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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm has bound the restless wave, we honor Your Name. Forgive us our sins and deliver us from evil. We thank You for food, drink, clothing, friends, and family.

Today, give our lawmakers faith to meet every challenge, courage to live by Your precepts, and humility to serve others in these grand and critical times. May a high sense of patriotism reinforce the commitment of our Senators to integrity, as they remember their accountability to You.

And, Lord, we thank You for the life and contributions of Matthew Pollard, who worked on the Intelligence Committee.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The Senator from Mississippi.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I rise in strong support of the nomination of Mike Pompeo, our current CIA Director, to be the next Secretary of

State. I must say, I watched with interest the proceedings the day before yesterday in the Foreign Relations Committee. The debate was interesting on both sides. I appreciate the fact that accommodations were made so Mike Pompeo's nomination could be presented to the full Senate with a positive vote.

I am disappointed that so many of my Democratic colleagues have stated they will oppose this nomination. I heed the admonition of one of the Members of the Democratic Party at the confirmation vote before the committee when this Member asked that Senators not question the motives of anyone who takes a position one way or the other with regard to the nomination of Mr. Pompeo. I will heed that admonition and not question the motivation of any Senator who votes either yes or no on this nomination.

I will simply observe this: Mike Pompeo is a highly qualified nominee, a distinguished former Member of the House of Representatives. He served with accomplishment and great dignity and ability as Director of the CIA. He graduated first in his class from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and went on to graduate with distinction at the Harvard Law School and served as editor-in-chief of the Harvard Law Review.

This is a man of great intellect, a man of great ability and great accomplishment. Without impugning the motives of anyone who would vote no, I simply observe they will be voting against a highly accomplished and qualified nominee.

When the shoe was on the other foot during the Obama administration, I—along with almost a unanimous majority of Members of my caucus—voted yes, in favor of the confirmation of Hillary Clinton to be Secretary of State. I voted yes—again, a virtually unanimous vote on both sides of the aisle—for the nomination of our colleague John Kerry to be the successor to Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State.

I will simply note to my doubting friends, who are standing on their rights on the other side of the aisle, that the overwhelming weight of public opinion from the news media has come down on the side of Mr. Pompeo. The Wall Street Journal headline says we need a Secretary of State and that Mike Pompeo should be confirmed. The Chicago Tribune, in an editorial, states why the Senate should confirm Mike Pompeo. The Washington Post headline on the editorial page proclaims: "Confirm Mike Pompeo." The New York Daily News says: "Confirm Mike Pompeo: President Trump Needs a Secretary of State."

I will add, this country needs a Secretary of State. The cause of international diplomacy needs a Secretary of State. The cause of human rights around the world needs a Secretary of State.

USA Today: "Confirm Mike Pompeo to Fill the Void at State."

I will not question the motives of any of my colleagues, my friends whom I respect. I will only say, things are surely different around the U.S. Senate nowadays than they were previously, when we rose up almost unanimously and confirmed John Kerry and Hillary Clinton and stood for the proposition that a President of the United States is entitled to his or her team and that person needed strong support.

I only say that at a moment when our country needs to send a strong message of resolve to our allies and to the entire international community, we need to send a strong signal of unity; that the vote we may take later this week in confirming Mike Pompeo might send a signal of excessive partisanship and division, I regret that.

We are going to have a great Secretary of State at the end of this process. I think this, unfortunately, narrow vote will come and go and perhaps not be the standard we operate under in future times. I will only say that for those colleagues who are still looking

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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for an answer and still wrestling with how they should vote, I commend to them the example of previous days and the example of sending a strong signal around the globe that this President is supported in his efforts in international diplomacy and that he is entitled to the team he has chosen.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes. I appreciate the distinguished minority leader for indulging me and allowing me to go forward.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Mike Pompeo, of Kansas, to be Secretary of State.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

WELCOMING THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, before I begin, I want to welcome the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, who just finished his address before a joint meeting of Congress. His words were timely, particularly his admonition to reject false idols of our time: isolationism, cynicism. He argued that if we were to advance principles upon which both our Nations were founded—as he would say, “liberte, egalite, and fraternite”—he would say it better than I, of course—and secure the prosperity and security of our peoples in the future, we must seek further cooperation with our allies and engagement with the world. I hope everyone at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue takes President Macron’s words to heart.

Madam President, the Senate is considering the nomination of Mike Pompeo to be the next Secretary of State. I must admit that even after his confirmation to the directorship of the CIA, I remained concerned about Mr. Pompeo when he was in the Congress. I talked to him directly. I told him how deeply disappointed I was in how he handled the Benghazi hearings, how partisan they were. I told him some of his comments about minority groups—Muslims in particular—were way over the top. Over the course of his tenure at Langley, I met with him several times after that first meeting where I had given him my views on some of the things I disagreed with in what he did.

I have to say, those meetings were good meetings. He was very candid

with me. He is obviously very smart. He is obviously well informed about foreign policy—far more well informed than Secretary Tillerson was when he came to visit me before his nomination hearing. In particular, what gave me some good feeling was that Mr. Pompeo was particularly strong on Russia sanctions, even showing some separation from the President as we met. I began to think Mr. Pompeo was better than my first impression, which has been guided particularly by his very poor performance in the Benghazi hearings. Then, he was nominated for Secretary of State. That is a whole different ball game. Anyone nominated for such a critical security position deserves the most careful and thoughtful scrutiny.

With that in mind, I met with Mr. Pompeo privately, where I interviewed him on foreign policy. Frankly, on many issues, our views were not the same. He was far more hawkish than I prefer our diplomat to be. Frankly, my views were probably, on this issue, a little closer to the President’s, who remembered, as I do, that in Iraq, we spent over \$1 trillion and lost close to 5,000 of our bravest young men and women, and Iraq doesn’t seem much better off today than it was then.

My view was that he was too quick to recommend strong military action when diplomacy might do. At the same time, I believe the President should get to pick his team. President Trump wanted a more hawkish Secretary of State—it would be concerning to me, but it is his decision—and Mr. Pompeo answered my questions with the same candor and forthrightness as in our previous meetings.

I thought I would wait for his hearing—because speaking in public is different than speaking privately to a Member of the Senate—before making the decision. At Mr. Pompeo’s hearing, I became very disappointed. First, the President has shown in word and deed that he often directs foreign policy by impulse—erratically, inconsistently. The fact that we are contending with several hotspots in the world—North Korea, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Venezuela, and Russia—means we need someone in the State Department who not only prizes the value of diplomacy but is willing to check the President’s worst instincts. Unfortunately, Mr. Pompeo’s testimony—and, of course, public testimony is the real test—did little to convince me that he would be a strong tempering influence on an often erratic President. He didn’t convince me that he would be the kind of Secretary who most of us believe Secretary Mattis is, who is able, successfully, to check the President when the President may go off base. Even more disappointing was Mr. Pompeo’s tepid responses to questions about his commitment to bedrock principles such as rule of law.

As important and difficult as our foreign policy decisions are, the Nation is facing a great test. The President seems to tempt rule of law in America when it comes to the investigation of

whether there was collusion between his administration, his campaign, and Russia. An investigation to look into this—to look into Russian interference in our elections and whether there was participation of the President or members of his campaign or administration—is vital to the bedrock of America. Even worse is if a President says: I can undo this investigation one way or another; I can thwart it.

He is already trying to intimidate it, but fortunately Mr. Mueller is not the type who is intimidated, and Mr. Rosenstein does not seem to be either. These questions were crucial. A key position like Secretary of State should be able to speak out on this kind of issue because America is recognized throughout the world as the country that most prizes rule of law. If our Secretary doesn’t speak out strongly against this, it is not only bad for our country but not good for his ability to do his job around the world. Unfortunately, I was deeply disappointed.

Mr. Pompeo responded, when put to this question as to whether he would stand up to the President, whether he would resign or otherwise protest the President’s actions that would undermine the rule of law—his answers were weak. He did not say he would resign if the President fired Mueller or Rosenstein. To me, a Cabinet officer should do that. He did not even unequivocally state that he would publicly urge the President not to fire Mr. Mueller. That was not good enough, but I thought I again owed Mr. Pompeo a direct discussion because he is a talented man, and the President does deserve the benefit of the doubt.

So I called him into my office for one private meeting, one final meeting. I asked him pointedly whether he would be able to simply say publicly, before we voted on him, that the President shouldn’t fire Special Counsel Mueller. I asked him what he would do if the President fired the special counsel or Mr. Rosenstein. His answers were extremely insufficient. I also asked him if he would be willing to recant or undo some of what he had said about Muslims, Indian Americans, LGBTQ Americans, and women’s rights now that he was in line to be our Secretary of State and had to deal with countries that might be affected by his remarks. Again, he demurred. When he left that meeting, I emerged with a clear conscience in that a vote against Mr. Pompeo’s nomination was the right thing to do.

I still believe a President deserves his team and that disagreements on policy alone are not sufficient reasons to reject a nomination, but I gave Mr. Pompeo the benefit of the doubt and three chances to answer the questions I thought were extremely important to assuage my broader concerns about his nomination. He did not answer those questions in any way that was satisfying. So, with a clear conscience, I will be voting against his nomination.

Let me be clear. This is not about politics. This is not about denying the

President his team just for the sake of it. It is about the role of Congress and, frankly, the Cabinet to provide a check on a President who might go off the rails and undo the respect for the rule of law, the tradition of the rule of law, that we have had in this country for so long.

It is my view that the next Secretary of State, in this unique moment of history, with a President who seems to behave erratically and with little regard, oftentimes, for our Nation's history, a President who tests our constitutional order, must be willing to put country first and stand up for our most sacred and fundamental, foundational values—for the rule of law, for the idea that no person, not even the President, is above the rule of law.

Unfortunately, Mr. Pompeo, in these very difficult and troubled times, didn't meet that test as much as I wish he had. I don't doubt that the President could nominate someone with the right experience, the right values, and the right commitment to our core, national principles to earn my vote to be Secretary of State, but I do not believe Mr. Pompeo has those qualities so I will be voting no on his nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I have come here for the first time in what will be a weekly speech that I will give as long as we have somebody, in my opinion, who is improperly and unjustly being held in a Turkish prison.

As a matter of fact, this man, Pastor Andrew Brunson, has been in a Turkish prison for 565 days. He was arrested in October of 2016. He didn't even receive charges until about 2 months ago—so arrested, without charges—conspiracy to plot a coup attempt against President Erdogan and his regime in Turkey.

About a month ago—it was, maybe, about 2 months back, 3 months back—I heard from some people that Pastor Brunson was afraid that with his time in prison and the charges being levied against him, the American people were going to read the charges and forget about him and turn their backs. That is why I decided to travel to Turkey and meet with him in prison about a month ago. It was to let him know I had no intention of forgetting him and that I had every intention of making sure everybody understood what was going on with this case and why it should be a lesson to anybody who is thinking about traveling to Turkey today from the United States.

Before I start this, I have to talk a little bit about Turkey. It is a NATO ally. It is a country I led a delegation to when I was Speaker of the House in North Carolina. I spent almost 2 weeks there back about 6 years ago because I saw great opportunities for our State of North Carolina and the country of Turkey to build closer ties—closer eco-

nomic ties, closer cultural ties. I saw real opportunities to strengthen the relationship with a very important NATO ally. Yet now I am beginning to doubt whether what I saw in Turkey—at least the Turkey I visited 6 years ago—is the Turkey we are confronted with today.

Pastor Brunson, a gentleman from Black Mountain, NC, was part of a church up there at Montreat, which was the same church, a Presbyterian church, that Rev. Billy Graham was a part of. The injustice I see displayed to him makes me wonder if the people from the State of Iowa or from the State of North Carolina should go to that country until we understand whether American citizens can be treated justly there.

He has spent 565 days in a Turkish prison. For about 15 months, he was in a cell that was designed for eight people. It had 21 people in it. The others had been charged with terrorism and conspiracy to plot a coup. Pastor Brunson has been in Turkey for 20 years. All he is guilty of is of being a Christian and trying to bring a Christian message to those who want to hear it. He has a church in Izmir. It is a very small church. You can only seat about 120 people in it. They open it up, and they let anybody walk in off the street to hear what they are saying. They work with the police department to make sure they are secure and that they understand what they are saying. There was no nefarious purpose here except to have done his job for 20 years as a missionary in Turkey.

I am going to come back to this slide in a minute.

It is also important to understand timing. The coup occurred in 2016. Pastor Brunson and his wife Norine had actually traveled back to the United States. They were having a visit with family in North Carolina. President Erdogan and the Erdogan regime were rounding up tens of thousands of people and putting them in prison, even somebody loosely associated with the coup, and many who were not were being arrested. Pastor Brunson was in North Carolina at the time, but he and Norine went back to Turkey at a time when people were being rounded up. When he got back, they rounded him up.

Why on Earth would any reasonable person go back if he had been involved with it and had seen what had been happening in Turkey? That is just one data point. Now let's cover a few more.

First off, I have to bring this up. I have to say, after I went and visited Turkey for about 48 hours about a month ago, I went back last week. I, actually, spent 12 hours in a Turkish courthouse and listened to the charges against Pastor Brunson. It was remarkable. It was a three-judge panel. Imagine that they are sitting up at the dais, and next to them—unlike in our courts, where you have the defense and the prosecutor sitting on equal terms—their prosecutor is sitting up at the dais and is actually looking like a

fourth judge. In Turkey, you are, more or less, considered guilty until proven innocent. It truly was, in my opinion—look it up if you do not know what a kangaroo court is—a kangaroo court.

They have already decided they want to prosecute him, and they are trying to get some of the most specious, circumstantial arguments to convict him to 35 years. He is 50 years old. By the way, he has lost 50 pounds since he has been in prison. A sentence of 35 years is effectively a death sentence for the kinds of charges I will tell you a little bit about.

No. 1, it is very clear to me, after spending 12 hours in a courtroom, that the Turkish authorities believe that any religious organization is actually a part of a broader plot to undermine the Turkish Government and to promote terrorist activities. They actually view the Christian faiths, the Christian religions in the United States—the missionaries—as some sort of coordinated plot to undermine the country of Turkey. They view a missionary who risks life and limb to go into the Syrian countryside to help people who are trying to flee the carnage that is occurring in Syria—to give them food, water, and comfort—as being, in some way, someone who is perpetrating and being a coconspirator in a plot by the PKK, which is a terrorist organization that is focused on opposing Turkey. That is what missionaries are subjected to.

As a matter of fact, there was a part of the court proceedings during which they suggested the mere fact that Pastor Brunson, who is a Presbyterian, had Mormons enter his church—actually, it is just part of the services, and they are services that are wide open to anyone. Yet, because of the mere connection with the Mormons, who also do missionary work in Turkey and Syria, they were able to glue together, on a circumstantial basis, the idea that because they have actually talked to each other and the Mormons have also provided missions to the Kurdish region, they are a part of the PKK.

That is what we are talking about. That is why I am giving everyone a stern warning. If you are traveling to this country, I can't guarantee your safety based on the facts as they exist today. I am trying to get somebody out who is only guilty for actually being a Christian missionary in Turkey for 20 years.

I am not going to go into the details of this, but when you invest 12 hours in a courtroom, it is a really accelerated learning process. Let me give you an idea of some of the things they said because they observed this. We are not talking about any specific charge for something violent that occurred or something damaging that occurred. This is the level of evidence that was presented against Pastor Brunson.

There is a dish that is cooked over there. I don't know. I love Turkish food. I eat anything. Usually, when I go over there, I gain weight. It is good

food. Well, there was this communication between the daughter and the father about a good meal they had had. They suggested that communication—because it was of food that is, apparently, enjoyed by the Kurds—was a reason to suspect that somehow they were conspirators in the PKK plot. So I tell somebody who is traveling to Turkey, be careful what you eat and be careful what you like and don't put it on Facebook because you, too, could find yourself in a Turkish prison.

That is the level of argument they are using against this man who has been in prison for 565 days. I am not making this up. You could not create a movie plot that would be more egregious in terms of the way they have treated this man for 565 days.

After I went to the Turkish prison, Pastor Brunson and I spent about an hour and a half together. To the Turkish prison officials' credit, they gave me more time than they normally would. At about 59 minutes, they get you out of there, but they told me I could spend the time I wanted to. The discussion with Pastor Brunson was really heart-wrenching. The reason it was heart-wrenching is he said: I just firmly believe that people are going to forget about me. I think Congress could read this 62-page bogus indictment and believe it is true.

I told Pastor Brunson that the only reason I was there was to look at him eye to eye and tell him Congress has his back. This is not going to go away until the Turkish people release Pastor Brunson. We did something here over the course of 2 weeks. I also told him, in that meeting, I was going to get Members of the Senate to sign on to a letter and was going to prove to him that the people in the Senate, on a bipartisan basis, agreed with my position that Pastor Brunson should be set free.

I know the Presiding Officer knows better than anybody that getting 66 Senators to sign on to a letter, if you spend 3 or 4 months doing it, is uncommon, but to get 66 Senators to come together and sign this letter in a couple of weeks is extraordinary. When they heard the argument, they knew they needed to be a part of the voice of the Senate. It is no coincidence that I wanted to get 60-plus votes. I wanted to send a very clear message that we are educating Members of the Senate, and we have the votes necessary to move forward with things I prefer not to do.

I prefer to be moving forward with legislation that strengthens the relationship with Turkey—our military alliances, our economic alliances—our broader relationship. Yet we also need to send a clear message that we will take other steps, if that is what is necessary, to get the attention of the Turkish administration and President Erdogan to do the right thing. I thank all my colleagues who signed the letter. Since we published it with 66, we have had others express interest, and I think that is very important.

Now what does President Erdogan say to that? He basically says that if

we are willing to trade with someone here in this country who he believes was involved in the plot, then he will give Pastor Brunson back to us.

We have an extradition treaty with Turkey. If Turkey goes through the proper processes that can prove the person he wants in this country should be extradited because he is guilty of laws broken in Turkey, great. But I find it objectionable to compare that pastor who is here or that religious leader who is here with a pastor who spent 20 years in Turkey doing nothing but missionary work.

When I was in Turkey, someone asked me: What do you think about the prisoner exchange? I think what has been offered is absurd. But I promise you this: If you know of a Turkish person—a Turkish national in a U.S. prison who was held for 17 months without charges and then was convicted on circumstantial evidence for 5 years, 10 years, or 35 years, count me in on getting them released without even a concept of trade because that would be a terrible miscarriage of justice.

Let me tell you, there is not somebody in a U.S. prison because there is no way that anybody in the United States would have been held overnight in jail for the charges I saw demonstrated in that courthouse just a week ago. So President Erdogan possibly doesn't know what I now know, having sat through 12 hours of court. I have to believe he is a fair person, and I have to believe that he is hearing from people in his administration who are not telling him what they are trying to do to this man in their Turkish judicial system. I am here, and I will be here every week to ask President Erdogan to invest the time that I have invested to know it is a miscarriage of justice that is going to hurt our relationship with Turkey on every level, and I will go from someone who is a strong advocate of our Turkish alliance to someone who maybe has to think twice about where this relationship goes from here.

This is the beginning of what I hope is a very short time of my coming to this floor and layering in additional facts every week until Pastor Brunson is released.

Again, I warn anyone who is going to Turkey to pay attention to what I have just said. Pay attention to the fact that I may not, as a U.S. Senator and the Presiding Officer, as a U.S. Senator from Iowa—we may not be able to guarantee your safety under the current emergency orders in Turkey. You may actually just find a group of friendly people with whom you take a picture and you proudly put it on Facebook because you are reaching out to people, you are traveling to countries, and you are trying to build friendships and relationships. But there may be some Turkish bureaucrat who sees that picture and sees a few Kurds in it, and suddenly you become a conspirator. You spend 565 days in a Turkish prison, and you have your Sen-

ator coming over there to take you out. That is what is going on in Turkey right now.

Pastor Brunson represents just one of several people in Turkey for whom we have to fight. A NASA scientist has been convicted and sentenced to 7½ years; he has served 1½ years. He was guilty of doing nothing more than going to visit his family in Turkey at roughly the time they started the coup attempt. Now he is in prison—an American citizen, a dual citizen, a Turkish-American, a NASA scientist imprisoned, implicated as being a part of our intelligence agency. I am not making this up.

I have invested the time in Turkey to follow the facts. I wouldn't pursue this if all I had were briefings from the State Department or the staff. I invested the time to go there, look at the pastor eye to eye, look at the judges eye to eye, and look at the prison guards eye to eye, and I am convinced this is a risk to every single American. Every single one of you should put yourself in Pastor Brunson's place and go from here and make sure people know what is going on there.

Pastor Brunson needs to know he has the backing of the U.S. Senate. He will have the backing of the House. My colleague MARK WALKER and the deputy whip PATRICK MCHENRY are working on a similar letter in the House, and we will continue to show that we are in shape, and we are ready to run this marathon. Hopefully, they are going to sprint to a just decision on May 7. That is his next court date. But if he doesn't, you can expect me to be here, and each and every time I am going to add some other cases for why we really have to rethink our relationship with Turkey until justice is done.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today to express my opposition to Mike Pompeo serving as the Nation's top diplomat.

As I stated earlier this week in committee, I am generally disappointed to be casting a vote against a Secretary of State nominee. I believe the United States needs an effective leader on the global stage. But at the end of the day, as I considered Director Pompeo's nomination, including his hearing, his past statements, and recent revelations, I have lingering concerns along three broad themes. Mr. Pompeo failed to express any tangible diplomatic strategies for which he would advocate to advance American interests; he failed to be forthright with the committee; and, finally, I don't have a satisfactory answer to the question: Which Mike Pompeo am I asked to cast a vote on?

Unfortunately, during his nomination process, in which he had an opportunity to address all of these concerns, Director Pompeo offered contradictory statements and was less than forthcoming when pressed on a number of issues.

Given the opportunity to outline the strategies he would advocate with the administration to deal with the challenges of Russia, Iran, North Korea, China or Venezuela, to mention a few, he failed to exhibit the depth of knowledge or thoughtfulness about what those strategies would be. Granted, he is under the constraints of this administration, which has failed to offer a strategic vision for American diplomacy, a White House that has failed to effectively outline policies or strategies to achieve a series of ever-changing goals and objectives. But I expect our chief diplomat to have a vision for diplomacy.

A meeting is not a strategy. Air strikes are not a strategy. Unilaterally walking away from an international agreement is not a strategy.

Beyond his lack of strategies, I fear Mr. Pompeo was less than transparent through his confirmation process. Truthfulness and willingness to be forthcoming to the Foreign Relations Committee are essential in a Secretary of State nominee. But in his refusal to answer questions about the Russia investigation, in which he was interviewed—a critical issue before the committee—and in his failure to disclose any information about his trip to North Korea, which he could have disclosed even in a classified setting, although we got to learn about it through the press—both critical issues before the committee—he exhibited that he was more suited to the clandestine nature of the CIA Director than the transparency of a Secretary of State.

I don't expect a Cabinet Secretary to publicly disagree with the President; indeed, it is his or her duty to carry out the President's agenda. But as policies are being formulated, I remain skeptical of whether he will be forthcoming with Members of Congress, how he will approach complex issues, and what that means for our foreign policy.

This lack of forthrightness ultimately leaves me wondering whether he would be willing to push back against the President's worst instincts, whether he would be willing to say no to advance a different course or whether he would simply be a yes-man.

When the President blames Russia's aggressive behavior on Democrats—pretty amazing, on Democrats—will Director Pompeo remind him that Russia's aggressive behavior is caused by Russia and no one else? As our Nation's top diplomat, would Director Pompeo, as he said in his confirmation hearing, value diversity and demand every employee be “treated equally with dignity and respect”? Does he believe, as he said in his hearing, in “promoting America's ideals, values, and priorities,” including our collective identity as a nation of immigrants and refugees fleeing oppression who have made the United States a bastion of hope in the world? Or will we be represented by Congressman Pompeo, who voted against the Violence Against Women's

Act to deny support to victims of gender-based violence and who sponsored legislation to roll back marriage equality, or Congressman Pompeo, who, as recently as 2016, sponsored legislation to immediately halt refugee resettlement in the United States until ill-advised reforms were made? These concerns are beyond policy disagreements, which alone are not the basis for rejecting a nominee. Rather, this legislative history paints a troubling picture of how the United States and our diplomatic efforts will be conducted and received by our allies and adversaries alike.

Will the Department seek to roll back programs advancing women's access to healthcare and justice systems—programs that have significantly improved the lives not only of women all over the world but, by extension, improved stability, prosperity, and governance reforms? When we talk about promoting universal human rights in countries that seek to oppress people based on their sexual orientation, what will our Nation's top diplomat credibly say?

