Thus, when a U.S. President holds back military assistance to Ukraine through NATO and other instrumentalities, Congress must insist on transparency on any conversations that relate to our cooperation with the nation of Ukraine.

Please let me remind, after the collapse of communist Russia in 1991, officially known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ukraine became a free nation. At least it had a chance to be. Ukraine had been occupied for all of modern history by Russia and began its jagged path forward to the free world, a path that has been tortuous and fraught with danger and setbacks.

It will be a permanent blot on American history that certain Americans, including President Trump's campaign manager, Paul Manafort, and several other Trump operatives were actually involved in supporting the corrupt pro-Russian political operatives in Ukraine

and doing it to earn money, millions and millions of dollars from Kremlin allies. What an abomination to liberty.

Since Ukraine's Euromaidan Revolution of Dignity 5 years ago, the Ukrainian people have bravely demonstrated their resolute commitment to their nation's democratic future.

The latest example is the recent historic Presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine, which international observers lauded as free and fair. What progress.

Ukraine has managed to make critical reforms, despite the immense pressure of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine in which 13,000 poorly equipped Ukrainian troops and many civilians who were in the pathway lost their lives; 30,000 have been injured; and 1.5 million Ukrainians have been dispossessed of their properties and are displaced.

Tragically, Ukraine is at war and must fight a two-front war: one against Russia and one against the enemy from within, the scourge of corruption aided by Kremlin allies every minute of every day.

While Ukraine has sought to shake off the vestiges of Soviet repression, Ukraine's oligarch class has subverted this progress in order to steal and plunder from the people of that nation to advance their own sick, insatiable, and corrupt moneyed interests.

In fact, it might surprise people to hear that, in the State of Ohio, the Ukrainian oligarch who owned the television station that made the current President of Ukraine famous is the largest commercial real estate owner in Cleveland, Ohio. With a net worth of over \$1.2 billion, Ihor Kolomoisky is one of the richest oligarchs in Ukraine. But he travels between Ukraine, Cyprus, Israel, and here. His own son was on the basketball team at Cleveland State University.

But this oligarch ran the show, servant of the people, who propelled President Zelensky to stardom. And so the question for history is: Will President Zelensky be his own man, or will he be beholden to oligarchs? Will he stand for liberty, and will the people of this country and this House, who are the Representatives, stand for liberty against repression?

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD material related to my remarks this morning.

[From Clevescene, June 11, 2019]

HOW UKRAINIAN OLIGARCHS SECRETLY BECAME
THE LARGEST REAL ESTATE OWNERS IN
DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND

(By Sam Allard)

In an explosive legal complaint filed last month in Delaware, attorneys for a major Ukrainian bank alleged that two oligarchs who founded the bank and controlled it from 2006 to 2016 laundered hundreds of millions of dollars in fraudulent corporate loans to purchase assets in the United States and unjustly enrich themselves and their associates.

Dubbed the "Optima Schemes" in the 104-page document, these "brazen fraudulent schemes" were successful, among other

things, in making the oligarchs and their co-defendants the largest commercial real estate holders in Cleveland.

With money siphoned from public bonds and 20 million private Ukrainian citizens who'd opened accounts with PrivatBank, the oligarchs Igor Kolomoisky and Gennadiy Bogolyubov doled out corporate loans to shell companies that they controlled. They used PrivatBank "as their own personal piggy bank," in the words of the complaint.

Those loans were then laundered in multiple digital transactions, sent through dozens of other shell companies that had been created exclusively for the purpose of laundering. These accounts were managed by co-conspirators at PrivatBank's branch in Cyprus.

The true origin of the money thus concealed, funds were then shipped to LLCs in Delaware (hence the legal filing there). Those LLCs—"One Cleveland Center, LLC," to take just one example—were used to acquire properties and metalworking facilities in the U.S. Kolomoisky and Bogolyubov are mineral magnates and own mining factories and metalworking plants in Ukraine.

The men on the ground in the United States, according to the complaint, were a Miami-based trio: Mordechai "Motti" Korf, his brother-in-law Chaim Schochet, and Uriel Laber. These three men managed the "Optima" companies: Optima International, Optima Ventures and Optima Acquisitions, all of which were created and ultimately controlled by Kolomoisky and Bogolyubov.

"Optima Ventures" should be a familiar local name. It was the company, launched in 2007, used to acquire properties in the U.S. for Kolomoisky and Bogolyubov. The majority of these properties were in Cleveland.

Chaim Schochet was Optima's "front man" in Northeast Ohio. He told the Plain Dealer in 2012 that his local goals were twofold: "making money for investors betting on the upside of a Midwestern city, and contributing to the betterment of a downtown that more high-profile buyers ha[d] passed by."

But his investors' funds were ill-gotten, according to the complaint, proceeds from "massive, systematic and fraudulent loan misappropriation and recycling schemes. (In the 2012 PD piece referenced above, Schochet was reportedly "circumspect about discussing how [Optima Ventures] is structured or who the major investors are.")

The loan recycling schemes were functionally identical to a ponzi scheme, except instead of paying purported profits to early investors with funds from more recent investors, the Ukrainian oligarchs and their cronies within PrivatBank paid off early fraudulent corporate loans with money from new fraudulent corporate loans.

"On paper, this appeared to be a repayment," the complaint explains. "But in reality, it was a sham and fraud, as PrivatBank was repaying itself and increasing its outstanding liabilities in the process. This process was carried out over and over again, over a period of many years."

In December 2016, the Ukrainian state was forced to nationalize PrivatBank as a result of the oligarchs' conduct. The state injected more than \$5.5 billion into the bank to prevent its collapse, and "preserve the stability of the [Ukrainian] financial system." In 2018, the bank reverted to private ownership.

The complaint alleges that Korf, Schochet and Laber were in on the racket, aware of the systematic corruption because they were under direct supervision from Kolomoisky and Bogolyubov (or their trusted lieutenant inside PrivatBank, Timur Novikov), and because they were enriched in the process. Korf, Schochet and Laber received "substantial financial remuneration," according to the complaint, which they used to acquire