

Renew Democracy Initiative Unites Fetterman, Kinzinger, Kallas, and Georgia Election Workers

RDI named Sen. John Fetterman, Rep. Adam Kinzinger, Estonian PM Kaja Kallas, and Ruby Freeman and Shaye Moss Heroes of Democracy at its second annual gala.

NEW YORK, NY, USA, April 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Renew Democracy Initiative (RDI) hosted its second annual Heroes of Democracy Gala at New York City's Gotham Hall on Thursday, April 4. RDI celebrated public servants and ordinary citizens who have taken significant personal and political risks to defend democracy at home and abroad. Receiving RDI's Hero of Democracy Award were Senator John Fetterman and Representative Adam Kinzinger, Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas (represented by H.E. Mr. Rein Tammsaar, permanent representative of the Republic of Estonia to the UN), and Georgia election workers Ruby Freeman and Shaye Moss.



Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA) and former Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL) address RDI's Heroes of Democracy gala in New York.

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Prime Minister Kaja Kallas of Estonia

RDI's leadership highlighted the precariousness of democracy in the US and around the world. "The right to choose your leaders is not just part of your birthright, it is a hard-won privilege you must fight constantly to protect," said RDI Chairman Garry Kasparov. "It is on us to put these words into action."

RDI CEO Uriel Epshtein recalled his parents' experiences living under communism in the Soviet Union as a key motivation for the organization's work: "The scariest thing for me is that I'm starting to hear echoes of some of my

parents' stories right here in the US."

In a video address to RDI's guests and leadership, Prime Minister Kallas affirmed that "organizations like the Renew Democracy Initiative are important because they remind us why democracy also needs to be protected and cared for." She also noted Europe and America's responsibility to defend Ukraine.

Each of the honorees echoed this spirit, appealing to Americans and supporters of freedom worldwide. Sen. Fetterman highlighted the struggles of democratic allies like Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan, each facing down authoritarian enemies, and criticized the politicization of US foreign policy. Former Rep. Kinzinger praised the alliance between moderates on the right and left against the political extremes. Freeman and Moss spoke about how democracy requires collective, community-wide involvement.

Director of RDI's Frontlines of Freedom program Evan Mawarire, a Zimbabwean activist and former political prisoner, called on the audience to embrace the "hard lesson that fighting for democracy is not a job left to politicians and that it takes each of us with whatever we have to offer to win our collective freedoms."

In addition to RDI's chairman, Russian democracy activist and former World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov, the gala was also attended by a number of notable public figures including H.E. Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya, permanent representative of Ukraine to the UN, and Representative Dan Goldman (D-NY-10). The gala host committee included Garry Kasparov, Annie and General Stanley McChrystal, General Ben Hodges and Dr. Alexandra Schwarzkopf, Lt. Col. Alexander and Rachel Vindman, Miles Taylor and Hannah Hummelberg, Enes Kanter Freedom, Pavel Khodorkovsky and Olesya Khodorkovskaya, Greg Wilson, Marc and Anna Rotenberg, and Kevin and Victoria Toner.

The Renew Democracy Initiative's mission is to unmask and confront the alliance of dictators threatening freedom around the world. By doing so, RDI inspires those in the US and in other free countries to value and protect their own democracies. RDI envisions a world in which the forces of freedom are united and authoritarianism is in retreat.

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