As we work with our allies who are absorbing literally millions of refugees from profoundly devastating crises all over the world and as families in my own State of New Jersey and throughout the country open their hearts and their homes, what will he credibly say as this administration slashes our own refugee program, once a crown jewel of our foreign policy, both in establishing our moral leadership and in supporting our partners globally?

On our own border, we simply cannot address the threat of drug traffickers or opioids without productive collaboration with Mexico. When the President wants to call Mexicans drug traffickers and rapists, as our Nation's top diplomat who, during his confirmation hearing, insisted his “record is exquisite with respect to treating people of every faith with the dignity they deserve,” would Mr. Pompeo advise the President not to call Mexicans drug traffickers and rapists or would the Pompeo who once called an Indian-American political opponent a “turban topper” prevail?

How would he explain this kind of rhetoric to people of myriad different faiths who wear turbans, whether they are millions of Sikhs, Punjabis, or Muslims in India—a critically important ally—or Orthodox Christians in the Horn of Africa or tribal leaders in Afghanistan with whom we are trying to build constructive relationships based on values of democracy and human rights?

What impact would his accusations that Muslim leaders in the United States are somehow “complicit” in devastating terrorist attacks have as he engages with Muslim leaders and citizens around the world? Nearly 2 billion people in the world adhere to the Muslim faith, many in countries with which we have relationships critical to protecting and promoting our national

security, with citizens who have suffered the most from brutal terrorism.

Similarly, part of the exceptionalism of the United States comes from the power of our diaspora communities, which serve as critical cultural and public diplomats to the rest of the world. How can someone who has made such derogatory and uninformed remarks conduct effective diplomacy?

As I have said before, I believe it is imperative for the Secretary of State to be forthright, to be someone with whom the American people and our allies can invest faith and trust, someone who will unequivocally champion our values to assert our global leadership.

Our global leadership comes from our investment in diplomacy and development as our primary policy drivers abroad. Unfortunately, I don't believe that Director Pompeo is someone who will always prioritize diplomacy over conflict, particularly in the context of the aggressive foreign policy voices growing around him. I am particularly concerned by his past comments on regime change in North Korea and Iran. Look, I abhor both regimes, but our national security is a little different.

While he said during his confirmation hearing that war is “the last resort,” Mr. Pompeo's past statements calling for military action and regime change in Iran, for example, will surely follow him as we work with our allies to build on multinational agreements to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. His offhand remarks about regime change in North Korea will be ever-present as we pursue negotiations to roll back North Korea's nuclear weapons program and seek dismantling.

With all of these concerns of mine, ultimately, I simply do not believe that Director Pompeo is someone who can genuinely represent all Americans and best promote American foreign policy interests. It is for these reasons, among others, that I will be voting against Director Pompeo. Let me be very clear. Despite what some of my other colleagues may believe or tell the press, this is not a vote in the name of political resistance to the President. I have voted for members of this President's Cabinet, from the Secretary of Defense, to the former Secretary of Homeland Security and now the President's Chief of Staff, to our Ambassador to the United Nations, to mention some.

I will never hesitate to agree with a sound policy or criticize a misguided one, regardless of which party is in the White House. I think history will certainly prove that and judge it to be true. I will always put patriotism and our national security interest over partisanship—always.

I also reject the notion that we should confirm a Secretary of State based on world events outside of our control, whether that be a NATO summit or a meeting with North Korea. Nobody forced the President to fire his former Secretary of State at the time

he did. And unless Kim Jong Un is unilaterally dictating the terms of our relations, we should wait until we have the appropriate people and dutiful preparation to achieve the success that we and the world need.

In closing, as we consider this nominee and the nominee for Germany who is also subject to cloture, let me be clear. Despite what the White House wants to claim, Democrats are not obstructing nominees through this body. The facts are simply not on their side. Of 172 positions at the State Department and USAID critical to advancing U.S. interests, the administration has failed to even nominate 77 of those positions, including 45 ambassadorial positions in critical countries, including South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, to mention a few. I could go on and on.

Lest we all forget, Republicans control the votes on the Senate floor. Republican leadership can bring up any nominee, once they have passed the committee, at any time. That is their prerogative.

The Founders recognized that an effective democracy needs coequal branches of government to operate in a system of checks and balances. The President has the right to nominate whomever he wants, but the Congress has a responsibility to ensure that person is best suited for the job at hand—we have already seen challenges to some of these nominees in that process—and in the case of our Secretary of State, one who will prioritize diplomacy instead of war and promote fundamental values.

If and when he is confirmed, as someone who has served on both the House and the Senate committees tasked with overseeing foreign policy administration, I am more than willing to work alongside the nominee to provide advice and input as he and the President seek to advance American interests and values on the global stage. I will, of course, in my capacity as ranking member, work alongside him in pursuit of comprehensive and coherent strategies that promote American interests. Despite my misgivings, I will always have an open door and seek opportunities to advance our shared objectives. We stand ready and willing to take any and all actions in the interest of peace, security, and all Americans. That has always been my North Star, and it will always be.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, the Senator from Ohio, Mr. BROWN, be allowed to make remarks for about 3 to 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, I stand here today to urge the very swift confirmation of my good friend, my former colleague, the current Director of the CIA, Mike Pompeo, to serve as America's next Secretary of State.

Mike's résumé would put him at the top of any pile. Speaking as someone who has hired a lot of folks over 28 years in the private sector and now spending time in public service, his résumé shines, but let's talk about his record of results.

I just returned from a trip to China. I was with four other U.S. Senators. We visited China, South Korea. In fact, while in South Korea, we went to the DMZ. I met the Premier of China while I was in Beijing. In fact, the same week that I met the Premier of China, Kim Jong Un met with President Xi in Beijing. We spent time with the Prime Minister of South Korea, as well as time with many other leaders. Their feedback was very clear. Perhaps this is the untold story we are not hearing in the United States, in the media, and it is this: The administration's resolve and their diplomacy is what has brought Kim Jong Un to the negotiating table.

The administration is moving forward toward a denuclearized North Korea, and Mike Pompeo has played a critical role in those efforts. As Secretary of State, Mike would continue to defend and represent American interests abroad, protecting our national security and making the world a safer place.

Mike has not just excelled, he has been the best at everything he has put his mind to over the course of his life. He was first in his class at West Point, a graduate of Harvard Law School, editor of the Harvard Law Review. He served our country in the military. He ran businesses before serving in the U.S. Congress, which is where my path crossed Mike Pompeo's, as we served as colleagues in the U.S. Congress. Mike has the résumé, the character, and the record of results to make him an exceptionally qualified leader for this job.

As we wait here in limbo without a Secretary of State, lives are on the line, our national security is on the line, and our freedom is on the line. I urge my colleagues across the aisle, please stop putting politics before America's national interests. For heaven's sake, this body passed Hillary Clinton through as Secretary of State with 94 votes. I urge them to make the best decision for our country and their constituents back home and join me in confirming Mike Pompeo as our next Secretary of State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Montana for the unanimous consent request.

CFPB ACTING DIRECTOR MULVANEY

This morning, the New York Times reported that Mick Mulvaney, the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—that is the Bureau that saved \$12 billion for 29 million American consumers who have been wronged, cheated, misled, deceived by banks and other financial service actors. Again, that is \$12 billion and 29 million consumers helped by the Consumer Financial Pro-

tection Bureau. Think about that for a second.

This morning, the New York Times reported that Mick Mulvaney, the head of that Bureau—the organization that looks out for or at least used to look out for American bank customers—made a speech to 1,300 bankers yesterday, and he told the banking industry to step up their lobbying efforts.

So you have a government official who took an oath to represent the American public to the best of his ability and to carry out his job to the best of his ability at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and he is going in front of bankers and telling them to step up their lobbying efforts to weaken the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The Times reported this, and there is a recording of this, so this isn't—as probably Mr. Mulvaney might suggest or the President will suggest—this isn't fake news. There is a real recording. He told banking industry executives on Tuesday that they should press lawmakers hard to pursue their agenda, and he revealed that, as a Congressman, he would meet with lobbyists only if they had contributed to his campaign.

Here is what the Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said. He was a Member of Congress—a far-right, tea party, Republican Member of Congress who took a lot of bank contributions, I would add, but I will put that aside for a minute—until he became the head of the Office of Management and Budget and then of the Bureau. He said: "We had a hierarchy in my office in Congress." That is when he served down the hall here at the other end of the Capitol in the U.S. Congress. "We had a hierarchy in my office in Congress," he told 1,300 bankers and lending industry officials at the American bankers conference in Washington. He said:

We had a hierarchy in my office in Congress. If you're a lobbyist who never gave us money, I didn't talk to you. If you're a lobbyist who gave us money, I might talk to you.

I guess you can't call that bribery. I am not suggesting exactly that it is bribery. But you are saying: If you didn't give me money, I wouldn't talk to you, and if you gave me money, maybe I would talk to you.

Again, I am not a lawyer, and I don't think that is under the classification of bribery, but I think it is pretty awful. It is pretty awful when the guy who appointed you said he was going to clear the swamp. It is pretty awful when you have been elected by the people—in his case, of South Carolina—and you say: If you didn't give me money, I wouldn't talk to you, and if you gave me money, maybe I would talk to you. Can you believe that? This is a high-ranked, U.S. Government official who was confirmed by the U.S. Senate—at least for the first job at the Office of Management and Budget. Deciding who you will meet with based on campaign contributions is the kind of pay-to-play

that makes Americans furious with Washington, DC.

President Trump got elected because he was going to drain the swamp. President Trump got elected because he said the system was rigged. President Trump got elected because he doesn't want this pay-to-play. President Trump got elected because this place needs to be cleaned out. Then he appoints somebody to be the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau who only really wants to talk to you if you gave him campaign money, which is fundamentally what he said.

If the policy at his congressional office has been his policy at OMB and his policy at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, it has corrupted all of his work. It is hard to believe otherwise. Mr. Mulvaney should resign. He should resign.

Mr. Mulvaney should release his schedule since he has been head of the Bureau. One of the functions of the U.S. Senate, of either party, regardless of the President, is to oversee what exactly is happening in the executive branch of government, and I think it is important that we see Mr. Mulvaney's schedule. Who is he meeting with? What kind of contributions did they make to him when he was a Congressman? Is he directing money to the Senate majority or to the House majority Members to help Speaker RYAN? Is he sending money to political candidates who have been his allies in trying to emasculate the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau?

Mr. Mulvaney should resign. He should release his schedule. The White House should quickly nominate a permanent CFPB Director with bipartisan support and, may I suggest, a moral compass. I will say that again. The White House should quickly nominate a permanent Director of the Bureau with bipartisan support and a moral compass. Banks and payday lenders already have armies of lobbyists on their side; they don't need one more.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Texas.

CORRECTIONS ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this afternoon, the House Judiciary Committee will begin to consider their version of a bill I have introduced here in the Senate with the junior Senator from Rhode Island, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, called the CORRECTIONS Act. This legislation addresses prison reform—an issue at the forefront of how justice is administered in this country—by focusing on reducing rates of recidivism, or repeat offenders, and ensuring that those reentering society can become productive members of our communities without threatening the crime rate.

Our efforts here are important, as re-offense rates in our country remain at high levels. In other words, our criminal justice system has become a revolving door, with reoffense rates of more than 75 percent for State pris-

oners and nearly 50 percent for Federal prisoners. So there is a 75-percent chance that somebody who goes to State prison will end up going back and a 50-percent chance that a Federal prisoner will end up going back unless we do something about it.

In law school, students are taught that the bedrock principles of our criminal justice system are deterrence, retribution, incapacitation, and rehabilitation. The reality is that somewhere along the way, we forgot about rehabilitation, and our prisons have literally become a warehouse for people who have been convicted of criminal offenses. That reality is part of the reason that my State of Texas and several other States have led the way not just to be tough on crime but to be smart on crime too.

Texas focused on the important role rehabilitation can play by implementing statewide prison reforms to help offenders learn to overcome the reasons they went to prison in the first place—whether it is a drug or alcohol habit or an addiction, whether it is simply being unprepared to enter the workforce because they dropped out of school or, perhaps, they have some sort of learning disability.

By using recidivism reduction programs like job training or alcohol and drug rehabilitation and letting prisoners go to school while they are in prison to earn a GED or to learn a marketable skill, Texas has reduced its incarceration rate and crime rate by double digits at the same time. Let me say that again. We have reduced our incarceration rate and our crime rate by double digits at the same time.

The end all and be all, in my view, of our criminal justice system must be to reduce the crime rate. In other words, whatever else we do, if the crime rate doesn't go down, we are not getting it right. As a result of the State-based reforms that I am talking about, we have actually been able to reduce incarceration rates and crime rates too.

I must say that when we talk about rehabilitation of prisoners, we are not talking about something we do to them. They have to want it. They have to want to turn their lives around, and they have to take advantage of the opportunities we provide them to do so, because that sort of personal transformation requires extraordinary commitment. Again, it is not something the government can do to somebody. They need to do it for themselves with the help we provide.

By doing so, we found that we can save billions of dollars for taxpayers, and we spared countless victims from further criminal activity. You have to wonder, from the time somebody comes out of prison to the time they reoffend and go back, how many crimes have they committed? How many people's lives have changed forever?

Finally, when they get apprehended for committing a crime, we tend to look at that in isolation, but the truth is, for people who live lives of crimi-

nality, this is what they do full time. They commit numerous crimes against property and against people. If we can reduce the crime rate, we can help them get back on their feet and become productive members of society, and we can save money at the same time. It strikes me that this is a pretty good deal.

For years I have tried to bring the successful State-based experiments and models to Washington, DC. That is why I felt it was important to reintroduce the bipartisan CORRECTIONS Act with the junior Senator from Rhode Island. Senator WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island, my cosponsor of this legislation, and I have very different perspectives on the world. He is a Democrat. I am a Republican. I am a conservative, and I would say he is at least a liberal. I don't know if maybe he would call himself a progressive. The fact is that we tried this and it works. Rather than having the Federal Government and the entire country be a laboratory for experimentation when it comes to things like this, isn't it better to let the States do what they always were conceived of being capable of doing, which is to be the laboratories of democracy? See what works and then take those successful experiments and scale them up so the whole Nation can benefit—that is what this legislation does.

This bill requires the Department of Justice to develop assessment tools that will assess the recidivism risk on all eligible offenders. In other words, we are not going to give hardcore multiple offenders—violent criminals—the benefit of these programs. What we will do is to start with the low-risk and moderate-risk offenders. We have scientific tools, tests, and the like that can help us make better decisions on who ought to be eligible and who should not.

We also shift the Federal Bureau of Prisons resources toward those most likely to commit future crimes. In other words, if we take low-level and mid-level offenders and we give them a way out to turn their lives around and become productive and we reduce the crime rate, that gives us more opportunity to focus on the hardcore violent criminals that are the greatest threat to our communities across the board. Focusing on less restrictive conditions for lower risk inmates and focusing on the hardcore violent criminals gives us a chance to concentrate our efforts on the people most likely to commit future crimes and to reoffend.

Our bill requires the Bureau of Prisons to partner with private organizations, including ones that are not-for-profit or faith-based, to promote recidivism reduction. We have had some very successful programs in Texas where religious organizations will go into the prisons and offer people a chance, not only to learn the skills they need in order to succeed on the outside but to turn their lives around by recognizing a higher power in their life. This is the

sort of experience that causes many people's lives to be transformed forever. Again, it is not because of something government does to them but because of what they embraced and have done for themselves.

I am more encouraged than ever that we will see some positive momentum on prison reform as the President and some of his closest advisers see prison reform as a top priority. Jared Kushner, the President's son-in-law, had a piece today—I believe it was in the *Wall Street Journal*—talking about this initiative. He has been a great partner, working with House colleagues and Senate colleagues to try to make this a priority, as well as urging the President and the Attorney General to do so as well.

Earlier this year, the President held an important meeting on this subject after 6 months of exploring the issue with his team. Attorney General Sessions attended, as did my friend and fellow Texan Brooke Rollins, the head of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, whose Right on Crime Program has been on the leading edge of those prison reforms in Texas and, then, taking that message nationwide. That meeting with the President was very productive.

In my discussions with colleagues and at the White House since that time, what we have repeatedly come back to is the idea of taking those success stories at the State level and scaling them up into a Federal reform package.

Our State began this effort back in 2007. A number of States have done the same thing. Over the last decade, we closed or consolidated multiple prisons, saving significant taxpayer dollars. The crime rate has fallen Statewide, even while our State's population has exploded during that same period of time. Something is clearly working back home in the Lone Star State. It has worked in places like North Carolina, where the Presiding Officer played an important role in the reforms in his State, as speaker of the house. It has worked in places like Rhode Island and Georgia, just to name a few.

That is part of the reason why prison reform has enjoyed such broad bipartisan support. It is an issue that unites liberals and conservatives around shared principles of saving money, reducing crime, and successfully reintegrating our citizens into society upon release.

I believe in the essential dignity of every human life. If there is a human life we can help salvage by giving people access to some of these programs and by changing the way we look at incarceration as—not just a warehouse where we put people, but also by providing people who are willing to take advantage of these programs the opportunity to turn their life around—it strikes me that we are giving people a second chance. It seems to me like the right and just thing to do.

Are we going to be able to save everybody? I am not naive enough to think that we are going to be able to save everybody. Some people are simply going to have to be incarcerated and kept off the streets so our communities can be safe, but that is not true for everybody. Looking at low-level and mid-level offenders, doing the sort of risk assessments I am talking about, giving them access to these programs where they themselves can turn their lives around while making our communities safe, and giving them an opportunity for a second chance and to save money—that strikes me as something we need to do.

Every day we fail to act on this issue we allow our prisons in the United States to become more bloated, more inefficient, and more wasteful. State and local governments spend more than \$200 billion a year on criminal justice, and a large fraction of that is spent on locking people up. I know there are some people who think we ought to lock them up and throw away the key, but that doesn't happen. People get out after a few years. The question is, Are they going to be prepared to reenter lawful society or will they simply go back to the same old lifestyle, reoffend, and end up back in prison?

There are even more consequential and less tangible costs on our communities when people continue to reoffend, because they don't find a way out of their life of crime. There is the cost on strained and broken families, on lost incomes and savings, on children who have to grow up without one or both parents. Those are some of the collateral damages of our criminal justice system when we don't take advantage of commonsense, proven reforms like I am talking about.

When people go to jail, the ripple impact affects all of us. It affects all of our families, all of our friends, and all of our neighborhoods. Some people need to go to jail. They need to stay there to pay for their crime and to be separated or segregated from law-abiding society to keep our communities safe.

Again, if we can help address the problems by expanding programming like substance abuse treatment and vocational training, which have been proven to reduce recidivism, these programs can help break the vicious cycle of imprisonment. For people who want a better life but simply have not found a way out of it, by investing in programs that focus on job training, education, drug rehabilitation, and mental health treatment, we can save taxpayer dollars and lower crime and incarceration rates and decrease recidivism.

More importantly, in the end, I think we can help people to change their lives for the better. We can give them hope and give them some opportunity and let them accept the power of transforming their lives and the promise that provides to them and to all of us.

I applaud the administration and the Attorney General's efforts to refocus our criminal justice reforms on the prison reform issue and for their work so far. I am encouraged by Speaker RYAN's meeting with members of the President's staff last week and by the House Judiciary's action starting today. I know it will not end today, but they are taking up a version that closely mirrors the CORRECTIONS Act, which I have addressed in these remarks.

I also greatly appreciate the leadership of my cosponsor, Senator WHITEHOUSE. I know that other people have other ideas—perhaps about sentencing reform and the like—but in this political environment, I am for doing what we can do rather than spinning our wheels being frustrated about things we can't do because there is simply not the political support in the House, the Senate, and at the White House to get it done.

The prison reform bill, I believe—the CORRECTIONS Act—is the way to go. I am looking forward to working with all of my colleagues in the House and the Senate, as well as the President, to get this done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I am glad to be here today to be on the Senate floor to rise to urge my colleagues to confirm Mike Pompeo as our next Secretary of State.

The Senate is an institution built on history and tradition. We hear that quite a bit as we walk the halls, particularly where it comes to confirmations.

Confirming the President's Cabinet, confirming judges, confirming a Supreme Court Justice, I think, is one of the greatest honors that we enjoy as Senators.

Recent Secretaries of State have enjoyed strong bipartisan support from this Chamber during their own confirmation process. Hillary Clinton was confirmed by a vote of 94 to 2. John Kerry was confirmed by a vote of 94 to 3. These are overwhelming, bipartisan votes, and it is not because everybody in this Chamber agrees with everything Secretary Clinton or Secretary Kerry would have done on most of the foreign policy questions. The result is the Senate's strong tradition of confirming qualified nominees to represent the United States on the world stage. This very crucial position, Secretary of State, gives the President his or her voice around the world in the diplomatic realm. But when it comes to the confirmation of this nominee, Mike Pompeo, many of my colleagues have

seemed way too ready to brush aside this long-held tradition. What is the reason for this? I think you would agree with me—the reason is pretty obvious—that it is just flat-out partisanship. Partisanship is the only explanation because it certainly could not be, is not, and will not be the nominee's qualifications.

We have all heard Mike Pompeo's résumé by now. His list of experience and accomplishments make him more than qualified to serve as this Nation's top diplomat. I think some of his qualifications are worth repeating.

He was first in his class at West Point. He was a cavalry officer in the U.S. Army and served honorably. He is a graduate of Harvard Law School. He was an editor of the Harvard Law Review and the Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy.

After law school, Mike worked at one of the country's very prestigious and top law firms before he cofounded a company where he served as CEO. He then joined another company where, again, he served as the CEO.

That was all before Mike was elected to serve four terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, where I was very fortunate, in my years as a U.S. Congresswoman, to serve and work alongside him and to call him my colleague.

During his time in Congress, he served on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Just on the title alone, "Permanent Select"—it is a committee selected by the Speaker and the minority leader—you know that it is extremely important because it deals with all of the Nation's intelligence.

We know that after he left that position as a Congressman, he became President Trump's Director of the CIA. By all accounts and by all reports, he has done an absolutely exceptional job. He revitalized the morale within the CIA and put us on even footing on one of our core missions.

I think it is an impressive list of qualifications that he has, especially when you compare some of our previous Secretaries of State.

I would ask the question: What does it take for a military officer, a lawyer, a CEO, a Congressman, and now a CIA Director to get one Democratic vote out of committee? Why is there such pushback on such a qualified nominee? I believe it is because of a partisan campaign to obstruct. We have seen it on other nominations and certainly on this one.

This sort of obstruction does not help our government function. It doesn't help the career folks over at the State Department do their job—and they are ready. It doesn't help our country lead on the global stage, and it certainly doesn't help the people we serve.

This is an important time in our Nation's history, particularly around the world. You and I just heard the French President—the Chief Executive—talk about the needs of Europe and his views on terrorism and America's place

as a world leader. Now, more than ever, we need a strong and qualified Secretary of State. We need a leader to negotiate with North Korea. These negotiations are coming up rapidly, and we know that Mike Pompeo has already developed a relationship.

We need him to counter the Russian aggression we see cropping up in other areas all around this globe. We need a strong leader to address the chemical weapons situation in Syria, as tragic as it is. The list could go on and on.

And do you know what? Mike Pompeo is up to this job, and we should give it to him. We should give it to him in this Chamber by confirmation.

The American people want Washington to work. They want us to work together. They want us to work as a team. That is how we are set up. So how can that happen if the President can't even get the opportunity to put his own team in place?

I am going to vote for Mike Pompeo to be our next Secretary of State because I want the President to have his team. I want the Nation to have a strong leader. I want our State Department to be functioning as fully, as vibrantly, and as aggressively as we can around the world in these dangerous times.

With that, I urge my colleagues to put partisanship aside and confirm Mike Pompeo as our next Secretary of State.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I rise to join the Presiding Officer and others who have been on the floor hoping that we will move this week to support the confirmation of Mike Pompeo, who has been nominated to be the Secretary of State.

It is a critically important time for the country. I think we heard this morning in a joint meeting from the President of France the importance of our country and those who agree with our defense of freedom and security to stand up for that. There are threats all over the globe, and certainly everybody realizes that Mike Pompeo, the current Director of the CIA, would have the knowledge he needs to do the job. He clearly has the experience he needs to do the job, and he has the support of the President, whom he would be representing.

Historically, this body, until recent years, always dealt with foreign policy as if we were sure that bipartisanship starts at the water's edge and partisanship ends at the water's edge. That long tradition was always evident, particularly in the Secretary of State's job and confirming people to important

positions that relate to our national security.

John Kerry was confirmed as Secretary of State by a vote of 94 to 3. Hillary Clinton was confirmed by a vote of 94 to 2. Condoleezza Rice received 85 votes when she was confirmed, and Colin Powell was confirmed unanimously. That is the tradition the country has always set for this job.

My colleague from New York Senator SCHUMER said in 2013—and this is an exact quote: "Who in America doesn't think a President, Democrat or Republican, deserves his or her picks for who should run these agencies? Nobody." That is end of that quote. That is the answer to his own question. Apparently, that is no longer the answer to that question on the part of Senator SCHUMER and others.

Senator Kerry, and later Secretary of State Kerry, said in 2009:

It is essential that we provide the President with the tools and resources he needs to effect change. That starts by making sure he has the national security team he has chosen in place as soon as possible.

Secretary Kerry and Secretary Clinton were not confirmed because Republicans agreed with every single one of their policy positions. They weren't confirmed because their colleagues in the Senate agreed with every one of their votes. They were confirmed because they were qualified to do the job, and the President, who had nominated them, deserved to have his team in place to carry out the policies he had been elected to carry out.

Now the same standard should be extended to Director Pompeo, who is eminently qualified for the job. Director Pompeo graduated first in his class at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1986, and he served as a cavalry officer patrolling the Iron Curtain before the fall of the Berlin Wall.

After leaving Active Duty, Director Pompeo graduated from Harvard Law School where he edited the Harvard Law Review. This is a man of great accomplishment before he entered politics.

In addition to those things, he also ran two successful businesses before he was elected to the House of Representatives in 2010. He served in the House from 2010 to 2017. He was a member of the Intelligence Committee. In that role, he was at the forefront of information that is important to national security, ranging from the Iran nuclear accord to the PATRIOT Act. He understands these issues. He is a person of significant capacity. Again, maybe most important of all the qualifications, he was picked by the President of the United States who, after this time of working together with Director Pompeo as the Director of the CIA, the President should know exactly what he is getting, and, frankly, we should too.

President Trump decided to not only nominate Director Pompeo to be the Director of National Security, but when he was sworn in—when he was confirmed, before he was sworn in, 66

to 32 was the vote. Fourteen Senate Democrats, most of them still here—if not, they may all still be here—voted for Mike Pompeo to be the Director of the CIA. I would say he is more qualified today to be Secretary of State than he was then to be the Director of the CIA because not only has he done everything he has done up until then, but he has understood, from the unique perspective of the CIA, the foreign policy and the intelligence challenges we face every day.

He has taken the responsibilities seriously. He has briefed the President over and over again. The President knows exactly what he is getting and Director Pompeo should know exactly whom he is working for.

SENATE RULES ON NOMINATIONS

Given the numerous challenges we face here and around the globe, it is important that we swiftly confirm not just Mike Pompeo but the President's other nominees. Many of these positions still remain vacant because our colleagues across the aisle have, frankly, wasted hours and days obstructing the confirmation process. It is way beyond any normal way that this has been approached.

Right now, we are in the middle of a 30-hour debate. I don't see that many people debating. We had a big debate yesterday—at least time was reserved—at the insistence of the minority. I think the debate was about 28 minutes out of the 20 hours between the time the nominee could have been voted on, and he would have gotten the same number of votes he got almost 20 hours later, after 28 minutes of debate.

President Trump's nominees have faced 88 cloture votes. That is the time we are in now, where we have a cloture vote and then we have this long period of time for theoretical debate that doesn't occur. Those nominees have faced 28 cloture votes compared to 24 total cloture votes in the first entire 2 years of the 6 previous Presidents combined. So there was an average of four cloture votes for those Presidents in their first 2 years. President Trump has had 88 cloture votes in less than a year and a half.

Something is happening differently than has ever happened before. It takes an average of 85 days for the President's nominees to be confirmed once they get to the Senate, 20 days longer than President Obama's nominees. The other difference with President Obama's nominees is, we didn't stop all the work in the Senate during the 60 days that we were having hearings, getting the nomination ready for the floor. We didn't do exactly what we are doing right now, which is fully taking advantage of every right the minority has to insist on debate. The only thing missing in that debate is the debate. At the rate we are going, it would take more than 9 years to confirm all of the President's nominees. This would be 9 years of his 4-year term. If he didn't nominate anybody else, this would be longer than the President would have if

he were elected to two terms. It is unacceptable. It is ridiculous. It denies the President that counsel he needs of senior leaders, but it also denies the Senate the floor time it needs to deal with the issues.

If people have watched the Senate in the last several years, and particularly if you have watched it over the last several months, the quorum call that we so often have—the one I suggested we remove ourselves from—is what you see when you turn on the Senate because we are waiting for a vote to happen, the debate of which does not occur.

So, later today, the Rules Committee I chair will be considering Senator LANKFORD's legislation to address these delays in the confirmation process. All Senator LANKFORD's resolution does is to make permanent the same rules Senate Democrats agreed to in 2013, when they were in the majority. While they were in the majority, a majority of Republicans and Democrats all agreed we would confirm President Obama's nominees with debate that more nearly met the likely debate for that office.

Senator LANKFORD's resolution would simply reduce debate for most executive branch offices from 30 hours down to 8 hours and for district judges from 30 hours to 2 hours. By the way, we don't have to use those 2 hours or those 8 hours either. If there is no debate, we should always move to the vote, but at least the debate time still gives the minority the protection that traditionally they have had. When you abuse the minority protections in the Senate, that is when those protections tend to go away.

The resolution still would have 30 hours of debate for the Supreme Court, for circuit courts, the courts of appeal for all the district courts, and for Cabinet-level nominees.

We are not opposed to debating nominees and really debating them. I think the opposition here is we are opposed to not debating and using up time simply as a delay tactic, where the result would be the same, whether you voted in 30 minutes or 30 hours.

Now, remember, this is the same framework the Senate passed by a vote of 78 to 16 in 2013. Fifty-two Democrats voted in favor of this exact same resolution in 2013, including the current minority leader. Senator LANKFORD's proposal would make that framework permanent. It would allow the Senate to expedite the confirmation process for the President's well-qualified nominees. It would also allow the Senate to get to the other work that the American people expect the Senate to do and have every reason to expect the Senate to do.

So, today and tomorrow, we will continue this process of waiting for the vote on the nominee to be Secretary of State; again, a vote that, prior to recent times, would have occurred right after the report was out and Members knew what they were going to do. So,

hopefully, we will begin to look at these rules and our work more seriously.

REMEMBERING TED VAN DER MEID

Mr. President, I want to pay tribute to Ted Van Der Meid, a longtime House of Representatives leadership staff member, who died of pancreatic cancer on March 19.

For the 10 years before Ted left the Congress, I worked with him every day the Congress was in session. He was a great public servant. Ted was emblematic of the professional staff that we count on here in the Senate and across the Rotunda in the House of Representatives. His dedication to the Constitution, the Congress, and democracy guided his work.

Ted didn't seek personal glory or seek to accumulate vast wealth. Instead, he woke up every day working to make the Congress a better and safer place for the American people.

He served as a staff member for several Members, including Jan Meyers and Lynn Martin, before serving as the general counsel to House Republican Leader Bob Michel where he worked on Congressional reform initiatives.

After leaving Leader Michel's office, he served as the chief counsel for the Ethics Committee.

When Denny Hastert became Speaker of the House, Ted became his chief of floor operations and chief legal counsel. In a wide portfolio, Van Der Meid coordinated with the House majority leader on all floor activities. He also was in charge of the institutional operations for the Speaker.

That institutional responsibility became especially important in the context of the 9/11 attacks.

It was Ted who drove the completion of the Visitor's Center that not only made the Congress more accessible to the American people, but also made the Capitol a safer and more secure place for the visitors and for those who come to work here every day. Ted was also involved in the potentially critical continuity of government discussions that overshadowed other concerns in 2002.

When Ted retired from the Congress, he eventually went to work for the Pew Charitable Trust, where once again he devoted his time in seeking to make this institution work better for the American people. In particular, he helped to establish forums where staff from a diverse set of Members got to know each other in more causal settings. It was Ted's view that the better staff and Members knew one another, the better they could find common ground and make progress on behalf of the voters.

Ted was taken away from us much too early. He fought the good fight and always thought about how he could make this Congress and this country a better place for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the nomination of Mike

Pompeo to be our next Secretary of State.

By now, we have all heard about Director Pompeo's accomplishments: first in his class at West Point, U.S. Army officer, graduate of Harvard Law School, editor of the Harvard Law Review, successful businessman, and Member of Congress. It is rare that a nominee to this position has had so many diverse accomplishments.

Some of my colleagues who are opposed to Director Pompeo argue that he will not deliver tough messages to the President or outline all of the policy options. They argue that Director Pompeo is a hawk who would prefer armed conflict to diplomacy. I find these comments disappointing. That has not been my personal experience with Director Pompeo. In addition, military officers are frequently the last ones to seek a military solution to a foreign policy challenge because they know firsthand the cost of war. On the other hand, they also know that without strength, no amount of diplomacy will be able to stop an authoritarian dictator.

I believe Director Pompeo's recent trip to North Korea highlights how effective and committed he is to pursuing diplomatic opportunities. He not only defended core U.S. interests, but he also moved the United States and North Korea closer to negotiations. Maximum pressure, combined with a willingness to talk, is working right now.

I also want to address the issue of communication with Congress. I have heard claims about information not being shared with the Hill. As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I have worked with Director Pompeo regularly and can personally vouch for his accessibility and candor. Having worked with a number of CIA Directors over the years on the Intelligence Committee, I can personally attest that Director Pompeo is at the top of the class for being open and straightforward.

I would also like to address the issue of bipartisanship. Since coming to the Senate a decade ago, I have had the chance to vote for three Secretaries of State. Mr. Pompeo will be my fourth. In each case, I have supported the President's nominee to serve as Secretary of State. President Obama's choices for Secretary of State would certainly not have been my choices. In the case of Secretaries Clinton and Kerry, there were numerous issues where we had substantial disagreements. I believed that as to the Secretary of State, however, the President was entitled to deference as to his choice, and that choice deserved bipartisan support because their credibility as the top diplomat is strengthened by bipartisan support.

Another important factor is that, with Secretary Pompeo, world leaders will know that he speaks directly on behalf of the President—something that has been an issue in the past. This quality is very, very important for a Secretary of State.

Director Pompeo is more than qualified to serve as Secretary of State. In fact, at this point, because of his service at the CIA, Director Pompeo is uniquely positioned to be a very successful Secretary of State. No other place in our government provides more insight into the inner workings of other countries than the work of our intelligence agencies. The CIA is certainly one of the top intelligence agencies, and Director Pompeo, in his service, has had access to and indeed directed the work of the CIA and has a very deep and profound understanding of the other nations in the world, and that applies particularly to the troubled spots in the world. He is uniquely qualified because of this experience to serve as Secretary of State.

We have often used the phrase “politics ends at the water's edge” to signal that our domestic political differences do not erode our diplomats' strength overseas. I hope that this vote does not change what has been a longstanding goal for our diplomatic efforts.

I urge my colleagues to thoughtfully consider support for Director Pompeo.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, what has happened to the State Department under this administration is almost impossible to imagine. What we are seeing there is a devastation and a decimation of the resources of a great part of our government, one of the most important parts. It is a small percentage of our budget, but the work done by the State Department is critically important in maintaining the position of the United States around the world, projecting our image—our values—where we can, helping the helpless in parts of the world where many countries come to their aid.

Under this administration in the last year, we have seen things happen that are unimaginable. When it gets down to the basics, key posts are unfilled at the State Department. There are more than 30 vacancies in ambassadorial positions. Don't blame Congress for it. In many cases, they have not even sent us the names of the nominees.

Can anyone here believe that we still do not have an ambassador from the Trump administration to South Korea? South Korea? We spend time talking about the Korean Peninsula and the future of the Korean Peninsula, and this President cannot find an ambassador to represent the United States in South Korea. What is the possible explanation for this? He can't blame anyone but himself. He has not sent us a nominee to even consider.

We are faced with a nuclear-armed North Korean dictator. We have 28,000 American U.S. military personnel who are literally risking their lives in

South Korea, and we don't have a diplomat on the scene to try to make sure that the United States is well represented.

The Department is also hemorrhaging top staff. Under Secretary Tom Shannon—one of the most respected—is scheduled to leave soon. It is no surprise this is happening. President Trump has repeatedly proposed dramatic, irresponsible cuts in the budget of the Department of State. His administration has kept top diplomats out of key discussions and deliberations. How, at a time of such international unrest in this dangerous world we live in, can we be diminishing and demoralizing our topline diplomats? How can that be a smart way to keep America safe?

I have been hoping someone would come along to right the ship at the State Department—someone to draw on this amazing reservoir of American talent in the areas of diplomacy and foreign policy, someone to make sure our best diplomatic efforts are projected to prevent conflict and to further American interests, someone who could be a proud face of America around the world.

It was in this context and with this challenge that I met with Mike Pompeo. He and I have met and had serious and challenging discussions before, notably when he was nominated to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. We met again a few weeks ago. It was a good, candid conversation. He seemed to understand the desperate situation at the State Department and that the State Department's top experts should be included in key administration discussions.

This conversation left me in the same place, I believe, that Senator MENENDEZ pondered at the end of Pompeo's Foreign Relations Committee hearing: Who is the real Mike Pompeo?

You see, I find it hard to square the reasonable man I met with the other day with some of his actions and comments. For example, has Michael Pompeo completely renounced the use of torture? He said he would not obey an order from the President to use torture. Let me add it is tragic that we have a President who brags about using such illegal, abhorrent, and un-American approaches, but we still have to worry about this. Contrast that with Mr. Pompeo's previous defense of waterboarding or his jarring comments about the 2014 Senate Intelligence Committee's torture report when he said “Senator Feinstein [today] has put American lives at risk” and that the intelligence operatives whose acts were scrutinized were “heroes, not pawns in some liberal game being played by the ACLU and Senator Feinstein.”

Or what about Mr. Pompeo's association with prominent anti-Muslim figures in the United States, like Frank Gaffney? The Southern Poverty Law Center calls Mr. Gaffney one of America's most notorious Islamophobes. For

example, Gaffney favors congressional hearings to unmask subversive Muslim conspiracies and was even banned from the far-right Conservative Political Action Conference events after accusing two of its organizers of being agents of the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet Mr. Pompeo appeared on Mr. Gaffney's radio show at least 24 times between 2013 and 2016.

What about when Mr. Pompeo used his position on the House Intelligence Committee to accuse then-Secretary of State Clinton of orchestrating a wide-ranging coverup of the Benghazi attacks that ended in the tragic loss of American lives in Libya? Is there anyone here who believes for a minute that was not a political witch hunt, which in part led to the further discrediting of the critical congressional committee involved—a committee that, incidentally, has lost all legitimacy in the current investigation over Russia's involvement in our election?

I face this decision on Mr. Pompeo with real concern. There are many policy issues on which Mr. Pompeo and I might disagree, notably on the Iran nuclear agreement. I asked him point-blank: What do you think is going to happen to this nuclear agreement to stop the Iranians from developing a nuclear weapon?

His conjecture was that this President would walk away from it and hope that our European allies, who also signed on to this agreement, would enforce it. Does that sound like a cogent foreign policy for a leader in the world like the United States?

Our Nation desperately needs someone to bring leadership to the State Department, but torture, Islamophobia, and wild political conspiracy theories don't seem to mesh with being our Nation's top diplomat from where I am standing.

I will vote against Mr. Pompeo's nomination. I sincerely hope I am wrong about this nominee. I believe he will be approved by a very small margin. I hope he will, in the end, uphold our Nation's laws and values when it comes to torture, tolerance, and international cooperation. I hope he will make sure diplomacy is exhausted before we turn to yet another war and, in particular, that he will resist John Bolton and others who are notorious for wanting to rush into military conflict. I hope he will listen carefully to Secretary Mattis at the Defense Department—someone I supported and someone I trust. I hope he will be clear to this President, as the man who is the Secretary of State in his administration, that climate change and Russia are truly threats to our Nation and well-being. Doing this will help strengthen America's leadership abroad and help build greater trust and cooperation in Congress.

DACA

Mr. President, on September 5, the Trump administration announced its repeal of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, known as

DACA. As a result, hundreds of thousands of immigrants who came to the United States as children, toddlers, and infants—known as Dreamers—face losing their right to stay here without being subject to deportation and the right to legally work in America.

DACA provides temporary legal status for Dreamers if they register with the government, pay a substantial fee, go through a criminal background check, and return every 2 years for renewal. It has been a great success. More than 800,000 Dreamers have come forward and received DACA protection.

When President Trump repealed DACA 7 months ago, he set an arbitrary March 5 deadline of this year for Congress to act and replace it. We tried. We offered to this President six different bipartisan alternatives to continue the DACA Program. He rejected every single one of them. He sent to Congress his own plan for dealing with immigration. It received 39 votes in the U.S. Senate—39. Remember, there is a Republican majority of 51. The President struggled to get his own party to support his ideas on immigration.

Luckily, a Federal court stepped in and issued an order blocking President Trump's repeal of DACA. This means those Dreamers who have DACA can continue to apply for renewed status. I certainly urge every DACA recipient to file for renewal as quickly as possible. There was a ruling yesterday, as well, in one of the DC district courts which also said that perhaps the President's actions on DACA can be questioned, and he gave the government 90 days to produce evidence of what authority the President used to reach that conclusion.

The Trump administration is doing everything in its power to fight this injunction, and it could be lifted any day. We don't know when the courts will turn and make a decision. This means there is still an urgent need for Congress to act to overcome the decision of the President of the United States of last September 5.

Last week, the Department of Homeland Security released updated statistics on DACA. It shows, as of March 31, more than 32,000 DACA renewal applications are pending. Of these pending renewal applications, more than 9,000 were from recipients whose DACA protection had already expired, and tens of thousands more Dreamers have DACA protection due to expire very soon.

The President has created chaos, not just in the White House but clearly at the Department of Homeland Security as they try to respond to his decisions. Secretary Nielsen of DHS has promised me and has said publicly that she will not be party to deporting any DACA recipient with a pending DACA application, even if their DACA status has expired. We will hold her to that commitment.

However, for DACA recipients whose status has expired, they are not going to be given any work permits while

their renewal applications are being considered. It means tens of thousands of DACA-eligible individuals could be forced to leave the jobs they have—such as teachers in our schools or even in our military—because of the chaos that has been created by President Trump's decision.

Consider the fate of Dreamers who are eligible for DACA but have never quite reached that status. Until this decision is made in the court hearing in the District of Columbia, they can no longer apply for DACA protection because of President Trump's decision to prohibit new applications after September 5 of last year.

The nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute estimates that—in addition to 800,000 DACA recipients—there are an additional 1 million Dreamers who are eligible for DACA. President Trump's cruel decision to end DACA means that some 1 million DACA-eligible people cannot even apply.

On September 5, President Trump called on Congress to legalize DACA. As I mentioned, he has refused to accept six different bipartisan approaches that would. He even rejected one approach that offered \$25 billion for his infamous wall on the Mexican border. Instead, the President has tried to put the entire hard-line immigration agenda on the backs of DACA recipients.

It is not working, for 85 percent of the American people are on the side of these young people who were brought to the United States as kids, children, infants who grew up in this country, pledging allegiance to that flag, and wanting to be part of our future. There are 85 percent of Americans, including many Trump voters, who believe that is the right and fair thing to do, but a handful of hard-liners in this administration are determined to exact a punishment on these young people and their parents. That is why we find ourselves in this situation today.

I have come to the floor more than 100 times to tell the individual stories of these Dreamers. I do that today as well.

This is Karina Macias. She is the 114th Dreamer whose story I have told on the floor.

At the age of 3, her family brought her to the United States from Mexico. She grew up in East Palo Alto in Northern California. She loved to read and spend her afterschool time and summers at the local Boys & Girls Club. Karina was an excellent student, and she received numerous awards in high school, including the Mount Holyoke Book Award, the AP Scholar Award, and a Rotary Club Academic Achievement Award. She was the co-editor of her yearbook and copresident of the Community Service Club. She volunteered as a tutor and worked as a volunteer in food distribution centers. She attended Saint Mary's College of California, where she continued to excel academically and to receive many awards. In May 2016, she was awarded a bachelor's degree in communications.

She works today as a project manager at a biotechnology firm. She volunteers with the Peninsula College Fund, where she organizes career development and college success workshops. She tutors elementary students and mentors middle school youth who compete in local science competitions.

What is her dream for the future? She wants to pursue an advanced degree so she can become a biotechnology researcher.

Here is what she wrote in a letter to me:

DACA is my hope for a future in which, with hard work and perseverance, I can achieve any dream imaginable. It's my protection from being ripped away from the only place I've known as home. It's the promise to my baby brothers—both U.S. Citizens—that I'll be around to watch them mature into exceptional young men. It's the ticket that allows me to be a contributing member of society. I credit my success to the endless support I have received from so many sources. I want to give back so my fellow Americans have the opportunities to achieve their dreams.

What a tragedy it would be to deport this young woman. Why would America do that? What sin has she committed? What crime is she guilty of? Who will feel so good to see her leave America? It will certainly not be the many people whom she currently works with and serves in her community.

That is what we face because of President Trump's decision to end DACA. That is what hundreds of thousands of young people face every single day, who are just like Karina, because of this President's personal, unilateral decision. President Trump created the DACA crisis we face today.

Instead of working toward a solution, a few hard-liners around him have sabotaged every effort to help the Dreamers. In fact, the President quickly adds: Don't use the word "Dreamer." He doesn't like that word. It is why I have used it so often today. I introduced that DREAM Act 17 years ago, and I am glad it has become common parlance in America when referring to the plight of these young people.

Congress needs to do its job; most importantly, the President needs to do his. If he truly wants to lead this Nation and bring us together, if he wants to stand for fairness and justice and the opportunity for young people to make America better, then this President has to step up and admit that the problem he created on September 5 of last year can only be solved if he stands up and shows the courage and determination to find a solution.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, earlier today, we heard the French President address a joint meeting of Congress. He reminded us that the French and American people have always fought side by side to defend our common values. France was our original ally during the American Revolution.

Americans fought and died in France during World War I and World War II.

Our alliance has spanned centuries because of diplomats who have cultivated the close relationship that the countries continue with today, and it is a shame we didn't have a Secretary of State of the United States who could have helped us welcome the French President during his visit here. We have a nominee who is eminently qualified—Mike Pompeo—and Republicans are ready to confirm him right now. We were ready to confirm him last week. We are ready for him to get to work in maintaining and strengthening relationships around the world.

Under previous administrations, we could have brought the nomination to the floor of the Senate without needing to waste all of the time and the delays, by the Democrats, on a cloture vote. That is how we used to treat important national security positions like the Secretary of State but no more, apparently. That is what happened even when Senators disagreed with the administration's foreign policies.

Consider Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of State John Kerry. The Republicans and Democrats agreed that the President deserved to have the team he wanted—the people he wanted—on the ground helping him. We all agreed some of these positions were very important to national security—so important that, in a bipartisan way, we felt that playing political games with them was just wrong. Apparently, that has changed in the eyes of the Democrats now that Donald Trump has been elected President of the United States.

When Barack Obama became President in 2009, the Republicans didn't obstruct his nomination of Hillary Clinton to be Secretary of State. No. She was confirmed by a vote of 94 to 2. Then, when President Obama nominated John Kerry for the job in 2013, the Republicans didn't slow down or block that choice either. He was confirmed by a vote of 94 to 3. The Republicans had serious concerns about President Obama's foreign policy ideas, his strategies, his approach, but we confirmed the people whom he wanted as his Secretary of State. We did not obstruct these nominations, and we didn't try to tarnish the reputations of the people whom he picked for these important jobs, not at all.

I think the Senate does have an obligation to carefully evaluate a President's nominees. When those nominees are qualified and capable, then the President has every right to have his team and have his team in place quickly. That was the standard the Republicans applied to these Democratic nominees for Secretary of State under a Democratic President.

What has happened since then? Why has all of this changed since then?

We now have a Republican President, and we have a Republican nominee to be Secretary of State. It seems the Senate Democrats have tossed out the way things have always been done before. "No, we do not want to do it that

way anymore." The only interest seems to be obstruction—obstructing, delaying, resisting anything the Republicans, under President Trump, are trying to do, anything he is trying to do in terms of getting his team in place—a team he needs.

How does someone justify a vote for these two people to be Secretary of State—the Democrats and Republicans who voted for these two—and then turn around and not vote for Mike Pompeo? How can you justify that? I certainly cannot.

When Mike Pompeo was nominated to be the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, 15 Senators from the other side of the aisle were willing to set aside partisanship. They knew he was qualified for the job—first in his class at West Point, the Harvard Law Review, his activities as a Member of Congress. Everything he has done as the CIA Director has shown that those 15 Senators made the right call to support him over a year ago. They made the right call to join the Republicans and to respect the traditions of the Senate—to put qualified people on the job even if they may not have agreed completely with their philosophies on political issues.

There is no reason other than pure partisan politics that any of these Democrats would vote against Mike Pompeo now. He is eminently qualified. He showed during his confirmation hearing—he went through 5 hours of questioning—that he has the intelligence, he has the integrity, and he has the experience to serve as our Nation's Secretary of State.

Turn to the newspapers. You have the Washington Post coming out, writing: "Confirm Mike Pompeo." You have USA TODAY coming out today and writing: "Confirm Mike Pompeo." We even have the New York Daily News—the hometown newspaper of the leader of the Democratic Senate—coming out and writing: "Confirm Mike Pompeo."

The Democrats in the Senate don't seem to care. It doesn't seem like they are interested in doing the right thing. They are interested in obstructing and continuing the history of the deliberate delays we have seen with them through this administration. They have been doing it since the very first day of the Trump administration. At this rate, it would take more than 9 years to confirm all of President Trump's nominees for important jobs. Why? The Democrats can't offer a single good reason. The Senate has been forced to waste huge amounts of time in confirming nominees who aren't even controversial at all.

When Senate Democrats try to block the President from filling important national security jobs, they are putting America's security in danger. We all know the world is a dangerous place and is getting more dangerous every day. Our adversaries are opportunistic. Our adversaries are aggressive. Our allies are eager to work with the United

States. That is what the President of France told us today.

Have the Democrats already forgotten the atrocities we saw in Syria a few weeks ago? It was France and Great Britain that joined the President of the United States in launching airstrikes against Bashar Al-Assad's chemical weapons facilities.

We need to be able to maintain the relationships that allow this kind of action to occur. We need people on the job who can both encourage our allies and deter our enemies. The Senate Democrats have to decide what is more important to them—protecting America's national security or appeasing the extreme liberal, far leftwing of their party.

I understand if there are Senators who have principled reasons for objecting to this nominee or any nominee. They can vote no but not continue to hold up or slow down the process as they have done for a year and a half. I think, if a Senator is against a nominee, then come to the floor; state the objection; cite the evidence; vote no. Yet that is not what many Democrats here are doing with their obstruction of one nominee after another, and it is not what they have done with their obstructions of hundreds of nominees. For them, it doesn't seem, at least to me, to be a principled stand. It seems to be a reckless political stunt.

I listened to my colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee the other evening when we voted on this nomination. I listened to the Democrats speak on the floor and speak to the press. Frankly, I have not heard a single good reason to delay the Senate's consideration of Mike Pompeo to be Secretary of State. The Democrats need to stop the games, stop the delays, allow us to move immediately to vote on his nomination, and get President Trump's Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, on the job.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 317

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, Senator McCASKILL and I rise to have an opportunity to pass a bill and for the Senate to do some work on a bill that has been around for several years and just hasn't been able to go over the finish line. We would like to see that finish today.

It is a bipartisan bill with a very straightforward concept. Right now, if any agency head or any sub-Cabinet individual or any individual within the government wants to see what another agency is doing, they have to go to the Office of Management and Budget. They would do a study—and get it back to them—to find out if the program they are doing exists somewhere else.

If any Member of this body or of the House wants to find out about an agency and such straightforward things as how many employees they have, what programs they are doing, if they meas-

ure those programs, how are those programs measured—if we want to find out those very basic things, we have to go to the GAO office to make a request, and 18 months later, we will get an answer back on that specific thing.

This is something that every agency either already has or should have but that the American people can't see, the Congress can't see, and, quite frankly, the individuals within the agencies also cannot see.

This is a straightforward concept. We call it the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act, and it is something Senator McCASKILL and I have worked very hard on. It is something that passed out of the Homeland Security Committee unanimously. This is a bipartisan bill. In fact, to show you how bipartisan it is, this passed in the House of Representatives last session 413 to 0. Not a single House Member voted against this proposal, but it wasn't able to pass in the Senate. So Senator McCASKILL and I brought it up again this year. It came unanimously out of committee; it also has been through the House of Representatives. In January of 2017, it passed unanimously in the House of Representatives again. This is not a controversial piece of legislation.

What is interesting is that Senator McCASKILL and I did a lot of work with President Obama's Office of Management and Budget to make sure there were no concerns. They had some concerns, so we made some changes, and President Obama's Office of Management and Budget signed off on this and said it would be a helpful document.

We have now worked with President Trump's Office of Management and Budget, which also signed off on this proposal and said that this would work.

We went to the Government Accountability Office, the entity we asked to help us find duplication, waste, and inefficiency in government, and in a hearing we asked Gene Dodaro, the head of GAO, a simple question: Would it be a help to have the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act? You have the ability to see all agencies. Would this be a help to you? His exact response:

I would urge the Congress to complete passage of that bill—

meaning the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act—

and send it to the president for signature. I think that it would make a huge difference in identifying overlap, duplication, fragmentation in the federal government and provide a better accountability tool to the Congress and the agencies. It's severely lacking.

That is from the head of the Government Accountability Office, the one we have asked to help us find these things. He is saying that he needs this tool. We need this tool. The agencies need this tool.

President Obama's team signed off on this. President Trump's team has signed off on this. It has passed unanimously out of the House of Representatives.

We bring it to the floor today to ask unanimous consent to move this across the floor of the Senate today, to be able to get in place what President Obama asked for, what President Trump has asked for, what the Government Accountability Office has asked for, what all Members of the House of Representatives have asked for, and what Senator McCASKILL and I are asking for.

With that, I yield to Senator McCASKILL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. McCASKILL. Mr. President, I come today to join my colleague from Oklahoma to ask unanimous consent that we take up and pass S. 317, the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act.

I want to thank Senator LANKFORD for his continued hard work on this bill. Senator LANKFORD has been working on this bill since his days in the House, and I worked hard to move this bill with his predecessor, Senator Tom Coburn, to try to get this through the Senate before he left the Senate. Hopefully, we can get it across the finish line, if not today, in the near future.

American taxpayers deserve a government that can tell them how their money is being spent. This is all this bill is trying to do. It is not complicated. It is trying to get important information to the people who are paying the bills. Don't they have a right to know where all the money is going?

It improves a publicly accessible online database with information about Federal programs, including the funding information for the program and the activities it comprises; the authorizing statutes and relevant rules and regs; the individuals a program serves; the employees who work to administer it; and copies of recent evaluations or assessments provided by the agency, inspectors general, or the Government Accountability Office.

The truth is, much of this information, including the program inventory itself, is already required by the Government Performance and Results Act, or GPRA. It passed this body by unanimous consent in 2010. But the current program inventory under GPRA is a mess. It is virtually useless to help lawmakers understand whether these programs are actually working as intended or whether they are a payroll without a purpose.

This bill adds a few additional information requirements to the program inventory and makes it much easier to compare apples to apples, which is what we need to do when we are making funding decisions.

Senator LANKFORD and I have agreed to a number of changes to this bill, raised not only by President Obama's administration but also President Trump's administration and by leaders in this body. There were some concerns expressed to us that OMB could use the information to punish agencies by holding up rules and holding up budget requests. I have news for everybody.

They can already do that; they have the ability. But just because they can do it now, we have agreed to include a clause which says that nothing in this bill gives OMB any additional authority whatsoever, other than what is needed to comply with the requirements of this bill. I can't imagine anything clearer than that.

We have added caveats to make it easier for programs and agencies to comply with the requirements of this bill.

I have to tell you, this is what drives the American people crazy. Different from private business, somebody around here could have a good idea and we can legislate a new program, but going back and determining whether that program is actually delivering on the goals that were stated and believed in at the time the legislation was passed—we are really not very good at that. That is what this bill is about.

It will give us the tools to require that these programs and agencies at least have information as to whether they are working—how much money they are spending, what they are trying to do. Why are we hiding behind a maddening bureaucracy when we can simplify things with the technology that is available today? Frankly, if we can't defend these programs and justify how we are spending taxpayer money, we should be shutting them down.

I urge my colleagues to commit to and support this good government transparency bill. I am worried that there is an objection. I am disappointed there will be an objection from the leader of my own party. That is disappointing to me, but it doesn't change my commitment that this is the right thing to do.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 43, S. 317; that the committee-reported amendment be withdrawn; that the Lankford substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I certainly have a great deal of respect for my friends from Missouri and Oklahoma and their desire to increase transparency in government. I share that goal. But, respectfully, the legislation they are proposing, I believe, would undermine and potentially threaten important programs administered by the Federal Government.

The idea of requiring the government to publish an inventory of Federal programs is not something I object to. As my friend from Missouri has stated, it is already required under the law, but it is such a cumbersome thing to do that for 7 years they have not published an inventory, not because it is

lacking the provisions in the bill proposed by my colleagues but because it is virtually impossible to do in the way that you would do it in other far more different and simple things—in a factory that makes widgets.

This bill would go further and make it even more difficult to publish the inventory they already haven't been able to publish. Neither the Director of OMB under President Obama nor the Director under President Trump has complied with the existing law.

I further have serious objections with the reporting requirements. How can an agency, for instance—and this would happen on a thousand occasions under this law—quantify the number of individuals who benefit from the Community Development Block Grant Program? If one neighborhood is revitalized, maybe it benefits the neighboring neighborhoods. What if they put that number in, and the OMB Director says: Oh, no. That is all wrong. There is no way to do that.

How about this: Is there a threshold to the number of people that is too many to administer a program that helps disabled Americans get appropriate schooling or access to healthcare? These types of questions could fill volumes and volumes. There is no good answer to them, there is no clear answer to them, and this law will not make it any easier to discern which programs are working and which programs are not.

I have a great deal of worry, particularly, to be honest, with Director Mulvaney. If you saw the budgets that Director Mulvaney has submitted to this Congress—he has eliminated just about every potential program. He is a scourge. He was one of the 10 most conservative Members of the House when he was there. He eliminated programs necessary in my State to keep the Department of Defense going, to help our nuclear weapons stay strong. He zeroed them out; he didn't just cut them. Can you imagine if he got his hands on this? He would use this bill not for the purposes my colleagues intend but to basically hold back money, punish, and in other ways delay very necessary programs that 90 to 95 percent of this Congress agrees to. I am concerned that this legislation, left to the implementation and oversight of a man so hostile to government services up and down the line, whose budgets have been dramatically and repeatedly rejected by Democrats and Republicans alike in the House and the Senate, would be used for ill, not good. The potential downside to this legislation far exceeds the potential upside, dramatically.

I cannot in good conscience support a bill that would give Mr. Mulvaney more tools to slash Federal programs that almost every American would agree serve the public good.

In conclusion, I support the goal of this bill, which is to provide more transparency to taxpayers, but I believe it will not. It will confuse things, delay things, provide more layers of

bureaucracy, not less, and can well be used by someone who believes in slashing programs of all kinds to delay them, fail to implement them, and not deliver the services that so many Americans need. I strongly object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. McCASKILL. Mr. President, Senator SCHUMER is just flat wrong. He is just wrong about this bill. There is nothing in this bill that gives the OMB Director any additional power. There is nothing in this bill that gives him any additional tools to delay or cut programs. In fact, we specifically put that language in at the request of the minority floor leader, that this would give the OMB Director no additional tools.

Frankly, I remember when we were having the discussions under the Obama administration. Many of my Republican colleagues were worried that this would be a way for the Obama administration to somehow have more power than we want them to have.

The bottom line is, we have the power in the legislative body to decide which programs get funded. We are the people who appropriate government funds. Shouldn't the taxpayers and Members of Congress have an easily accessible way to get good information about a program?

By the way, no one is saying that anybody has to draw certain conclusions from the facts that would be on this website. We are only asking that the facts be put on the website. It is not nefarious. There is no plot here. I don't want to hurt CDBG, and neither do all of the House Members who voted for this. Not one Democratic House Member objected to this bill.

So I have to respectfully say that Senator SCHUMER is wrong about this legislation. He is wrong about what it would do. It is the right thing for good government. It is the right thing for transparency. I am going to keep working at it until hopefully we can either convince every Member to let this go by unanimous consent or until we get an opportunity to get a vote on it on the floor, where I am confident it would win by an overwhelming number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. TOOMEY). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I could not more wholeheartedly agree with my colleague from Missouri.

What is surprising to me is that Senator SCHUMER's objection to the taxpayers right-to-know bill was that the taxpayers would actually find out information that he doesn't want them to find out. That is the surprising part.

I am grateful to be able to get his answer because over the last 6 months, our staff—Senator McCASKILL's and my staff—has worked with his staff every month. We have made 27 changes and 6 revisions over the last 6 months. In the last month, we have gotten radio silence—nothing from Senator SCHUMER's staff. So we finally brought it to

the floor and said “What is the problem?” because we can’t seem to figure out what the problem is. We learn today that the problem is that he doesn’t want the program inventory to be public because if the American people and the Congress and the Office of Management and Budget see the programs, they might actually do things with efficiency. That seems surprising to me, but if you read the transcript, that is what he just said. The fear is that they will actually find out what the Federal Government does in the programs.

Surely that is not his objection. Surely no one in this body would say: I hope the American people and the Office of Management and Budget never find out what the Federal Government does.

Here is what this bill does. The reason we could not have a good listing—Senator SCHUMER mentioned that there is no way to do a list right now—is because there is no definition for a program. The Federal Government has struggled with that simple definition, so this bill fixes that. The reason that inventory doesn’t exist gets solved with this. So literally Senator SCHUMER’s objection as to why we shouldn’t do this is nonsensical.

The second issue with this is the fear of OMB and Mick Mulvaney actually trying to slash programs. OMB and Mick Mulvaney have no authority to take down a program. Congress does that, and Senator SCHUMER knows that better than anyone in this body. While OMB can make recommendations, Congress has to actually vote to act on those recommendations. He can’t just slash programs. He can recommend it. He can say: Here is an issue of inefficiency. It is the exact same as the Obama administration could have done, the exact same as any future administration could do, but Congress must act on that.

It seems exceptionally shortsighted to say: I don’t want the American people to know what the government is doing, because of the current administration and someone I don’t like.

In a few years, there will be a different administration. That may be in 7 years, or that may be in 4 years, but in a few years, there will be a different administration, but this problem will still remain. Agencies can’t see what other agencies are doing, this Congress can’t see what the agencies are doing, and the American people cannot see what the agencies are doing.

I would say that for the benefit of the taxpayers—not the benefit of Washington bureaucracies but for the benefit of the taxpayers—we should allow this information to go public. I hope we can continue to work with Senator SCHUMER’s office, after making 27 changes that his staff recommended, to finish this document.

Yesterday, Senator SCHUMER was caught in the hallway and was asked what the problem is in the Senate, and his response to a reporter was that the

Senate needs more comity. I would agree.

The House approved this unanimously. Our committee approved this unanimously. It has come to the floor and has but one person who believes that the American people should not have access to the information on the programs they pay for.

I would love to see more comity in this body and for us to work this out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, an opioid epidemic is sweeping the country. More than 60,000 Americans are dying from opioid overdoses every year—more than the number of Americans who died in all 20 years of the Vietnam war. What a staggering fact that is, but behind each number is a tragedy for a family who loses their loved one.

Today, I want to tell the story of the Hacala family from Rogers, AR. It is a story of love, persistence, courage, and, I hope, a story that will save other families from the tragedy they felt.

Betty and Steve Hacala are joining us in the Gallery today. I met Betty and Steve 3 weeks ago at a roundtable on the opioid epidemic in Little Rock with Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, State and local law enforcement, and the families of opioid victims. The news is full of tragic deaths from heroin, fentanyl, and prescription drugs. I met families that day whose children died from those well-known drugs, but I learned from the Hacalas about another killer: unwashed poppy seeds.

Their son, Stephen Junior, died in his sleep from an overdose 2 years ago. Stephen was only 24 years old and was a recent graduate of the University of Arkansas. He loved to play guitar, and he was very accomplished at it. He was the joy of his parents’ life, and he was the joy of his sisters Christina and Lauren’s lives. His sudden death came as a shock to them, but they got another shock when an autopsy determined that Stephen died of morphine intoxication. There were no drugs in his apartment—no pill bottles, no needles, nothing. What had been found was a 5-pound bag of unwashed poppy seeds. Stephen had ordered the seeds on Amazon. The Arkansas crime lab soon determined that the poppy seeds were the source of the morphine that killed Stephen.

Stephen’s death resulted in part because of a dangerous gap in our Nation’s drug laws. It has been well known for ages that poppies are dangerous, both addictive and toxic. That is why it is illegal to grow or own almost any part of the poppy—the straw, the pod, the latex. There is an exception, of course, for poppy seeds, which many people enjoy on bagels, muffins, cakes, and other pastries. The seed itself isn’t addictive, but unwashed seeds tend to still have bits of the plant on them, which can be washed off and used to create a powerful narcotic.

To give a sense of just how deadly poppy seed tea can be, a lethal dose of morphine is about 200 milligrams, but researchers at Sam Houston State University, commissioned by the Hacalas, concluded that there were about 6,000 milligrams of morphine in that 5-pound bag of seeds that Stephen bought. That is over 30 times the lethal dose. Stephen had no way of knowing just how toxic these seeds were.

While there are plenty of legitimate uses for washed poppy seeds, there are no legitimate uses for unwashed seeds. Yet drug dealers and unscrupulous merchants are abusing the legal status of washed seeds to profit and to push unwashed seeds, which are widely available through online retailers. And when you read the user comments, you can easily find instructions for how to brew poppy seed tea and a description of its narcotic effects.

So there is no question of these unwashed seeds being used for grandma’s poppy seed cake; it is plain they are being used to smuggle the banned drug into our homes, and the manufacturers and distributors should know that. And Betty and Steve made sure they did. It is hard to imagine the grief they feel. It would have been easy to despair, but they did not. They want to save other families from their fate, to be sure Stephen’s death would have meaning. They researched the issue, commissioning that report from Sam Houston State and studying the market for unwashed poppy seeds. They also became advocates, meeting with community leaders and elected officials. As I said, I only learned about the danger of unwashed poppy seeds by meeting the Hacalas.

After that meeting, I put in a call to the leadership of Walmart and Amazon, which at the time both allowed unwashed poppy seeds to be sold on their websites. They listened to our case and quickly agreed to stop selling poppy seeds that are labeled as unwashed. This is important. The two behemoths of online commerce agreeing to take down those seeds was a victory and a testament to what normal citizens like Steve and Betty can accomplish.

This is more than a labeling problem. In fact, some of the most potent and deadly seeds, which we know about thanks to the work of Steve and Betty, are not labeled as unwashed and are still available for purchase. Therefore, I will work in the Senate and with the Drug Enforcement Agency to ban unwashed seeds entirely. But today I do want to take a moment to thank Amazon and Walmart for taking an important first step for our country, for our State, and for the Hacalas and families like theirs.

It is always hard to lose a loved one, and a child is the hardest loss of all. I suspect nothing can assuage that kind of grief. But because of the Hacalas’ courage and determination, we can hope that a few more families will be spared it. That is an act of true love for Stephen and for their fellow Americans.

Mr. President, the office of Secretary of State has always held a place of special prominence in the President's Cabinet. The conduct of foreign policy is the highest craft of statesmanship. In the Secretary's hands rest matters of the most sensitive, delicate, and consequential nature, affairs of war and—we always hope—peace. President Kennedy put it simply when he said: "Domestic policy can only defeat us; foreign policy can kill us." That is why Presidents across the ages have filled the office of Secretary of State with some of the most distinguished statesmen in our history, names such as Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Adams, Clay, Webster, Marshall, Kissinger.

Now we will add the name of Mike Pompeo. Very soon, the Senate will confirm Mike to be our 70th Secretary of State. I strongly support his nomination, as I have made widely known in recent days. Before we vote, I want to emphasize what a truly impressive nominee he is—a man of noble character whose name future generations, I suspect, will include on the roster of those great statesmen.

Mike has succeeded at every stage of life. He graduated first in his class at West Point and then joined the 2nd Cavalry on the frontline of freedom in West Germany. After his military service, he excelled at Harvard Law School. He later started one business and served as president of another. He became a respected community leader in his adopted home of Wichita, where his fellow Kansans elected him in repeated landslides to serve them in the House of Representatives. Wichita is also where he had his biggest victory of all—winning the hand of his bride, Susan. Of course, he has served as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency for the past 15 months after being confirmed by the Senate on a bipartisan vote of 66 to 32. Since then, I have watched Mike lead the CIA, boost its morale, and put the right people in the right places, driving them to succeed and holding them accountable.

None of this surprises me because I have known Mike for as long as I have been in public life. When I was an unknown candidate for the House, he called me out of the blue to encourage me and offer support. He was one of my best friends in the House and one of my strongest supporters and smartest advisers in my Senate campaign. As Members of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, we traveled the world together to learn, to conduct oversight, and to engage with foreign leaders.

Mike and I have collaborated on several occasions to highlight gathering threats to our Nation. In 2013 we wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post calling on our party to support a strike against Bashar al-Assad for using chemical weapons. It was a lonely place for Republicans to be, but we were right then, and we are right now. I only wish more Republicans and President Obama had heeded our call.

In 2015 we traveled to Vienna, where we discovered and revealed Iran's secret side deals with the International Atomic Energy Agency. In 2016, after a trip to Norway and Sweden, we wrote an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal drawing attention to Europe's growing challenges with mass migration and what it means for our own country.

Mike has gone from one success to another because he is a consummate professional—a man who treats everyone with respect but who doesn't pull a punch or shade a view to please his audience.

Democrats don't deny his professionalism. The senior Senator from Montana has said that he has led an "exemplary career in public service." The junior Senator from Delaware said he would be a "good advocate for the career professionals at the State Department and USAID." Even former Secretaries of State Hillary Clinton and Madeleine Albright have expressed their hope that he would reinvigorate the State Department, and nonpartisan experts agree that Mike Pompeo's integrity and record of accomplishments cannot be denied. As ADM James Stavridis has said, Mike is "a solid, thoughtful and accomplished leader." It is why 30 national security professionals—including former NSA Director Keith Alexander, former CIA Director Michael Hayden, and former Attorney General Mike Mukasey—submitted a letter endorsing Mike's nomination.

Unfortunately, many Democratic Senators are opposing Mike's nomination, and they have given their reasons. But I have to say that these reasons don't hold up very well under scrutiny. Some say Mike is adverse to diplomacy. In fact, he simply knows that diplomacy is most effective when it is backed with a credible military threat. As Frederick the Great said, "Diplomacy without arms is like music without instruments."

He also knows that some situations may not be susceptible to diplomatic solutions no matter how much one might wish it so. That is a fact of life. It is not a reason to oppose Mike's nomination.

I would add that he recently demonstrated his commitment to diplomacy by meeting with Kim Jong Un to lay the groundwork for the President's upcoming summit. It is hard to think of a worse regime than North Korea, but Mike was willing to sit down with Kim to try to find a peaceful solution to the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. That should show us all, definitively, that he is committed to diplomacy.

Others say they are opposing Mike because they disagree with him on social issues. Here I would simply note that most Republicans surely disagree with Hillary Clinton's and John Kerry's views on these issues. Yet they still voted to confirm them. For that matter, Hillary Clinton opposed same-sex marriage when the Democrats voted to confirm her back in 2009. So it

hardly seems fair to hold Mike Pompeo to a different standard.

Still, others oppose Mike's nomination because he refused to say that he would resign if President Trump fired Special Counsel Robert Mueller. I have to say, that is quite a stretch for a Secretary of State nomination. This isn't the Department of Justice. On the merits, I would ask: Do they think it would have been a good idea for Henry Kissinger and Jim Schlesinger to resign in 1973 or 1974? Would it help or hurt America to have our top diplomat suddenly leave the world stage at a time of domestic turmoil? And if that is to be the standard, have those Democrats asked Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis that question? I bet they haven't.

Finally, there are those who worry that he will not be a check on the President. But since when is a Cabinet member supposed to do that? Regular elections, the separation of powers, and all that entails are the checks on the executive branch under our Constitution. The President's Cabinet owes him candid advice, especially when he doesn't want to hear it, but they aren't supposed to undermine him. The State Department, in particular, is the last place for open conflict between the President and a Cabinet member. If the world doesn't believe that the Secretary has the President's confidence and conducts foreign policy on his behalf, he is of little use to the President or the country.

In fact, I would say it is the President's confidence in Mike that cinches his readiness for the job. When Mike Pompeo speaks, the world will know that the Secretary of State speaks for the President. He is well respected by the President's national security team, and he is well respected by the world.

I know Mike Pompeo will excel as our Secretary of State, and I regret some Senators will oppose him for shortsighted, political reasons, but since they all profess grave concerns about the lack of personnel at the State Department, I look forward to them all confirming Secretary Pompeo's sub-Cabinet nominees promptly once he submits them.

But even better is to put politics aside and to do the right thing for our country. Mike Pompeo has served his country with distinction. He is eminently qualified to be Secretary of State, and we need him on the job now. I call on every Senator to vote for confirmation and to send to the State Department a strong leader, a wise counselor, and a good man—Mike Pompeo.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to voice my strong

opposition to Director Pompeo's nomination to be our next Secretary of State.

This position is too important. The stakes are too high to let this nominee slide by without full consideration of what it would mean for Director Pompeo to be our Nation's top diplomat—the person whose every word and action broadcasts America's values to the rest of the world.

Some of my opposition concerns Director Pompeo's harsh views on matters of war and peace, and his blatantly false accusations regarding members of the Muslim community. Some of my opposition surrounds my deep concern about Director Pompeo's ability to stand strong against President Trump's erratic and uninformed foreign policy positions.

But what I wanted to take a few minutes this afternoon to do is to express my serious concern about what Director Pompeo's ideological, extreme positions on women's rights and reproductive freedom would mean for women across the world.

Our Nation has an important role to uphold as a global champion of women's rights. We need a Secretary of State who will be a strong advocate and continue our legacy of leadership in fighting for women's health and reproductive freedom and the rights of women and girls around the world. Instead, I am afraid Director Pompeo would undo much of that legacy and undermine much of the global progress we have made.

An advocate for women doesn't repeatedly support the global gag rule, which keeps funding from clinics and programs that provide women important medical care. Director Pompeo did.

An advocate for women doesn't vote to defund the United Nations Population Fund, which provides family planning services for women around the world who live in poverty. Director Pompeo did.

When it comes to fighting for the survivors of rape and against those who would use rape as a tool of war, it is clear we should stand by survivors, fight for them, and work to make sure they have access to the medical care they need. However, Director Pompeo has said he would prevent women who have been raped from access to abortions. That is an unacceptably cruel response to women and war survivors, and it is one of the many clear indicators that Director Pompeo is an unacceptable choice to serve as Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State is always a critically important position, but it takes on even more important meaning in 2018. The President not only needs good counsel in navigating our complex global relationships, but he also desperately needs someone who can tell him when he is wrong and who can stand up to him and be a check on this President's worse impulses.

Throughout his nomination process, Director Pompeo failed to convince me

that he is that person. So I will be voting no on his nomination to be Secretary of State. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I don't know if the Presiding Officer was able to be present in the House of Representatives earlier today when the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, spoke to us about a variety of things, including the Paris accords, the Iran deal, the long history we have between their country and our country; the fact that the American Revolution and the French Revolution were really contemporaneous. We share the birth of democracy in our country and, to an extent, in their country at roughly the same time.

Those who have studied American history know that one of the ways we won our freedom and independence from the tyranny of that British throne was with the support of the French. We have not always agreed with one another in the years since then, but mostly we have. The bond between their Nation and our Nation continues to be strong, not just between our leaders but also between our people.

We are fortunate to have a number of French tourists who come to our country. From time to time, some of us are fortunate to go to that part of the world and to visit them, to know them as human beings. The bond between our countries is a benefit for both them and for us, and, I think, for the world.

I have never come to the floor to start reading someone else's speech, but I am really tempted to read some parts of what President Emmanuel Macron said today. I speak a little bit of French. I spoke to him briefly in French before he gave his remarks. His English is a lot better than my French. I want to mention a couple of things that he said and add some comments of my own.

He talked a bit about the Paris Agreement, and he talked about climate change. These were his words, and I think they are worth repeating and reflecting on.

He said:

I believe in building a better future for our children which requires offering them a planet that is still habitable in 25 years. Some people think that securing current industries and their jobs is more urgent than transforming our economies to meet the global challenge of climate change.

He went on to say:

I hear these concerns, but we must find a smooth transition to a low-carbon economy.

Because what is the meaning of our life, really, if we work and live destroying our planet while sacrificing the future of our children?

President Macron then said:

What is the meaning of our life if our conscious decision is to reduce the opportunities for our children or for our grandchildren? By polluting the oceans, not mitigating carbon dioxide emissions, and destroying our biodiversity, we're killing our planet.

He went on to say:

Let us face it. There is no planet B.

I turned to my colleague sitting next to me and I said, I am going to steal that line: There is no planet B.

He is right.

I like to say this is the only planet we have, and it is going to be the only one we ever have in our lifetime, and probably the lifetime of anybody around this planet.

Then President Macron went on to say:

On this issue, it may happen that we have disagreements between the United States and France. It may happen. Like in all families. But that's, for me, a short-term disagreement. In the long run, we will have to face the same realities, and we're citizens of this same planet, so we will have to face it. We have to work together with business leaders and local communities. Let us work together in order to make our planet great again—

Isn't that terrific? "Let's work together to make our planet great again"—not just to make America great again; not just to make France great again but to make our planet great again—

and create new jobs and new opportunities. While safeguarding our earth.

He concluded this part of his speech by saying:

And I'm sure, one day, the United States will come back and join the Paris Agreement. And I'm sure we can work together to fulfill, with you, the ambitions of the global compact on the environment.

I had the opportunity last week to speak at the University of Delaware to a couple hundred graduate students. It is an annual gathering that they have and they were nice enough to invite me to come and talk to them about leadership. One of the things I mentioned is that leaders are aspirational. We appeal to people's better angels. Leaders unite, not divide. Leaders build bridges, not walls.

I thought we were privileged today to hear that kind of leader. When I spoke to him in French, I wished him well. I wished him good luck, and I thanked him for joining us in the kind of message he brought to us.

I don't suspect he would have any reason to know this, but when people got up today and went to work in this country, 3 million people went to work in jobs that probably didn't exist 20, 30 years ago—3 million people. The jobs they went to work on are jobs where they are creating renewable energy, sustainable energy, clean energy, carbon-free energy, or they are going to work in jobs which conserve energy so we just use a whole lot less altogether. Think about that. Three million people

in this country went to work in those kinds of jobs. We are adding 75,000, 100,000 of those jobs every year.

I have always had a close relationship with the auto industry until about 6 or 7 years ago. We had a GM plant and a Chrysler plant in Delaware, with about 4,000 employees in each of them at one time. We lost them both at the bottom of the great recession. I have always, and even now, tried to work closely with the auto industry, even though they don't have the kind of presence today in Delaware they once did, but they have provided a lot of jobs. Part of the supply chain is in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and other places.

Sometimes people say we cannot have clean air, clean water, and a strong economy. I think that is a false choice. The President of France as much as said that today.

It was not a Frenchman, but it was Einstein who said that "in adversity lies opportunity." I think if we are smart about it and we look at climate change, global warming, sea level rise, and pollution of one kind or the other, there is actually great opportunity that each of those present to us. They present difficulties and challenges but also great opportunity.

I will never forget a couple of years ago what happened in a hearing in the Environment and Public Works Committee on the issue of mercury emissions from powerplants. We had, I think, four or five, maybe six witnesses. The first four or five witnesses said: We cannot reduce mercury emissions by 80 percent over the next decade. I think that is what they said. They said we cannot; it is just not possible for us to reduce mercury emissions.

Why do we want to reduce mercury? Because it is up in the air; it is carried by the winds, the rains; it ends up in the water; it ends up in fish; we eat fish. It is harmful especially for pregnant women. They give birth, in many cases, to children with brain damage. So we had this hearing, and the first four or five witnesses, all from coal-fired utilities, said: We can't do it. Eighty percent is not a reasonable target for mercury reduction.

The last witness was from a trade association whose members actually focus on developing technology to reduce harmful emissions of all kinds, including mercury emissions from powerplants. Our last witness said: I think we can not only meet that target of 80 percent reduction in 10 years, I think we can do better than that, and I think we can do it in less than 10 years. Do you know what? He was right. It turned out he was right. We ended up with a 90-percent reduction in mercury emissions, and that technology has been used in this country.

The nice thing about it is that technology—there are plenty of coal-fired plants around the world where they need to reduce mercury, and we are selling that technology all over the

world. So that is really one of the opportunities the President of France was talking about—looking at adversity and finding opportunities, including climate change and other kinds of pollution; pollution of our water, you name it.

Anyway, it was just a joy to hear him speak today. I was really impressed.

We have a bunch of pages sitting in here today. I don't know if they were able to hear the speech, but if you got to hear the speech today, raise your hands. I think it had to be uplifting for young people because he was focused very much on the future. He was not just looking back but focusing very much on young people. I liked that a lot.

One of the other things he spoke about was the Iran deal. For years and years, as some of my colleagues may recall, we suspected that Iran was secretly developing nuclear weapons. We didn't know for sure. We suspected the worst. In the last administration in this country, we went to work with a new leader in Iran to see if we might be able to better ensure that they are not going to develop nuclear weapons, and we provided safeguards and early detection systems so that if they do, we will know about it. In the meantime, we placed a lot of economic sanctions on Iran, trying to get them to give up what we thought was the development of nuclear weapons. They always said, "No, we are not doing that," but we didn't believe them.

At the end of the day, we looked at entering into this agreement between the United States and Iran and five other nations. Iran had to open themselves up to intrusive inspections. They had to be willing to give up some of the more modern centrifuges they had for developing highly enriched uranium. To the extent that they are willing to do that and continue to put up with intrusive inspections by the atomic energy agency, then we would gradually reduce and relax the economic sanctions.

The intrusive inspections have continued now for several years, and the agencies responsible for this say, so far, they are keeping their word. Does that mean they are always going to keep their word? Not necessarily. Does that mean we should be less resolute in watching what they are doing? No. We should be resolute and hold their feet to the fire. But to the extent that they are keeping their word, I think the idea of lifting our sanctions—along with other countries as part of these accords and joint agreement—is good, not only for Iran but also for us.

We have this agreement because we felt it was important for inspectors to have a window into that country to see what they are doing. We have that. So far, it seems to be working.

Our President now says that in a couple weeks he would like to close out of the Iran deal. If we do that, my fear is they will simply go back to a secret program to develop nuclear weapons.

That will encourage the Saudis to do the same and maybe lay a precursor or put us in motion to have a nuclear arms race in that part of the world. Sunni versus Shia, Saudis versus Iran—that is not a competition that will end well.

I am not going to read everything President Macron said today about the Iran deal, but a fair amount is worth repeating. I will do that, and then add some comments of my own:

As for Iran, our objective is clear: Iran should never possess any nuclear weapons. Not now, not in 5 years, not in 10 years. Never.

"Never" is a long time.

But this policy should never lead us to war in the Middle East. We must ensure stability, and respect sovereignty of the nations, including that one of Iran, which represents a great civilization.

Let us not replicate past mistakes in the region. Let us not be naive on one side. Let us not create new walls ourselves on the other side.

There is an existing framework—called the JCPOA—to control the nuclear activity of Iran. We signed it at the initiative of the United States. We signed it, both the United States and France. That is why we cannot say we should just get rid of it like that. But it is true to say that this agreement may not address all concerns, very important concerns. This is true. But we should not abandon it without having something substantial, more substantial, instead. That is my position. That is why France will not leave the JCPOA, because we signed it.

Your President and your country will have to take, in the current days and weeks, [its own] responsibilities regarding this issue.

What I want to do, and what we decided together with your President, is that we can work on a more comprehensive deal addressing all these concerns. That is why we have to work on this more comprehensive deal based—as discussed with President Trump yesterday—on four pillars.

And then President Macron went on to talk about those four pillars.

[No. 1] the substance of the existing agreement, especially if you decide to leave it, [No. 2] the post-2025 period, in order to be sure we will never have any nuclear activity for Iran, [No. 3] the containment of military influence of the Iranian regime in the region, and [No. 4] the monitoring of ballistic activity.

The Iranians have a penchant for firing and testing ballistic missiles. They say that it is not offensive; it is defensive. But one would wonder about that. Questioning minds way wonder.

I think these four pillars, the ones I addressed before the General Assembly of the United Nations last September, are the ones which cover the legitimate fears of the United States and our allies in the region.

I think we have to start working now on these four pillars to build this new, comprehensive [deal] and to be sure that, whatever the decision of the United States will be, we will not leave the floor to the absence of rules.

We will not leave the floor to these conflicts of power in the Middle East, we will not . . . [increase] tensions and potential war.

That is my position, and I think we can work together to build this comprehensive deal for the whole region, for our people, because I think it fairly addresses our concerns. That is my position.

I have heard several Presidents speak to joint sessions of Congress over the years; I have heard any number of leaders from other nations speak before joint meetings of Congress in the years I have been privileged to serve here. I don't know that I have seen a warmer and more enthusiastic welcome than the one we witnessed today for the President of our close ally, our friends, the French. I hope the standing ovations he repeatedly received reflect not just the emotion of the moment but reflect the belief that he may be on to something here.

One of my colleagues whom I was sitting next to during President Macron's remarks said that the President of France was delivering an elegant rebuke to our President, and he was so skillful in doing it, it was hard to tell that was what he was doing. Maybe that is true. But I think he might be on to something. He didn't just come up with it today. This is something that President Macron has been talking about for days, weeks, months—at least since last fall.

I hope our President, with whom he had a chance to spend some time, might say: Let's drill down on that. I think you might be on to something.

Meanwhile, I don't know what others have been saying about former Secretary of State Tillerson, but I thought he was an unlikely person to be Secretary of State. He had been the leader of Exxon, knew the world, and knew the world's leaders. It was unusual to have someone with that pedigree to be our Secretary of State. He exceeded expectations, at least for me. I think he was fired by the President a couple of months ago through Twitter, and that was it—no ceremony, no handshake, no thank-you for taking on a tough job and doing his best.

I would say to Rex Tillerson: Thank you for your willingness to give it a shot, for taking on a tough job in a tough administration. We may not agree with everything he said or thought, but he took on a tough job, and we are grateful for that.

The question is, Who is going to succeed him. I have asked to meet with the President's nominee. They have not been able to find time to do that, which I think is unfortunate.

If we had had the time to meet, I would have wanted to talk with him about a number of issues. One of those would be the Iran nuclear deal and how he feels about it. I would like to hear his thoughts on what President Macron suggested today as a possible alternative follow-on to the JCPOA. But I am not going to have the opportunity to do that.

I was reminded recently of something John Kennedy once said. I hope I have this right: America should never negotiate out of fear, but we should never fear negotiating. Think about that. Our country should never negotiate out of fear, but we shouldn't be afraid to negotiate.

I think President Macron may have given us an opening here, and the open-

ing is to come up with something that could be even more effective than the JCPOA. If we are smart, the door has been opened and we will walk through it instead of walking backward.

While we prepare to vote, maybe tomorrow, on the nominee to be our next Secretary of State, one of my disappointments is not having had a chance to—not negotiate with him but to share with him what President Macron had to say, to try to get his take on that and, if he were Secretary of State, how he might pursue this opening. Unfortunately, that is not going to happen.

I notice my neighbor from across the border in Pennsylvania has risen to address the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

TAX REFORM

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to follow my friend and neighbor to the south and east from the great State of Delaware.

Yesterday, the Senate Finance Committee had a hearing on tax reform. I had a chance to introduce one of the witnesses, a fellow named David Cranston from Robinson Township in Western Pennsylvania.

David is the president of Cranston Material Handling Equipment Corp. It is a third-generation small business founded in 1957 by David's grandfather. Today, David leads that company—a company he has worked at since 1983. So for 35 years he has been there. Today he leads a team of seven full-time employees and two part-time employees, truly a small family-owned business.

Cranston Material sells and installs material handling and storage equipment to manufacturing companies, including very large manufacturing companies, and their products and services help these manufacturers to store and lift products in the storage process—items like cabinets, containers, conveyors, cranes, and dock equipment.

As I know the Presiding Officer understands very well, it is small businesses like this that really make up the backbone of our economy and the backbone of our communities.

What is it that David Cranston had to share with us as a witness before our committee? He shared the story of how our tax reform from late last year is already working and helping his small business.

How is that happening? Well, in a variety of ways. The two most direct ways are, No. 1, Cranston Material is organized as a subchapter S corporation. That is a long way of saying they are not taxed at the level of the corporation itself but, rather, the income that is earned by the business flows through to the owners of the business and is then taxed on the individual returns of the owners.

How has our tax reform helped the owners of this business? We built into

the Tax Code an automatic 20 percent discount on the amount of their income that is taxed. So 20 percent of their income from this business is not taxed at all. That is true for all small businesses in America. The 80 percent that is taxed is taxed at lower rates.

The total tax burden for these small businesses is much lower than it used to be. Why is that important? It is important for a lot of reasons. David Cranston told us that this is how they are able to accumulate capital. This is how his business is better able to accumulate the capital that he describes as the lifeblood of his small business. It is, in fact, capital that allows these small businesses like Cranston to take advantage of new growth opportunities. Specifically, he shared with us an example. The tax savings that he is already enjoying have helped him expand into a new product line this year—a product line that he did not carry before, couldn't afford to, but now he can. In order to launch this product line, he needed to purchase new equipment, invest in employee training, and build a new website—all of which are well understood.

He also touched on something else, another way in which our tax reform is helping his business; that is, the business optimism that he is seeing, which is encouraging his customers—primarily larger companies—to increase their own capital spending. That includes, in some cases, the purchasing of his products. As Mr. Cranston put it, the tax reform is “spurring business investment and therefore has set the stage for economic growth for years to come.”

This increased investment activity that is helping workers and businesses and small businesses and our economy is exactly what we envisioned, exactly what we had hoped for, and exactly what we designed our tax reform to accomplish.

I have to say, the story that David Cranston told us at the Senate Finance Committee yesterday is not an isolated story. It is completely consistent with stories I have heard all across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from small businesses; that is, tax reform is working. It is working for them.

Businesses are, in fact, increasing their investments, exactly as we predicted they would if we lowered the after-tax cost of making those investments. For example, just last month, the March 2018 research report by Morgan Stanley—they surveyed their clients—concluded that its capital expenditure plans index—it is an index they keep track of that monitors the amount of capital being put to work in America, being spent on new equipment—according to them, in March, just last month, it reached an alltime high. Their characterization: “Strength in our index indicates continued momentum in equipment investment through the second quarter of 2018.” It is already happening, and they believe it is likely to continue.

Some of our friends on the other side who are very critical of our tax reform were very critical of the idea that business should benefit from this. They didn't want business to benefit from this at all. I have to point out the multiple ways they are wrong in their analysis.

First of all, when businesses—especially small businesses but all kinds of businesses—benefit from a lower tax regime, much of that benefit flows right to workers. We have seen that in a very direct fashion. In fact, over 500 known, large companies—big enough that their press releases get picked up and noticed—have given employees bonuses, pay raises, increased contributions to their pension plans, or some combination. There are now millions of American workers who work for these 500-plus companies who have directly benefited personally, in their pockets, because of the tax reform. I think this is fantastic, and it has been immediate. It is already happening.

Over the long term, I think there is an even bigger benefit that will be accruing to American workers as a result of our tax reform, and that is the medium-, long-term upward pressure on wages for the people who work for a living to earn those wages. Why do I say that? The fact is, the more capital that gets spent, the more productive workers are able to become, and the more they are able to earn.

Let me give an example that I like. If you go to any construction site when they are at the stage of doing the site development—when they are moving the dirt and maybe they are digging a hole for the foundation—at that stage of the process, you very typically will see somebody operating a backhoe. There is a guy operating a backhoe. He is digging the hole for the foundation. You will very often see somebody with a shovel. He is doing the tidy-up work around the edges. The guy with the shovel is working very hard. He is probably working up more of a sweat. He probably goes home with his muscles and his back aching more than the guy operating the backhoe. But who do you think gets paid more? It is not a close call; the guy operating the backhoe is always paid more. There is one reason for that. The reason is that he has a more advanced set of skills. Because he has those skills and because he has a major piece of equipment to operate, he is much more productive than any human being can ever be with a shovel. The more productive worker is able to earn more.

That is why I am so excited about a reform that encourages businesses to invest in capital. It is already making workers more productive, and that means they are going to earn more income. But it doesn't stop there. All of that capital expenditure, whether it is with David Cranston's company or whether it is a backhoe—when companies want to buy that, someone has to build it. There is more demand for workers to build more of this equip-

ment that is getting put to use. Then after it is built and it is purchased by the business that can afford it now because of tax reform, somebody has to operate it. There is still more demand for workers.

So what happens in an economy when you are close to full employment—the unemployment rate is around 4 percent, which is unusually low for the American economy—and you introduce a significant new demand for workers—well, I would say there are two things that happen. You create opportunities for people who left the workforce to return, and you put upward pressure on wages because all the businesses have to compete for whatever workers are available.

So we have the direct benefit that people have seen in the form of lower withholdings and more take-home pay. We have the direct benefit that workers have seen when the companies they work for have decided to give them a raise or a bonus because they can better afford it. And we have this indirect benefit that might very well be the biggest of them all, as workers become more productive because they get to use the equipment that is put to work when their companies invest the capital that we have made more available to them.

I am very bullish, as apparently the respondents to the Morgan Stanley survey were, and I am grateful to David Cranston for telling his story about how much his small business is already benefiting from our tax reform.

Mr. President, I would like to make a completely unrelated point, and that is, I would like to mention that I had an opportunity to have a long conversation today with CIA Director Mike Pompeo, to discuss his vision for his role as Secretary of State, should he be confirmed, and his vision for America's role in the world, the leadership role we have historically played and how he sees that going forward. I will tell you, I was extremely impressed. He is a very thoughtful, very knowledgeable, wise individual. I think he will give great counsel to our President. I think he will be an outstanding diplomat. I think the fact that he comes from the intelligence community will inform his judgment in a very constructive way. I think we are all very, very fortunate that Mike Pompeo is willing to serve in this capacity. I am looking forward to his confirmation later this week.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak on the pending nomination of Mike Pompeo to be the Secretary of State. As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I opposed the nomination in committee, and I will oppose it on the floor.

I have said publicly that this was not an open-and-shut case for me. Frankly, I would submit that I have probably voted for more of the President's nomi-

nees who have come before the Senate than have many of my colleagues. I do believe in giving a substantial amount of deference to the President in the choices that he makes of those who are to serve him in his administration. There have been a number of applicants for Cabinet posts whom I have supported even though I have had grave misgivings about the policies that they were going to be articulating and that they were going to be carrying out.

I also believe Director Pompeo when he talks about the morale crisis at the Department of State and his sincere desire to try to remedy that and address it. There was a morale crisis at the Department of State after Secretary Tillerson waged an assault on diplomats in his trying to push out as many as he could for over a year, changing work requirements to make it harder for people to live in very difficult places around the world and continuing a hiring freeze well past the point at which it was justified. There are a lot of people who serve in this country here in Washington and abroad who need to be told that their work is valuable again, and I believe Mike Pompeo when he talks about the need to try to engage in that morale-building project.

I think there are check marks on the side of the ledger that would argue for Mike Pompeo's confirmation, but I am going to vote no because, unfortunately, I think there are far more check marks on the other side of the ledger.

I want to talk today about the issue of qualifications. I don't argue with the fact that our choices, as those in the Senate, when it comes to those who are picked for the Cabinet, shouldn't really be about policy differences. Sometimes the policy differences will be so serious that Members of the President's opposing party may have to cast a "no" vote. By and large, I do think that we should be evaluating candidates based on their qualifications and based on whether their views are at least between the 20-yard lines, within the mainstream conversation about the portfolio of issues that they are going to undertake to oversee.

So I want to talk today about my belief that Director Pompeo is not qualified to be our next Secretary of State. I think that is the appropriate conversation for us to be having, and I want to talk about it through the prism of three qualifications that I would argue any Secretary of State has to meet.

One is that a Secretary of State who is going to be advising the President on matters of war and peace and on questions of military operations overseas has to believe in his heart or in her heart in the Constitution—in the separation of powers between the executive and the legislative branches—when it comes to war-making.

The second is that a Secretary of State has to believe in the value of diplomacy. The Secretary of State is in

the national security cabinet in order to represent diplomatic pathways out of very complicated, vexing, and dangerous problems around the globe. You need a Secretary of State who truly believes that diplomacy can be a viable path out of very complicated problems.

Third, you need a Secretary of State who is free of prejudice or who is free of a substantial association with prejudice. This is our Nation's chief diplomat, who is going to be representing the United States all over the world, who is going to try to build bridges between our country and those countries with different cultures, different faiths, different backgrounds, and different ways of viewing the world.

On these three tests, I don't believe that Director Pompeo measures up. Let me talk about each one of them very briefly.

The first is this belief in the separation of powers. If we aren't standing up for article I powers, no one else will. The Founding Fathers were very clear that when it came to military engagement outside of the United States, it was the Congress and only the Congress that had the ability to declare war. Now, admittedly, war is a much fuzzier concept today than it was when armies were marching against each other in open fields and when neat, tidy peace treaties were wrapping up those hostilities. So I will grant my colleagues that declarations of war are a little bit harder today when the enemies never seem to go away and the definition of "hostilities" is a little different than it used to be.

Yet, at the hearing, I asked a series of questions of Director Pompeo, whose answers did not leave me with any confidence that he understood that there still must be some places in which only the Congress can declare hostilities. Now, I don't believe the President has the ability to take military action against the Syrian regime without having the authorization of Congress. Apparently, there are members of the President's Cabinet who believe the same thing. Media reports suggest that Secretary Mattis counseled the President to go to Congress first before attacking the Syrian regime.

So I queried Director Pompeo about this topic. I asked him whether there was any attack that had been launched against the United States from the Syrian regime. His answer was no.

I asked him whether there was any threat of imminent attack from the Syrian regime against the United States. His answer was no.

I then asked him what the authorization was that allowed the President to take this action. His answer was "article II authority," which is kind of a blanket answer for anybody in an administration who doesn't have an answer.

I submit that the Obama administration occasionally relied on article II authority as well, but I tried to give Director Pompeo a way out of that overly broad answer.

I asked: Would you identify for me one limiting factor on this broad claim of article II authority. He could not. He could not articulate one definable, articulated restraint on article II military authority before the Foreign Relations Committee.

It speaks to what, I think, is a belief inside this administration, which is now being buoyed by people like Director Pompeo and John Bolton, that the President has virtually unlimited authority to begin military operations overseas. If you can attack the Syrian regime without having any authorization from Congress, then why couldn't the President launch a military attack against North Korea without going to Congress in the way that John Bolton had recommended in some of his writings before joining the administration?

If a Secretary of State is not prepared to argue that the Constitution requires that authority and cannot even articulate a single restraint on a seemingly limitless power under article II to launch attacks overseas without going to Congress, then who is making that argument?

I think a Secretary of State has to have an understanding of the limits of executive power overseas. I don't think Director Pompeo has that belief. Otherwise, he would have answered very differently the questions that he was given in his confirmation hearing.

Secondly, I believe that a baseline qualification to be the Secretary of State, to be the Nation's chief diplomat, is to believe in the fundamental power of diplomacy. Over and over, primarily when he was a Congressman, Director Pompeo showed us that he didn't think much of American diplomatic power. He opposed the JCPOA, which is, of course, a mainstream opinion within the Republican Party, but he did so because he thought that military action would involve just a few thousand sorties—American planes flying over Iran, bombing the country into submission. I think that is a pretty naive, uneducated view of how a war with Iran would go down, but it demonstrates an enthusiasm for military options ahead of diplomatic options, the kind that may be better suited for the Department of Defense than for the Department of State.

He has further cheered on this President as he has pulled out of the Paris climate accords, as he has attacked multilateral alliances that the United States has long been a part of. This is a candidate for Secretary of State who has a long history of critiquing and criticizing diplomatic paths to solving complicated problems around the world.

I want a cheerleader for diplomacy at the Department of State. We have been missing that for the last 1½ years with Secretary Tillerson. It doesn't seem we are going to remedy that. I think a qualification for Secretary of State is to be a cheerleader for diplomacy. That has not been the reputation or the record of Mike Pompeo.

Lastly, I think you need to be free of prejudice or free of substantial association with prejudice, and the reason for this qualification is self-evident. This is the member of the administration who is going to be most often overseas meeting with leaders that come from very different backgrounds, who believe different things than Americans do, who practice different religions than the majority of Americans do, who have different traditions than the majority of Americans do. So one has to have a respect, right? One has to have a love of other people who come from different faiths and different traditions if you are going to take this job.

This may be the blackest mark on Director Pompeo's record because there is a vast network all across this country that engages in a kind of Islamophobia, a hatred and bigotry toward the Muslim faith that is completely un-American but is also deeply antithetical to American national security interests because if we really want to make this country safe, then we have to be building constant active bridges to Muslim communities in the United States and to our Muslim partners around the world. When you trade in Islamophobia, a fear of Muslims, you are adding bulletin board material to recruiters who want to write a story about how America is at war with the East, how America is at war with the Islamic faith.

For much of his congressional career, Mike Pompeo was deeply intertwined with this network of anti-Muslim organizations. There is a really interesting study that I hope some of you will take a look at that details this network of organizations. They have fairly innocuous-sounding names, like the American Islamic Forum for Democracy, the Middle East Forum, the Investigative Project on Terrorism, Jihad Watch, ACT for America, the Center for Security Policy, the Society of Americans for National Existence. Those sound like things I might be for, but if you really take a look at what they do, they preach intolerance. They try to tell Americans that all Muslims are out to get them and that we are better off if we just shelter ourselves from people of the Muslim faith. That makes us less safe, and it morally weakens us as a nation. It is not coincidental that all of these groups sprang up or began to receive substantial funding after Barack Obama became President of the United States. It wasn't coincidental that as Donald Trump was going on cable news casting doubt on whether the President of the United States was really an American citizen or whether he was a secret Kenyan citizen planted in the United States that all of these organizations started to take root. They gained legitimacy because American political leaders associated themselves with their cause because they were able to lure Members of Congress like Mike Pompeo into their web.

Mike Pompeo went on these radio shows that traded in these conspiracy

theories about Muslims. He allowed for his name and his office to be associated with their causes. At one point, he actually accepted an award from a group called ACT for America, which is arguably the largest anti-Muslim group in America. They gave him an award saying that "Representative Mike Pompeo has been a steadfast ally of ours since the day he was elected to Congress." This is an organization that the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center classify as a hate group. Their founder said practicing Muslims "cannot be loyal citizens of the United States."

Let me say that again. The founder of the group that gave Mike Pompeo an award for being a steadfast ally of their cause said that practicing Muslims cannot be loyal citizens of the United States. These anti-Muslim groups became stronger, became more deeply intertwined into the mainstream because they have allies like Mike Pompeo. It wasn't a coincidence when a Presidential candidate stood up and said: If you elect me, I will ban all Muslims from the United States, that he wasn't laughed off the debate stage. He wasn't laughed off the debate stage because this conspiracy of Islamophobia had penetrated the mainstream because of its access to people like the nominee to be Secretary of State. That is disqualifying to me. That is not about Mike Pompeo's views. It is not about my differences with the policies he is going to espouse as a Secretary of State. That speaks to his qualifications.

This is one of the most important debates we are going to have. These are exceptional times for both Republicans and Democrats, dealing with an administration that conducts itself very differently from others. When it comes down to it, I don't think that by casting a "no" vote I am violating the traditions of this body, which have admittedly given deference to the President in some of these choices for Cabinet positions.

I don't think Mike Pompeo really understands the importance of the separation of powers between the Congress and the Executive when it comes to war-making. I don't think this is a Secretary of State who is going to walk into the room when big decisions are being made on foreign policy and argue the diplomacy portfolio. By virtue of his longstanding association with groups that argued values antithetical to a diverse America, arguing that Muslims have no place in this country, I don't think he passes the test when it comes to a Secretary of State who doesn't have an association with prejudice. That would disqualify him from being an effective advocate for us in parts of the world that practice faiths different than ours. So, for those reasons, I am going to be voting no on Mike Pompeo's nomination. At the same time, as I said at the outset, I acknowledge there are arguments for his nomination, and I will hope my fears

are unfounded. I will hope that he, if he gets confirmation from this body—which it looks like he will—is an advocate for diplomacy, that he understands the proper role of Congress, and that he represents all Americans when he serves us overseas. I certainly hope that to be the case. I hope I am wrong about my reservations, but I will still cast a "no" vote when his nomination comes before the Congress.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, as with many of my colleagues here today, I stand before you to voice my deep concern over the nomination of Mike Pompeo to be our next Secretary of State.

President Trump has tweeted about Senate Democrats that it is "hard to believe obstructionists may vote against Mike Pompeo for Secretary of State." Others have accused Democrats of playing politics, pointing to past Secretary of State confirmation votes that have faced less opposition in the Foreign Relations Committee and on the Senate floor, but this inference that we simply should rubberstamp Secretary of State nominees is misplaced.

Like all of my colleagues, I take my article II advice and consent responsibility very seriously, so I would like to state why I oppose Mr. Pompeo's nomination to be Secretary of State.

My opposition is not about politics. It really isn't about policy either. While I disagree vehemently with many of Mr. Pompeo's positions on issues such as human rights, climate change, and the Iran nuclear deal, these differences alone are not enough to disqualify him or any nominee, for that matter. Fundamentally, my opposition to Mr. Pompeo's nomination is about whether he can credibly fulfill his duties as our Nation's chief diplomat. Can he effectively and faithfully advocate for American diplomacy at home and abroad?

In this regard, as one of my esteemed colleagues said while introducing Mr. Pompeo before the Foreign Relations Committee, "Your background does matter."

So this is what concerns me about Mr. Pompeo's past. Mr. Pompeo was OK characterizing an Indian-American political opponent as "just another 'turban topper' we don't need in Congress or any political office that deals with the U.S. Constitution, Christianity and the United States of America." With a viewpoint like that, how can he credibly represent the millions of Indian Americans in the United States? Equally important, how can the United States be viewed credibly by India's 1.3 billion people, the world's largest democracy and a critical American partner in promoting American values and ideals in Asia in the face of a rising and ever more aggressive China? Sadly, that display of intolerance wasn't Mr. Pompeo's only past offense.

Mr. Pompeo has suggested homosexuality is "perversion," an insinuation Mr. Pompeo ever so cleverly did not address when questioned by my colleague Senator BOOKER. At the CIA, he also canceled a Pride Month event which featured a discussion on the importance of diversity and an appearance by the parents of Matthew Shepard, a young man beaten, tortured, and left to die in Wyoming on account of his sexual orientation. How can the United States stand with the LGBTQ people of Chechnya who have been the victims of violence simply because of whom they love if our Nation's top diplomat has disparaged who they are?

The offenses continue. Following the horrific Patriots Day marathon in Boston, Mr. Pompeo falsely alleged that American Muslim leaders were "potentially complicit" in violent acts for failing to speak out. Under my questioning at the confirmation hearings, he refused to apologize for these comments. Why was I concerned? It happened in Boston. Why was I concerned? Because the Muslim leaders in Boston had spoken out against that attack on our Nation on Patriots Day, on marathon day in Boston.

Mr. Pompeo has said he disagrees with the characterization of his comment, but there is nothing to characterize on the floor of the House of Representatives. His comments disparaging Muslim leaders are part of the public record.

How can Mr. Pompeo effectively represent America to Muslim leaders around the world who are just as interested as we are in preventing religiously motivated violence?

Mr. Pompeo now claims these statements were meant to demonstrate that tackling extremism requires those who are the most credible voices to take an unambiguous stand against violence. Well, as the Secretary of State, Mr. Pompeo would be considered our most credible diplomatic voice around the world. How could Muslim nations ever feel respected when our top diplomat has voiced such unambiguous hate?

Mr. Pompeo cowrote an article on migrants that blamed Sweden's "radical" immigration policy on "political correctness." America must be a leader in finding pathways to protect Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis fleeing the death and destruction of war, in sheltering the Rohingya seeking shelter from oppression in Burma, and in addressing the countless other refugee crises roiling the globe and threatening our collective security. That is not political correctness; that is our moral responsibility.

America is a nation built by immigrants and refugees. Some 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or the children of immigrants. Google, Tesla, Yahoo, Intel, and eBay are all companies that were founded by immigrants. Given these past statements, could Mr. Pompeo truly represent the interests of a nation made up of and built by immigrants? I do not believe that he can.

In the fight against violent extremism, there is no more divisive issue that erodes our ability to effectively cooperate with other governments than the use of torture. Mr. Pompeo has said that he won't rule out bringing back the abhorrent practice of waterboarding. A man who has said that those who carried out such actions were "not torturers, they are patriots" will not be able to credibly convey to governments with histories of human rights abuses that these actions are reprehensible with any semblance of moral authority.

Today, French President Emmanuel Macron addressed Congress and urged us to rejoin the international community in the commitment to combating climate change. He rightfully said that there is no planet B. But Mr. Pompeo characterized the Paris negotiations as an "elitist effort to reduce the power of the United States economy," when, in fact, it was a historic effort by almost every country in the world to tackle a global challenge that will be an existential threat to every single person on the planet.

I believe in American ingenuity, American enterprise, and American leadership. I believe America must lead the world in solutions to this generational challenge. But how can we expect Mr. Pompeo to lead the Department of State in bringing greater peace, security, and prosperity to the American people through international engagement if he does not believe in U.S. leadership, if he does not believe that the United States is necessary for solving global problems, especially global warming?

Mr. Pompeo has too much to apologize for, too many statements to retract or explain, and too many controversial positions to defend.

Of most concern are Mr. Pompeo's past statements suggesting that he values military force over diplomacy even when diplomacy is a real option.

While negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program were underway, he argued that military strikes on Iran were preferable to diplomacy and that "it is under 2,000 sorties to destroy the Iranian nuclear capacity. This is not an insurmountable task for the coalition forces."

Just a few weeks ago, under my questioning during his confirmation hearing, he did not rule out a military solution in North Korea, which would be disastrous for the 230,000 Americans who live on the Korean Peninsula. There is no military solution to the North Korean nuclear threat. Only through sustained diplomacy and economic pressure, in close coordination with our allies, will we be able to negotiate peaceful denuclearization of North Korea.

America's top diplomat should embody the best of America's values and diplomatic traditions, not attack people's race, defend torture, promote division, ignore human rights, propose military force as the primary solution

to our problems around the world, or reject solutions to the climate change that is threatening our planet.

The President can choose his own Cabinet, yes, but the Senate must advise and consent. No one wants to see the United States without a top diplomat, especially at such an important time in world affairs, but having a Secretary of State who has so thoroughly disqualified himself from credibly doing the job is no better.

Yes, I see and respect the former soldier and Member of Congress, the strong intellect who graduated first in his West Point class and edited the Harvard Law Review, but I also see and hear Mr. Pompeo's past comments and his more recent comments and positions that many who support him are conveniently choosing to disregard. But we cannot do that.

So I advise President Trump to choose a Secretary of State who embodies the best of America's values and diplomatic traditions and communicates them to the rest of the world, and I do not consent to the nomination of Mr. Pompeo, who is not the person for this important task.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, at a time when we are facing serious international challenges, from Russian meddling, to North Korean sabre-rattling, to an increasingly assertive China, it is very essential that the President have a qualified Secretary of State whom he trusts to be on the job.

Mike Pompeo unquestionably understands the international challenges we face and is more than capable of being a very effective Secretary of State. When I talk to our allies, they are anxious to see him on the job.

Unfortunately, some on the other side of the aisle are now claiming that he is not suited for the post of Secretary of State because of positions he took as a Member of Congress or his holding to traditional Christian teachings, as if a person's religion ought to have something to say about their being in public office or public service. Others have spoken about that, and I don't have a whole lot more to add on that point. I would note the irony, though, that many of the Senators who are most likely to vote against Cabinet nominees are also rumored to have Presidential ambitions. They should ask themselves if they truly want to live with the precedent they are setting.

You don't have to like the President personally or support the President's policies, but as an American, it is in all of our interests to have a fully functioning executive branch, especially when it comes to foreign policy.

If a mainstream Republican former Member of Congress is deemed unacceptable because of his beliefs, how should mainstream Republicans vote when faced with future nominees who do not share the beliefs that Repub-

licans hold? Should Republicans just willy-nilly vote against any future nominee who does not share our political or religious views?

That said, I would like to focus on other attributes of Director Pompeo's which some have criticized but which I see as assets.

By all accounts, this nominee's tenure at the CIA has been a success. However, some Senators who supported him then are now arguing that he should not be Secretary of State because he is not diplomatic enough.

First, let's dismiss the more radical talking points about his being a warmonger. The theory is that President Trump is liable to start a war at any moment, so we need to force him, as President, to have Cabinet officials surrounding him who will counteract his impulses. We could have a hypothetical debate about whether, if the American people elect a warmonger as President, he should be allowed to appoint a warmonger Cabinet, but suffice it to say that I don't think that label applies to Mike Pompeo or Donald Trump, and I view such accusations as simply cheap partisan talking points.

On the other hand, it is fair to say that Mike Pompeo doesn't always couch his words in diplomatic niceties. He doesn't mince words about the threats that we face. And his time at the CIA has surely enhanced his strategic thinking. That is good, and that is exactly what we need at the State Department. We need less diplomatic double-talk and more clear-eyed, strategic thinking about international threats.

Real diplomacy isn't always about sweet talk. Sometimes it requires taking a firm stand, and to be effective, it should be part of a strategic vision that incorporates all the elements of statecraft. For instance, I hope we have finally discarded once and for all the diplomatic impulse to make unilateral concessions to President Putin in hopes they will be reciprocated, as exemplified by the Obama-Clinton reset. We all know it didn't really reset. If you understand Russian history and Russian political culture, you know that Russians, especially from a KGB pedigree, are likely to see this as a sign of weakness to be exploited. Diplomatic overtures to the Russians without a corresponding demonstration of strength are simply an invitation to further aggression and misbehavior.

I think we are finally arriving at a bipartisan consensus that Russia is a major geopolitical foe. Mike Pompeo has made clear that he has no doubts about the threat from Russia. He understands the need to push back and push back hard against Russia's attempt to dominate its neighbors and sow discord in the West. The threat from Russia will need a strategic plan that integrates all the elements of statecraft, including government-to-government diplomacy alongside military deterrence, intelligence and counterintelligence, cyber security, and

public diplomacy, just to name a few, and there are a lot of others.

Another area where some clear-eyed strategic thinking is even more crucial is our approach to the People's Republic of China. So I just stated: Consider China a bigger threat than Russia. I just returned from a trip to China with several colleagues at the beginning of this month. It was an eye-opener. We hear a lot about how China is embracing capitalism and becoming more and more like us. Just don't believe it. The Chinese Communist Party has modified its economic policy to allow for economic growth, but it still serves the interests of the state, not the interests of the people. It is not a free market, clearly, because they admit that their economic system is what they would call authoritative capitalism, aka mercantilism.

I visited with government officials at the national and local level, Chinese and American businesses, and American diplomats. The Chinese officials and the Chinese businesses had their talking points down almost too well. However, the impression that I took away from the visit is that the Chinese Government will do anything—legal or illegal, moral or immoral, ethical or unethical—to get ahead of the United States, and when they get ahead, to stay ahead.

China coined the term “peaceful rise” to describe its drive to become a great power, which is designed to sound very benign. In fact, China later changed this slogan “peaceful rise” to “peaceful development” out of concern that the word “rise” sounds threatening. Just to be clear, I am not threatened by Chinese economic growth.

The development of a truly peaceful, free market democracy, no matter how large, would not be threatening because democracies generally do not threaten each other, and free enterprise is mutually beneficial. The fact that so many Chinese people have been lifted out of poverty and into the middle class is a good news story for humanity. It is also good for the United States. The more Chinese people who can afford to buy our pork and soybeans, our John Deere tractors, and our advanced manufacturing, the better for Iowa and our national economy.

Free trade on a level playing field enriches both participants. Unfortunately, China is not interested in a level playing field. It seeks dominance economically, militarily, and politically. Confucius said: “Heaven does not have two suns and the people do not have two kings.” By the same token, the Chinese leadership does not think there is room for two great powers in the world.

China seeks the advantage of trade with the United States but not mutually beneficial free trade in the spirit of the WTO. Despite having a middle class that is bigger than ours in the United States in absolute numbers, China still claims to need special pref-

erences extended to developing countries. China erects nontariff barriers in ways that just very barely skirt triggering WTO compliance in violation of the spirit of the level playing field the WTO seeks to create.

The Chinese military is 60 percent larger than the U.S. military, and its efforts to claim exclusive control over the South China Sea, in violation of international law by creating artificial islands, reveals an expansionist impulse. You can't hide those islands. You know it implies dominance.

However, the threat from China is not mainly military. The influential ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu focused on the role of deception over combat. He famously said: “To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”

Now, get this. The problem we face is, we are being treated like an enemy to be subdued without realizing it. I say all of this not to be an alarmist but to point out that China sees itself in a long-term strategic struggle with the United States. We don't need to overreact to this fact, but we do need to be aware and to apply some clear-eyed strategic thinking of our own. In that respect, Mike Pompeo's unique background seems perfectly aligned with the task ahead to develop a strategic foreign policy toward China incorporating all the elements of statecraft.

Because I have mentioned aspects of Chinese culture to illuminate the strategic thinking on the part of the People's Republic of China, I don't want to give the impression that this is a clash of civilizations. On the contrary, it is not traditional Chinese culture that is the problem; it is the unreconstructed Leninist nature of the state system that is the problem.

It is sometimes claimed that Chinese culture is not compatible with democracy, but that is hogwash. The proof to the contrary is the Republic of China on Taiwan. Taiwan is a fully functioning, prosperous democracy with the same Chinese culture and traditions.

This same democracy is what mainland China could have also if it is able to shed its one-party dictatorship, and I hope it will shed that someday.

In the meantime, we need leaders in our government who see China clearly and have the ability to think strategically. Mike Pompeo seems to me to be just that kind of a person, so I am happy to support his confirmation as Secretary of State.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Mr. President, as the Senate considers the nomination of Mike Pompeo

to be Secretary of State, we have to ask ourselves many questions. Among them are these: Will Mr. Pompeo offer the kind of independent judgment that is necessary to help restrain President Trump's worst impulses, or will he be somebody who becomes a “yes” man to the President of the United States? Will Mr. Pompeo continue in his past attitude, which reflects a “shoot first, ask questions later” approach to foreign policy? And can somebody like Mr. Pompeo, who has made very divisive, polarizing, and, in fact, hateful remarks here in the United States be able to reflect American values abroad?

I regret to conclude that I do not think Mr. Pompeo can pass these tests, and I will oppose his nomination for Secretary of State.

We all know that our country is facing formidable challenges. Armed conflicts are raging in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, creating refugee crises across borders. Russia's campaign to undermine Western democracies continues at pace and has sharpened divisions in our society. It has bolstered populous movements at home and abroad, and we have seen terrorist networks continue to expand their reach into information space. Changes in our climate have resulted in drought, natural disaster, and famine, and as the President of France reminded a joint session of Congress today, there is no planet B.

Of the many crises we are confronting, at least one of them is entirely of President Trump's own making, and that is the potential unraveling of the Iran nuclear agreement. Let me say that I agree with all of those who believe that we should never allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon. That is exactly why it is so important to keep that agreement in place.

In just a few weeks, President Trump will make a decision. He will decide whether to waive the nuclear-related sanctions on Iran in order to keep the Iran agreement intact or whether to blow up that agreement.

As the President of France reminded us today, that agreement was forged with our European allies, Russia and China, and yet it has cut off Iran's pathways to nuclear bombs, it has imposed very tough constraints on their nuclear program, and it has subjected Iran to the most comprehensive inspection and monitoring regime ever negotiated—an inspection regime that would disappear if we backed out of that agreement, leaving us blind to exactly what the Iranians were doing with respect to their nuclear program.

Our State Department, our Defense Department, and our intelligence community have all assessed time and again that Iran is in compliance with the nuclear agreement. Secretary of Defense Mattis testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee just last fall that the Iran deal was in the national security interest of the United States. Despite that consensus even

among the President's current team, the President is talking about recklessly shredding the agreement.

As President Macron of France warned us today, such a move would be very reckless and it would be reckless to replace what we have today without having something to substitute for it.

Mr. Pompeo has weighed in on this issue over the years. It is not only that he has been a fierce opponent of the Iran deal, but he has proposed military strikes against Iran. In 2014, he said that it would take "under 2,000 sorties to destroy the Iranian nuclear capacity. This is not an insurmountable task for the coalition forces."

That is a dangerous illusion—the notion that there would be absolutely no response to an American attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Iran, of course, is right next door to Iraq, where the United States spent an ill-fated number of years, at a great loss of lives both to Americans and Iraqis and at great cost to the public. To just talk offhand about bombing Iran as the solution is not the kind of sentiment or mindset that we want in the Secretary of State for the United States of America.

The idea that he somehow had a conversion to diplomacy is difficult to believe, given the testimony that he has provided and the statements that he has made.

We also know that we are at an inflection point when it comes to the situation in North Korea. In a span of just a few months, President Trump has veered from taunting Kim Jong Un over Twitter to recently calling him "very honorable." We are all rooting for diplomacy to succeed in North Korea, but we all know that the opening rounds are, in fact, the easiest legs, and that reaching a credible and lasting accord with North Korea will take significant time, hard bargaining, and the support of our partners and allies in the region.

When it comes to Russia, President Trump's affection for President Putin continues unabated. Two weeks ago, he rejected the sanctions on Russian companies found to be assisting Syria's chemical weapons program, contradicting his own U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Then, he earlier congratulated Putin on winning the election—an election that we all know was a sham election and that the outcome was never in doubt. It was marred by ballot stuffing and forced voting, and it was hardly what you would call a fair and free election.

When it comes to Russia, despite appeals from Republicans and Democrats in this body and in other parts of the country, the President has decided not to take action to address the threat of Russian cyber attacks in our upcoming elections. In fact, Admiral Rogers, the former head of the U.S. Cyber Command, testified just in February that President Trump had not directed him to confront Russian cyber operations at their source.

So while Mr. Pompeo has said that Russia will meddle again in our midterm elections, he has been much quieter and softer since his nomination was presented by the President with respect to President Trump's soft approach to Russia and Putin.

It is also a fact that our next Secretary of State will be responsible for managing tens of thousands of Foreign Service officers, civil servants, and locally employed staff of the State Department at our embassies and consulates overseas.

We all know that at the State Department today, we are witnessing historically low morale. In his budget, President Trump has tried to gut the State Department of its personnel and resources, issuing two budgets in a row that cut the State Department's budget by over 30 percent. You cannot conduct the diplomacy of the greatest country on Earth with two hands tied behind your back. Yet I heard nothing from Mr. Pompeo about challenging the President with respect to the deep cuts to the State Department and the resources that he will have available to him to conduct American diplomacy.

There is also the very long history of really awful remarks that Mike Pompeo has made toward various minority groups here in the United States, including Muslims and the LGBT community. You have to wonder how somebody who has made these comments is going to be able to oversee a State Department that has patriotic Americans who are Muslim Americans, who are LGBT, and who come from other minority groups. How do you lead an agency when you have made those kinds of comments about people in your workforce? And how do you represent American values overseas when you have disregarded those important values here at home?

Mr. Pompeo has said that Muslims "abhor Christians." He has said that all Muslim leaders were "potentially complicit" in acts of terrorism. He has made other statements and has not condemned statements made by groups that were supporting him.

We have heard today from the President of France, Mr. Macron, a speech that uplifted the best of American values and French values. It was a speech that could have been given by earlier American Presidents, Republican or Democrat. He called upon America, France, the NATO allies, and other freedom-loving democracies and countries that respect the rule of law to seize the mantle of leadership.

He said:

We can actively contribute together to building the 21st-century world order for our people, for all people. The United States and Europe have a historical role in this respect, because it is the only way to defend what we believe in, to promote our universal values, to express strongly that human rights, the rights of minorities, and shared liberty are the true answer to the disorders of the world.

He warned against using anger and fear to divide us. He said:

We are living in a time of anger and fear because of the global threats, but these feel-

ings did not build anything. You can play with fear and anger for a time, but they do not construct anything.

What we have heard from President Trump is exactly the stirring of anger and division that the President of France warned about in his talk today to the Congress. It is those fears that President Trump has sought to exploit rather than to rise above and to lead.

As I look at the record of Mr. Pompeo and as I listen to the statements he has made, including many repulsive statements about different groups within the United States, I have to conclude that he does not reflect the great tradition in American foreign policy of standing up for those universal values that the President of France talked about today. It is a sad moment in our history when it requires a President from France to remind us of those universal values.

France has been a leader in the world, but the United States has been the chief organizer of the post-World War II era. And our friends in France, in England, in Germany, and other allies not just in Europe but around the world have stood with us. Yet, in this administration, we see a full retreat from that kind of American leadership around the world.

I regret to conclude that, looking at Mr. Pompeo's record and statements, he is part of the retreat and not part of the leadership that we need in the 21st century. So I ask my colleagues to oppose this nomination. We can do better. We need to remind every Member of this body that the United States has always stood up for those values that are in our Declaration of Independence and in our Constitution, and we need to uphold those values in the conduct of our foreign policy.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

DARK MONEY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues and to associate myself with their remarks on the critically important issue of unlimited and unaccountable money in our political system. I would like to thank my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, for organizing this speaking series and for being a national leader on the issue of campaign finance reform.

While my colleagues make important points about how our rigged campaign finance system can and does serve as a channel for anonymous billionaires and special interests to exert undue influence across our political system, I would like to focus my remarks on a related issue: how our broken campaign finance system also threatens our national security.

There is no serious dispute that malign foreign actors like Russia are working to subvert our democratic processes and sow chaos in our political system. As we have seen, their strategies depend not on direct conventional attacks upon our Nation, but an

asymmetric approach that exploits the existing divisions and vulnerabilities of our open society, our democratic institutions, and our free markets.

Even though we are now aware of this, we have not taken the necessary steps to repair the situation. Indeed, our Nation retains a campaign finance system that empowers anonymous donors to funnel unlimited amounts of money to influence public policy at every level of government, and to hide their actions behind corporations.

This misguided system, which fell into place in the wake of the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision in 2010, allegedly has been exploited by foreign adversaries to advance their agendas on our soil.

How does this threat work? Prior to *Citizens United*, an incorporated entity did not have the same right as a flesh-and-blood human being to make contributions and expenditures in elections. This distinction makes sense. Corporations typically are permanent legal entities. They can amass outsized sums of wealth and, critically, they can shield the human beings behind them from scrutiny and liability. It is easier for those who wish to circumvent the laws protecting our democratic system to do so from behind a corporate mask. Thus, when the Supreme Court gave corporations the right to make unlimited independent expenditures in elections, it also opened the door for those who wish to hide their election spending to cover their tracks with shell companies and other entities that only exist on paper.

Our Nation historically has sought to safeguard our system of government from foreign influence. The Constitution requires the President to be a natural-born citizen. Early lobbying disclosure reforms were crafted with the threat of foreign propaganda in mind. And it remains a Federal crime for a foreign national, directly or indirectly, to spend money to influence our elections. But how can we know that authorities have the tools they need to enforce the law consistently when the law permits donors to funnel unlimited sums into elections and cover their tracks with shell corporations?

There are serious allegations that foreign actors have taken advantage of this vulnerability in our system. CNN reported in early April that Special Counsel Mueller is investigating whether Russian oligarchs used donations to think tanks, political action committees, and straw donors to cover their illegal campaign spending in the 2016 cycle.

One figure who is suspected of this type of malign influence-peddling is Alexander Torshin. Torshin is the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Russia, a close Putin ally, and was recently sanctioned by the Trump administration, along with other oligarchs and high-ranking Russian Government officials. Multiple press reports stemming from documents turned over to congressional investigations by Trump

campaign associates detail how Torshin allegedly cultivated people associated with the NRA to influence the 2016 election. His ultimate goal allegedly was to arrange a meeting during the campaign between then-Candidate Trump and Putin. Press reports indicate that the FBI is currently investigating whether Torshin illegally funneled money to the NRA to assist the Trump campaign in particular.

Indeed, if Russia did use the NRA to circumvent public scrutiny of its electoral meddling, it would have been following the same pattern as the Koch network. Robert McGuire from the Center for Responsive Politics stated: "We've seen some of the groups in the Koch network give large, six and seven figure grants to the NRA—knowing that the NRA is going to spend the money on ads in an election. . . . The Russians could easily have funneled money into the NRA coffers using a similar pathway. . . . A legal, ostensibly apolitical donation to the NRA by Russia could have freed up other restricted funds to spend on politics."

While money is fungible, it is quite striking that the NRA spent over \$30 million to assist the Trump campaign—two-and-a-half times more than what it spent in 2012 to assist Mitt Romney.

These allegations regarding links between Russia and the NRA are among the most widely reported, but there is evidence of other instances where Kremlin-linked oligarchs and their allies allegedly directed money into American elections. For example, Viktor Vekselberg, another close Putin ally and oligarch who made billions from a government-sanctioned oil deal, allegedly funneled over \$250,000 through a U.S. corporation run by his cousin to spend on the 2016 election. The cousin had no prior history as a major political donor before the last election cycle. Vekselberg was also recently sanctioned by the Trump administration for his close ties to Putin and alleged role in advancing Russia's malign influence activities. Special Counsel Mueller is also reportedly investigating whether Vekselberg funneled money into the 2016 election.

These are two illustrations of how those from Putin's inner circle may have sought to influence our elections. Some of these methods may appear legal because the source of the money on paper was a person who is legally allowed to make expenditures on American elections. But experts, like Louise Shelley, director of the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center at George Mason University, doubt that these sums could have entered our political process without approval from the Kremlin. As she puts it: "If you have investments in Russia, then you cannot be sure that they are secure if you go against the Kremlin's will. You can't be an enormously rich person in Russia, or even hold large holdings in Russia, without being in Putin's clutches."

If sophisticated special interest groups in our country rely on dark money to pursue their political agendas, and the Kremlin and Kremlin-linked actors can exploit this vulnerability, then it stands to reason that other foreign actors can also manipulate our system. As long as we maintain a system wherein a political spender can be a corporation that received money from another corporation, which, in turn, received money from yet another corporation, there will be no accountability in our campaign finance system.

Even if it cannot be proved that illegal campaign spending is changing electoral outcomes, I believe it is unacceptable for our Nation to knowingly permit an open conduit for foreign meddling in our elections, which has an effect on our national security. Our system of government depends on public faith that election results reflect the will of the American people.

Going forward, I intend to speak further on this topic and work on ways to give authorities much stronger tools to prosecute the laundering of foreign money in our campaign finance system. In my view, this is not just an administrative or an election issue; this is a national security and international criminal issue, and as such, there should be investigations and prosecutions on that scale. I invite my colleagues to work with me on this important issue, and I thank my colleagues again for highlighting the need to take unaccountable money out of our politics.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, at 12 noon on Thursday, April 26, there be 4 minutes of debate, equally divided; that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Pompeo nomination; that if cloture is invoked, all time be considered expired and the Senate vote on confirmation without intervening action or debate. I further ask that following disposition of the Pompeo nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the Grenell nomination, with the time until 1:45 p.m. equally divided in the usual form; and that at 1:45 p.m., the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination. I further ask that if cloture is invoked, all time be considered expired and the Senate vote on confirmation without intervening action or debate; and that with respect to both nominations, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid

upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Hawaii.

DARK MONEY

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, in his confirmation hearing last January, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said there was evidence that climate change had actually leveled off over the past two decades.

In response to Mr. Pruitt's comments, an atmospheric scientist in California named Benjamin Santer pulled together some colleagues to study satellite data from around the world. They found that Mr. Pruitt was in fact wrong, and they prepared to publish their findings in *Nature Scientific Reports*.

Then something pretty weird happened. A few of the scientists came forward and said that they didn't want their names listed on the research. They were worried about their ability to get a green card in the United States. Mr. Santer told the *New Yorker* that this was the first time in his life that he had seen his colleagues fear putting their names on research because they were worried about the negative consequences for themselves and their families.

In this country, scientists should not work in fear. They should not worry about their work being politicized. But this is where we are, and it is a moment that has been carefully planned by a small group of people who do not want the United States to act on climate. Because of these groups, the United States is home to the only major political party that opposes climate action. Because of these groups, Scott Pruitt—a man who denies that climate change is real and that it is caused by humans—is running the Federal Agency charged with dealing with climate change.

For too long, these groups have gone unchallenged, their web of deceit untouched. So I am joining with my colleagues to shine a light on these groups and how they have warped our ability to make good choices.

The Heartland Institute was started in 1984, ostensibly by a group of Libertarians. Each of their positions boils down to the idea that the government has no role—not to work on ending tobacco use or to define what health insurance should look like. But they are especially focused on keeping the government from doing anything about climate change.

The Heartland Institute denies that climate change is happening, and I disagree with them. Ninety-seven percent of all climate scientists disagree with them. But they are not playing by the average think tank rules because they are not your normal think tank. Over the years, the Heartland Institute has gained a reputation for, as one website put it, being a mouthpiece for the cor-

porations who fund it, and their funders are very, very hard to track because Heartland keeps its donations secret. But we know that donors like the Koch brothers, ExxonMobil, and the Mercers are some of Heartland's biggest funders, and these donors just so happen to benefit from American inaction on climate.

If the government does what Heartland wants and stops protecting the environment, these people will profit. It is almost as if the Heartland Institute exists to promote the interests of its donors.

Last year, they mailed a package to hundreds of thousands of science teachers. It had pamphlets, a DVD, and a book called "Why Scientists Disagree about Global Warming." The mass mailing was an effort to disseminate fossil fuel industry talking points as curriculum for science teachers. They tried to send it to every middle school, high school, and college teacher in the country.

The institute has also done everything it can to defend Mr. Pruitt, who is being investigated for a historic number of ethical lapses. Heartland wrote a letter to the White House just recently that called on the President to continue supporting Mr. Pruitt. The letter said the 10 ethical investigations into Mr. Pruitt amount to "an orchestrated political campaign by [the President's] enemies."

Heartland also supports a new proposed EPA rule, and—get this one—it is a new EPA rule that will restrict the use of scientific studies in EPA decision making. It will restrict the use of science in EPA decision making.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the American Lung Association, and the National Council for Science and the Environment are some of the 50 science organizations and higher education institutions that have opposed the new rule. But the Heartland Institute is for this rule.

I want to be really clear about this. This isn't about someone having a conservative ideology or different view from mine about what our energy future ought to be. There is no leftwing equivalent of the institute that acts like this. Brookings, the Center for American Progress, and other left-leaning think tanks all have dissent within their ranks, and even on the right, AEI and many others have legitimate academic discussions within the context of their political philosophy. That is not what this is. These other think tanks do not ignore scientific facts because they are real think tanks. But Heartland is not a think tank in any true sense of the word. Their work is focused not on promoting analysis based on science but on trashing analysis based on science. If you don't know that, then you can easily think they are legitimate.

For example, the Heartland Institute sends a monthly newsletter about climate issues to every legislator in the

country—State and Federal. It is actually a pretty good-looking product. This is a copy of it. It is actually really well done and well laid out in color, so it is not immediately obvious that this isn't even analysis. It looks like a publication from a scientific institution.

The people they quote or rely on for data are almost always from industry-supported think tanks funded by the same people. This month, they highlighted one of their own policy analysts who said that Oklahoma should not subsidize wind power because the industry can't survive without subsidies. They claim that wind energy is far less reliable and far more expensive than the power derived from fossil fuel. Who benefits from that analysis?

The fact is that wind energy is now the largest source of reliable electricity-generating capacity in the United States. In Oklahoma alone at least 30 percent of all power consumption comes from wind farms, and subsidies for fossil fuels are 40 times those for clean energy.

Also in their April newsletter, Heartland claims that natural gas has little effect on global temperatures. But recent evidence shows that methane emissions from oil and gas are vastly undercounted.

The temperature data on the back cover of this newsletter is from a climate denier at the University of Alabama whose data is considered unreliable and biased by the vast majority of the scientific community. This is not normal intellectual dissent within the scientific community. This is not normal political dissent about what our energy future should be. These people are propagating propaganda. This is not the work of a legitimate think tank. A legitimate think tank does not ignore facts and evidence. It does not publish data from a climate denier who is known in the science community for publishing work loaded with errors.

They are pushing us away from science and from doing the hard work of protecting and preserving our country's clean air and water so that a few of their donors can continue to make as much money as possible.

I was pleased with President Macron's speech today. There was so much he reminded us that we had in common, not just between America and France but between Democrats and Republicans. As he reminded us of our great history together, as he reminded us of our cultural exchange, as he reminded us of our military cooperation, he also reminded us that our great democracies believe in science. We have to believe in science. We have to believe in expertise. It is absolutely appropriate.

The Presiding Officer and I do not share the same political philosophy, but we have to share the same set of facts. That is what is so damaging about a so-called think tank like Heartland. They are not like AEI; they are not like CAP; they are not like Brookings. They are not like any other

think tank in Washington, DC, that on the level, from the standpoint of their own political philosophy and their own objectives, tries to get the right answer. That is an absolutely appropriate function for an institution to serve in this city, but what these guys do is not that.

I think it is very important that we draw a distinction between those who are relying upon facts and science, and those who are not. That is why I wanted to point out what Heartland is all about.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, it is hard to find the words that will truly reflect what an abomination the campaign finance system in America has become. The fact is, the only people who seem happy with the current state of campaign finance are billionaires who have phones full of contact information of the most powerful people in the land. Otherwise, if you are a typical American—putting in a hard day's work, supporting your family—you probably have the sense the campaign finance laws are rigged for the big and the powerful.

There was an era when running for office was as simple as putting your name out for the public, getting a few local civic groups in your corner, and bringing in a few modest donations to get your campaign off the ground. Certainly, it is not that way anymore. It has now been well chronicled how a wave of money—particularly from a few secretive powerful individuals like the Koch brothers—has flooded American politics in the last few decades. That has grown exponentially in the years since the Citizens United decision. The fact is, there has been a tidal wave of dark money buying influence across America's political system.

This isn't just about too many political ads on television and radio. Voters know that unless they unplug entirely and settle for a life out in the woods, they are going to see a lot of ads. Even beyond ads in the election season, there is this deluge of money buying the support of beltway think tanks, currying favor among lobbyists, funding so-called social welfare organizations that, frankly, aren't doing a whole lot of social welfare.

The bottom line is, for those like the Koch brothers, having deep pockets means you can buy the right to grab hold of the levers of power of the American Government. You can create a whole lot of noise that virtually drowns out the constituents back home.

I am heading home tomorrow. I have about nine townhall meetings sched-

uled in rural communities. They are always amazed that we are having those kinds of discussions—my colleague Senator MERKLEY does them as well—because it seems that in most of the country, everything that resembles the government we know so well, direct contact, open to all town meetings, is getting drowned out by a deluge of dollars that creates all of this noise—fake noise, to use the language of the times—that drives out real discussion about substantive issues.

I am going to talk about an example, one that has certainly generated some real concern over the last few months. If you want to see what is wrong with the election system, in my view, you don't have to look much further than some of the letters I have exchanged recently with the National Rifle Association. A few months ago, there were news reports of a potential financial relationship between a Russian oligarch close to Vladimir Putin and the NRA. The big question was whether the Russian money had been funneled into the NRA to assist the Trump campaign and influence the outcome of the election. In my view, I would say that is a question that most right-minded Americans would like to have answered.

I am the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, where we have jurisdiction over the Federal Tax Code. That includes the rules that pertain to political groups and tax-exempt 501(c)(4) organizations like the ones that are maintained by the NRA. I began in a series of letters that were sent to the organization, sent to the NRA, to ask questions about their foreign funding. The series of shifting answers I got in return from the NRA was enough to give you whiplash. First, when we inquired—because we had seen all of these news reports—they said: "Nothing to see here."

Then, as we followed up and found that a little hard to square with these public news reports, they said: "Well . . . we get foreign funding, but just from that ONE Russian, and that's it."

Then, we heard another version of what was going on at the NRA. They said it was a couple of dozen Russians giving money to the NRA. We continued to follow up, and they told the press and they told me: Hey, we are done with the Congress. We are not interested in answering any more questions. We are busy. We have other things to do.

That pretty much sums up the problem we have heard described on the floor this week with the campaign finance system. The information Americans have access to in campaign finance reports is just the tip of the iceberg, just the beginning of unpacking this whole question of where the money comes from in our political system. Everything under the waterline is where it gets seedy, but powerful interests have managed to figure out how to keep their handiwork hidden. The powerful use shell companies to mask the identities of who is funding campaigns

and so-called independent expenditures. Even simple questions asked of these powerful groups influencing campaigns—questions like, "Do you get money from overseas," the Congress and the American people cannot get a straight answer.

There are Members who want to see real changes made to bring some sunlight into this system. They see how important this is, giving the onslaught of attacks on the campaign finance laws that are coming from the Supreme Court. These attacks are one major reason why I have cosponsored legislation to create a constitutional amendment allowing Congress and the States to regulate and restore faith in our campaign finance system.

With respect to this approach, I didn't arrive at this judgment casually. Constitutional amendments, in my view, ought to be reserved for those situations when the delicate balance set up by the Founding Fathers has been upset or, in this case, jurisprudence that governs the system has also changed. That is the situation and the challenge our country faces today.

I know several Members of this body have put policy ideas forward. Many of them, in my view, have real merit. Virtually all of them, in my view, would be an improvement on this rotten abomination of a campaign finance system that exists today. Virtually every day folks back home get inundated with the smarmy political ads sponsored by groups that have these names that are just nonsense—names like the "American Association for American Values in America." There is one after another. I will hear about what citizens think about this during those nine townhall meetings that I am going to be having over the next few days at home. Citizens often say it is really good to have our elected officials do this. Sometimes they would kid me that we have more cows than we have voters.

Still, we are here to have this conversation because that is what I think the American political system ought to be about—direct communication, an ongoing discussion with voters, our actually being there, having the people we have the honor to represent be able to look us in the eye, to ask questions, and say: We want to hear your thoughts because we believe that is how we can hold you accountable. The flip side of that judgment is that they don't think they can do it with the campaign finance system I have described today.

All of this is fed by these reports about lawmakers who march up to Koch Industries in order to plead for support for one proposal or another. When people read these articles, they say that it sure feels like that is what the political system has become all about. It is why I have done even more open-to-all town meetings. It is one way that I can show, at least on our watch, that that is what we are doing to counter the fact that a handful of

the most powerful, like the Koch family, can generate a disproportionately loud voice in our system of government.

The fact is the campaign finance system is broken, and it is long past the time to have fixed it. I have appreciated my colleagues' coming to the floor this week to speak out on it.

I believe, as has been written, that this series of letters that I have exchanged with the NRA, just over the last few months, is a textbook case of how broken the campaign finance system is—what happens when powerful organizations and individuals like the Koch family can have a disproportionately large voice in the political system.

I think the Senate ought to get about the business of fixing this system and ending the current way in which political campaigns are financed, which, as I said when I began my remarks, is such an abomination that it doesn't pass the smell test.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, we are at a critical moment in world history, filled with innumerable dangers and challenges. Russia is causing enormous trouble attacking the foundation of democracies around the world, interfering in our elections, developing new tools to move public opinion in countries other than its own while hiding behind robotic social commentaries. We have a nuclear-armed North Korea seeking legitimacy and recognition and critical talks about to occur over the effort to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. Syria is not just in the grip of a civil war, it is in the grip of a fractured chaotic state as a result of the destruction of cities and towns throughout the nation, leaving them as destroyed shells of buildings with infrastructure completely decimated. We have a humanitarian crisis in Burma and Bangladesh with massive ethnic cleansing. We have four famines unfolding in Africa, with 20 million people at risk of starvation. In every place you look, there are more of these challenges related to corruption of foreign governments, to climate chaos, to civil conflict.

We need a Secretary of State who can help navigate our country in these difficult times. We need to be able to work with neighbors around the world, with allies around the world, exercising diplomacy in partnership with the strength of the United States.

I come to the floor to share that I have grave doubts that Mike Pompeo does not bring the right skills to this job. I am concerned about his choice of

military action over diplomacy in a position that is supposed to bring the art of diplomacy to its full execution. I am concerned about his statements of disrespect and dishonor to the fundamental nature of our Constitution under the first article that calls for Congress to be able to open the door to the exercise of military power, not the President. I am concerned about his deep-rooted conflicts of interest that may prevent him from tackling one of the gravest threats to humans on this planet; namely, climate change. So I will be voting against his nomination and felt it only appropriate to share more of my concerns.

Let's start with the issue of diplomacy. The United States led the world in working to stop the Iranian nuclear program, working with the P5+1 group of states and with Iran to say that such a program of developing the basic elements necessary for nuclear weapons was absolutely unacceptable and bringing to bear such international pressure that Iran said: We will agree to that. We will agree to that. We will dismantle our nuclear powerplant—our plutonium plant. We will fill it with concrete. We will proceed to eliminate the stockpile of uranium enriched up to 20 percent. They agreed to cut the stockpile of low-enriched uranium by 98 percent, to profoundly reduce its gas centrifuges, shutting down two-thirds of them. On top of that, Iran agreed to the most aggressive and furthest reaching inspections that the International Atomic Energy Agency has ever had in any agreement, giving us profound insights into the operation of their nuclear program or, to put it differently, profound insights into the operation of their program and the dismantlement of their program.

Yet Director Pompeo has condemned this effort in diplomacy to stop the uranium program. He has told me it was unneeded because Iran wasn't pursuing a nuclear weapon. Well, quite interesting, but Iran was pursuing, clearly developing, all the elements necessary to have a nuclear weapon, and that represented a significant threat to the United States of America, and this agreement stops that threat in its tracks. So he condemned it, not just saying it wasn't necessary but that it showed negotiations occurred "where we should have shown strength," and he said the United States "bowed when we should have stood tall."

What did he mean by that? He meant we didn't need an agreement in order to stop the Iranian nuclear program because we had something else. We had the sword that we could stop their nuclear program with, as he put it, "2,000 sorties"—"2,000 sorties," he said, "to destroy the Iranian nuclear capacity . . . is not an insurmountable task for [United States] coalition forces."

Simply carrying the sword and saying we could stop other nations from doing things by bombing them is not the expertise we need in a Secretary of State.

Then there is Mr. Pompeo's attacks on the Muslim community—falsely claiming that Islamic leaders in America were silent in the face of terrorist attacks like the Boston Marathon bombing. It was not true, but he chose to attack Muslim Americans—single them out for assault. He said they were "complicit" and failed in the "commitment to peace," not even bothering to get the facts in advance.

Then there is his longstanding opposition to equal rights for LGBTQ Americans. Much of what we try to do around the world is to lay out a vision of opportunity for all, and we should quit slamming doors in the faces of individuals around the globe who are pursuing personal happiness, opportunity, and success just as we try to end the door-slamming here at home—the discrimination, the prejudice, the hatred, the bigotry, but Mr. Pompeo engaged in calling the end of discrimination a "shocking abuse of power" when the Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell*. Not only that, but when he went to the CIA and the mother of Matthew Shepard was scheduled to give a speech on hate crimes, he canceled, at the last second, her speech. He did not want the mother of a victim of hate crimes to talk about the crime against an LGBT American strapped to a wire fence and left to die. Shouldn't that be exactly the sort of speech that should be given about our respect for all Americans and about how much we stand against hate crimes?

So that is very disturbing, when you go into a world where respect for people of every religion, from every part of the world, is part of the negotiating power and strength of America. If you disrespect people, they do not join us in partnership to solve problems. So those are my concerns on the diplomacy side.

I am also concerned that he expressed a complete lack of interest in the constitutional power invested in article I, which is the article for Congress to declare war. He indicated that the President had unlimited power in article II, which is the ability to conduct a war after Congress has authorized it, but he seemed to completely overlook that first step of congressional authorization.

We have tried to encapsulate that congressional authorization in the War Powers Act, making it clear that the President cannot take us to war without a declaration of war or, second, without explicit authorization through something like an authorization for the use of military force or without a direct emergency involving an imminent attack on the United States, our assets, or our forces. It is the War Powers Act that embodies the heart of the Constitution about the conduct, the ability, and the limitations on the President to start a war. It is given to Congress to decide whether or not we can go to war, and Mr. Pompeo does not agree with that important, important congressional factor. I don't

know, quite frankly, how one can take the oath of office and not respect the Constitution as it delivers that power to this body, not to the President.

My third concern goes to the conflict of interest that he brought into consideration for this position. Specifically, it is the conflict of interest that he carries into his career through his very, very close association with the Koch brothers. He has been given the nickname "the Congressman from Koch." The headquarters of Koch Industries is located in his district. The Koch brothers gave him the money to start his business. The Koch brothers were the biggest donors to his campaign. His entire career is carefully intertwined with the Koch brothers and advocating for whatever they wanted him to advocate for.

What we see is that the Koch brothers are advocating against our working with other nations to take on the challenge of climate chaos. Now, Mother Nature sent us a big, rude awakening this last year with three powerful hurricanes tearing apart parts of our country and with forest fires stretching from Montana across to the Pacific Ocean and down the Pacific coast, deep into California, because of the carbon pollution that is warming the seas and changing the weather patterns and drying out our forests.

We suffer that, but we see so much more. We see the moose dying. We see the lobsters migrating. We see the oysters unable to have babies. A billion of them died back about the time I took office here in the Senate because of the acidification of the ocean, coming from carbon pollution.

The whole world is coming together to try to take on this problem, but Mr. Pompeo is uninterested in this major threat facing humanity. He supports our disengaging from the international community and taking this on. He is fine letting China take the lead and producing the economic results of taking the lead instead of the United States taking the lead and being engaged in these partnerships. So, colleagues, those are my concerns.

We need an individual dedicated to the power of diplomacy, not someone who reaches first for the sword. We need an individual who respects different religions and respects the opportunity in the United States that we carry to the world as a beacon of freedom, not one who disrespects it. Third, we need an individual whose career is not tied to a single industry and whose outlook is to continue to protect that industry, even in taking this job.

So for those reasons, this nomination should be turned down.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from North Carolina.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EARTH DAY 2018

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last Sunday, April 22, marked the 49th Earth Day. Given the Trump administration's reckless assault on the environment, it is frightening to think where we might be on the 50th Earth Day.

President Trump hasn't built that "big, beautiful" wall he promised. More than a year into his term, he still hasn't filled dozens of critical posts, from Cabinet Secretaries to ambassadors.

Looking at what hasn't been done, a reasonable person might assume that this President still hasn't learned how to make government work. That might be true in many areas, but when it comes to the environment, it is dead wrong.

From day one of his administration, President Trump has used budget cuts, executive orders, and other administrative and regulatory tools to push a concerted rollback of environmental protections. President Trump has repealed or frozen some 850 rules and regulations, many of which have a direct impact on the environment.

He has signaled his intention to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate accord. America is the largest emitter of carbon gases, and we are the only nation on Earth that is not part of the global effort to save the planet from climate chaos and catastrophe.

Under this President, we have ceded global leadership on the climate to other nations, especially to China. Not only is that shameful, it is bad business. Some of the best-paying jobs of the 21st century will be in renewable energy industries. How are we going to create those jobs and industries in America with a President and administration that refuse to admit even the existence of climate change?

Since Earth Day last year, the U.S. has suffered some of the deadliest and costliest disasters in our history. Last August, Hurricane Irma battered the southern U.S., especially south Florida. It was followed quickly by Hurricane Harvey, which caused an estimated \$200 billion in damage and pummeled Houston. In September, Hurricane Maria caused the worst natural disaster on record in Puerto Rico. Nearly 8 months later, most of the island is still without electricity. After the hurricanes came the wildfires, including some of the worst wildfires in California's history.

Scientists warn that without significant reductions in carbon emissions, climate chaos will become more frequent, more deadly and more expensive.

What is FEMA's response? Strategic plans drawn up by FEMA during both the Obama and George W. Bush administrations acknowledged climate change as a serious threat, right up there with terrorist attacks. Under this President, FEMA has dropped any mention of climate change from its strategic plan. The reality we dare not deny has become the crisis whose name the Agency dare not utter.

Last year and again this year, President Trump has sent Congress budget plans that would gut the Department of Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Scott Pruitt, the President's choice to run EPA, is an ethical nightmare, but he is a polluter's dream. He has vowed to withdraw the Clean Power Plan, a plan to cut emissions from the U.S. power sector by 32 percent from 2005 by 2030. Administrator Pruitt has signaled that he wants to roll back modest new fuel efficiency standards for cars and light-duty trucks—standards that would reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions significantly. The EPA under Donald Trump and Scott Pruitt has suspended the "waters of the United States" rule, designed to reduce pollution in 60 percent of the Nation's lakes, rivers, and streams.

EPA is not the only member of the Trump Environmental Wrecking Crew.

Today, 94 percent of the outer continental shelf in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic Oceans is off limits from oil and gas exploration. The Department of the Interior is proposing to open 90 percent of the outer continental shelf for future oil and gas drilling. On top of this, this administration has weakened safety requirements that prevent oil spills.

Interior's Bureau of Land Management is also selling off thousands of federally owned parcels of land for oil and gas development. Among the national treasures up for sale are two national monuments in Utah: the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears, home to some of the richest and most important archeological finds in our Nation.

Interior Secretary Zinke had a special flag designed for himself and ordered that it be flown whenever he was in the Department headquarters. It would be more fitting if he flew the white flag of surrender because that is what this administration is doing.

They are surrendering America's global leadership in the efforts to save this planet from climate catastrophe, and they are surrendering decades of important and lifesaving progress we have made since the first Earth Day in safeguarding our environment, preserving our natural treasures, and protecting the health and safety of the American people.

They are undoing decades of bipartisan agreements that balanced science

and the public good with the interests of States, localities, landowners, business, and conservationists.

This past weekend, on the eve of Earth Day, the New York Times published an op-ed entitled, "America Before Earth Day: Smog and Disasters Spurred the Laws Trump Wants to Undo." The article recounts five devastating ecological disasters that shook Americans deeply in late 1960s and the 1970s and led to the creation of major environmental laws that have saved millions of lives and reversed horrendous environmental damage.

The accidents include the Cuyahoga River burning in 1969, which helped spur passage of the Clean Air Act, and the toxic poisoning of Love Canal in Niagara Falls, NY—a catalyst for the creation in 1980 of a superfund that would make oil and chemical companies pay for the pollution they cause and not walk away from the devastation and stick taxpayers with the tab.

The Trump administration is working to dismantle not just to these major environmental laws and abdicate America's role as a global leader on environmental protection, it is reneging on a bipartisan tradition on conservation and preservation of America's public lands that goes back more than a century, to a proud Republican President by the name of Teddy Roosevelt.

I ask unanimous consent that that full New York Times op-ed be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

Fortunately, American businesses and scientists, State and local governments, and the American people themselves refuse to wave the white flag. They refuse to sell America's clean air and clean water and the health of the American people to the highest bidder.

They are working in boardrooms and classrooms, in laboratories, in city halls, State houses, and courthouses to solve the urgent environmental challenges of our time and preserve the bipartisan environmental progress we have made.

The Trump administration needs to listen and stop waving the white flag of surrender. Our world and the health of our children and grandchildren is worth fighting for.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The New York Times, April 21, 2018]

AMERICA BEFORE EARTH DAY: SMOG AND DISASTERS SPURRED THE LAWS TRUMP WANTS TO UNDO

(By Livia Albeck-Ripka and Kendra Pierre-Louis)

A huge oil spill. A river catching fire. Lakes so polluted they were too dangerous for fishing or swimming. Air so thick with smog it was impossible to see the horizon.

That was the environmental state of the nation 50 years ago. But pollution and disasters prompted action. On April 22, 1970, millions of people throughout the country demonstrated on the inaugural Earth Day, calling for air, water and land in the country to be cleaned up and protected. And that year, in a bipartisan effort, the Environmental

Protection Agency was created and key legislation—the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act—came into force.

Now, the Trump administration has made eliminating federal regulations a priority, and an increasing number of environmental rules are under threat.

Here's a look at five environmental disasters that shifted the public conversation and prompted, directly or indirectly, lawmakers to act.

THE SANTA BARBARA OIL SPILL

On January 28, 1969, an oil rig exploded off the coast of Santa Barbara, Calif., spewing three million gallons of crude oil into the ocean in one of the worst environmental disasters in the history of the United States.

At the time, there were no federal measures in place to regulate offshore drilling.

After the spill local officials pleaded with the federal government to end oil exploration off the California coast. But it was not until 1978 that the first federal regulations were passed.

Just over 40 years after the Santa Barbara rig blowout, on April 20, 2010, an even worse spill, known as the Deepwater Horizon disaster, resulted in the tightening of federal rules.

But this past January, the Trump administration said it would reopen vast areas of United States coastal waters to new offshore oil and gas drilling projects. Shortly thereafter, the administration began the process of rolling back safety regulations on existing rigs.

Ryan Zinke, the interior secretary, has also proposed revising a five-year plan for offshore oil and gas leasing, which conservationists say would harm marine life and could also pose a danger to humans.

THE CUYAHOGA RIVER FIRE

The Cuyahoga River in Cleveland in 1952. The river burned at least 13 times before the 1969 fire that was covered by Time magazine. On June 22, 1969, the Cuyahoga River near Cleveland caught fire—both literally and in the public imagination. A few months later the conflagration became a big story in Time magazine, which described the Cuyahoga as a river that "oozes rather than flows."

The story prompted outrage throughout the country, where many rivers, after decades of industrial pollution, were too dangerous for swimming, fishing or drinking. (The main photo in Time was actually of the Cuyahoga when it caught fire 17 years earlier, in 1952. The river had burned at least 13 times.)

The fire, fueled by an oil slick on river's surface, and resulting media coverage galvanized the outrage into broader public action.

It culminated in the passage of the 1972 Clean Water Act. That measure, like the Clean Air Act, was an extension of earlier laws. But the piecemeal nature of the earlier rules had resulted in a lack of oversight and regulatory control. The 1972 act coordinated the rules and gave regulatory authority to the nascent E.P.A.

Since the law's creation, waterways across the United States are markedly cleaner, though half still fall short of national goals. Recent decisions, though, could lead to backsliding.

The E.P.A. has suspended the Obama-era Waters of the United States rules, which sought to clarify which waterways are considered part of the national water system. Smaller bodies of water, like intermittent streams and wetlands, have been in a legal gray area since the 1972 act despite having significant impact on water quality.

Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, also removed Clean Water Act decision-making authority from regional offices, leaving him the sole arbiter.

THE LOVE CANAL DISASTER

In the late 1970s, residents of Love Canal in Niagara Falls, N.Y., began complaining of odd smells, rashes and liquid leaching into the basements of their homes. Decades earlier, the Hooker Chemical Company had dumped toxic waste in the canal and buried it. Outraged, the residents of Love Canal organized and were eventually relocated from their town.

While the residents of Love Canal were not the first or only community to confront the toxic legacy of industry, their plight caught the attention of national media, and ultimately, helped prompt the creation of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, commonly known as the Superfund.

Passed by Congress in 1980, the law meant that chemical and petroleum companies would be taxed to create a cleanup trust fund.

Over time, however, the trust fund has dwindled, with taxpayers increasingly footing cleanup bills. In the E.P.A.'s 2019 budget, staff cuts have been made, while some people nominated for key positions have direct links to polluting industries. In December, the administration also rejected a proposed rule that mining companies prove they have the money to clean up pollution left behind at their sites.

THE SMOG-FILLED SKIES

Pittsburghers used to say that if you wore a white shirt to work in the morning, that the shirt would be as gray as the air by lunchtime. In cities and towns throughout the country, Americans didn't just breathe the air, they could all but touch it. In the nation's National Parks, air pollution clouded the views.

This was the United States before the 1970s Clean Air Act.

There was no single smog event that led to the act. In the years leading up to its passage, though, "You had growing awareness in the scientific community about problems like smog," said Eric Schaeffer, the executive director of the Environmental Integrity Project. "You had the beginnings of an understanding that it was bigger than any state agency could manage."

The act was an overhaul and extension of the 1963 Clean Air Act. It enabled the newly created E.P.A. to set standards related to six key pollutants that were known to harm human health.

In recent months the Trump administration has signaled its desire to undo some of parts of the act. Mr. Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, has said that Obama-era car emissions standards designed to reduce greenhouse gasses and other pollutants linked to respiratory diseases and heart disease are set "too high."

THE NEAR-EXTINCTION OF THE GRAY WOLF

In the early 1970s, the gray wolf was teetering on the edge of extinction in the lower 48 states. Throughout the earlier part of the century, the wolf was largely considered a trophy and was hunted and skinned for its fur to within an inch of the species' life.

In its company were dozens of other species at risk of dying out, with few laws to protect them.

In 1973, shortly after the first Earth Day, with the American public increasingly aware of the importance of biodiversity, the Endangered Species Act was signed into law by President Richard M. Nixon. The act was designed to prohibit the killing or harassing of protected species or damaging the habitats necessary for their survival.

Shortly thereafter, the gray wolf was listed as "endangered" under the act and—alongside the bald eagle, American alligator

and dozens of other species—began to slowly recover in some areas. Scientists estimate that the act has directly prevented the extinction of more than 200 species.

The act has long been a point of contention between industry and conservationists, and has come under criticism from previous administrations. But under the Trump administration, at least 63 separate legislative efforts to weaken the act have been undertaken since January 2017, according to the Centre for Biological Diversity.

Among them were the delisting of various species that conservationists argue are not fully recovered, like grizzly bears in Yellowstone National Park. The attempts to water down the act are “among the worst” by any administration, said Bruce Stein, the chief scientist of the National Wildlife Federation.

TRIBUTE TO DWAIN “DOC” PRESTON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in honor of April being National Poetry Month, I want to take a few moments to recognize an extraordinary teacher, poet, and Quincy, IL, legend, Dwain “Doc” Preston.

In the winter of 1936, Doc was born on a farm near Barry, IL. The son of a World War II tank crewman and a tough as nails mother who grew up in Oklahoma surviving the Dust Bowl, Doc attended four different one-room schoolhouses, including Berrian Elementary School in Quincy. After graduating from Liberty High School, he enrolled at Western Illinois University. That was the decision that he said “took me out of the cornfield.”

Doc joined the Air Force, attending Chinese language school, spending 6 hours a day for 8 months, studying at Yale University. To this day, much of his work in the Air Force remains classified. After his service, Doc returned to Quincy and was introduced to Regina Higgins by a friend Jay Lenne at Park Bowl, a bowling alley at the corner of 12th and Harrison. They fell in love, got married, and started their family. They had the first of four daughters in 1963, the second in 1964, the third in 1965, and lastly, the fourth, in—you guessed it—1966.

Doc followed in his uncle’s footsteps—a teacher of 55 years—and accepted a position at Quincy Junior High School after two of his former teachers vouched for him. Six years later, Doc used his G.I. bill to work toward his doctorate at the University of Illinois in Champaign. While working on his dissertation, he taught at Western Illinois University and officially became “Doc” Preston. He then did the unexpected and tried his hand at selling insurance, but Doc had teaching in his blood and returned to the classroom after just 1 year. For the next 26 years, Doc Preston could be found in the classroom, teaching writing, speech, and English at Quincy Notre Dame, where each of his daughters would attend high school. He also supervised the QND student council, teaching leadership skills and important life lessons that aren’t normally found in high school textbooks. Even

after his official retirement, Doc continued teaching creative writing to seniors and others.

Throughout the years, Doc has stayed in touch with many of his students. They will send him notes using words like icon, terrific, great, awesome, amazing, special—to describe him as a teacher or writer, but mostly as a man. When hearing these compliments, he responds in his humble simple way: “That’s always fun.” They just don’t make them like Doc Preston anymore.

Doc and his wife, Regina, spent 44 years, or as Doc put it, “over 16,000 days” together before Regina passed away in 2006, just 4 weeks following Doc’s retirement. In his beautiful poem titled, To Regina, he writes:

For over 16,000 days
You were part of me.
Now only memories are left
Of days that used to be.
But Ah! What memories they are!
The Buoy of my very life,
Which would have been of little worth
Had you not been my wife.

His words are haunting as he takes us on an emotional ride that both breaks the heart and allows us to celebrate the blessings that are memories.

Doc Preston didn’t write to publish or make money. He wrote because he loved it and his audience, consisting largely of his family, loved it. When each of his four daughters were married, Doc wrote them a sonnet. When each of his 11 grandchildren turned 13, he wrote what could be called a “good-bye to their youth” poem. When they were younger, Doc wrote each of them a book. All told, Doc estimates he has written about 150 books. On his 80th birthday, Doc’s children compiled and presented him with a book of his poem’s that he dedicated to Regina.

Despite being a brilliant writer and teacher, Doc’s proudest accomplishment is his family. In an interview last year, he said, “One of the things that is joyful about being a parent is watching them grow up and succeed.” His children certainly did. Two even went into the family business and became teachers. Doc loved parenting, but he once said, “Grandparenting is better.” I couldn’t agree more.

When looking for heaven, many look toward the sky—not Doc Preston. Doc and Regina, looked along the river bluffs of the Mississippi River and built heaven in Quincy, IL. Whether it was with Doc’s wife, Regina, four daughters—Carolyn, Cheri, Debbie, Teresa—11 grandchildren, or countless student, his life, love, and poetry have touched so many lives, including my own.

I want to thank Doc Preston for his dedication to teaching and his generosity to the wonderful people of Quincy. They call Quincy “Gem City.” Well, there is no gem shining brighter than Dwain “Doc” Preston.

Thank you, Doc, for sharing your gift with us all.

I would like to share the final lines of Doc’s poem, Southern Memories.

Oh, yes, I’ll savor snapshots,
To be sure,
But what I’ll treasure most
Are all the memories I made with you.

Doc’s right. I would like to tell him that what will be treasured most by those who know Doc, “Are all the memories [we] made with you.”

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I wish to call attention to what has been called the world’s most neglected humanitarian crisis and call upon the administration to play an active leadership role in helping bring a sustainable peace to the Central African Republic, CAR. Diplomatic attention, especially from the United States, has waned over the past 2 years. If we fail to commit diplomatic attention to CAR, we risk increasing threats to regional stability, U.S. investments, and, most tragically, the lives and livelihoods of millions of Central Africans.

CAR has long been beset by political and social upheaval. Since independence in 1960, the country has endured coups, military mutinies, rebellions, and incursions by the infamous Lord’s Resistance Army. The most recent civil war accelerated in 2013 after rebels opposed to the government of Francois Bozize took over the capitol. Their campaign to seize the capitol and the response by resulting self-defense militias were characterized by widespread violence against civilians. France, the European Union, and the African Union all deployed troops to prevent further bloodshed, and in 2014, the U.N. deployed a peacekeeping mission mandated to protect civilians and prevent further intercommunal fighting. The State Department’s Atrocities Prevention Board identified CAR as a country at risk, and the United States took action accordingly, working on the ground to support interventions to prevent mass atrocities.

These vigorous diplomatic actions ushered in a period of relative calm. In the wake of Pope Benedict’s visit in 2015 and peaceful elections in 2015–2016, the situation on the ground appeared to stabilize. President Faustin-Archange Touadera was elected in what was arguably the most competitive contest of any leader in the central Africa region. Donors pledged \$2.2 billion to support stabilization and postconflict reconstruction in late 2016.

However, in 2017, security in the country began to precipitously decline. Militia and criminal gangs in the north and eastern parts of the country began fighting each other in a quest for control over territory and resources, threatening the fragile peace. Entire villages have been destroyed, civilians targeted and killed. While the government and 13 armed groups signed a notional peace deal in June 2017—the fifth disarmament agreement signed by armed groups in 4 years—renewed fighting quickly followed.

Some armed groups have targeted United Nations peacekeepers, a potential war crime under international law. On April 3, members of “anti-Balaka” militias attacked a United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA, base, killing 1 peacekeeper and injuring 11 others. On April 8, MINUSCA troops came under fire as they were conducting a joint operation with CAR state security forces aimed at disarming and detaining the leaders of what they referred to as criminal groups in Bangui’s last remaining Muslim enclave, the PK5 neighborhood. Two days later, armed groups levied a sustained attack against a MINUSCA base in downtown Bangui, resulting in the death of one peacekeeper.

The resurgence of militia violence has made CAR one of the most dangerous countries in the world for humanitarian workers, leading aid agencies to reconsider their operations there. Six aid workers were killed in February this year alone, and attacks and threats continue. In November 2017, Doctors Without Borders shut down a major operation after a string of attacks and threats.

Some may ask why the United States should care about what happens in a small landlocked country in Africa with a population of just under 5 million. I give you three reasons.

First, as members of the community of nations, we have a moral obligation to take action when we see mass violence and human suffering. United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O’Brien warned in August 2017 that the renewed clashes were early warning signs of a possible move towards genocide. While thankfully that scenario has not unfolded, violence continues to play out along ethnic and sectarian lines, causing social profound cleavages. Armed groups of various stripes carry out atrocities, including widespread sexual violence, against innocent civilians. In 2014, largely Christian anti-Balaka militia groups, waged a systematic campaign in 2014 forcing most of CAR’s Muslim citizens to flee their homes. Many of those Muslim communities remain largely confined to the rebel stronghold of the northeast and small enclaves in the capitol and other population centers. We must do our part to bring this kind of horrific violence to an end. History offers brutal reminders of what happens when the international community fails to intervene on behalf of persecuted minorities.

We must continue to help those in need. The number of internally displaced persons in CAR has increased by more than 70 percent over the past year. Of an estimated total population of 4 million, approximately 681,000 Central Africans are internally displaced—the highest number reported since the height of the conflict in early 2014—while an estimated 568,000 more are sheltering as refugees in neighboring

countries. Over 87,000 children are at risk of acute malnutrition. Yet the U.N. has received only 5 percent of the \$515.6 million it has requested for its 2018 humanitarian response plan. The World Food Program was forced to cut rations in half for the most vulnerable families nearly a year ago, due to lack of funding. Earlier this year, U.N. Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Ursula Mueller stated unequivocally: “If we do not receive funding, people will die.”

Second, lack of stability in CAR has implications for broader regional instability. CAR is located in a volatile and impoverished region with a long history of development, governance, and human rights problems. Violence in CAR only adds to the enormous human suffering in neighboring countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. Other countries bordering CAR continue to struggle against the Boko Haram insurgency. We know that instability throughout the world can directly impact U.S. interests. It is in our interests to promote stability and peace throughout the region.

Third, the U.S. has invested \$1 billion in CAR in the past 2 years; promoting lasting stability and governance is the surest way for our investments to yield positive results. Our Permanent Representative to the U.N., Ambassador Nikki Haley, has spent considerable time focusing on cutting peacekeeping costs, and the administration has signaled its desire to limit funding for U.N. peacekeeping missions. However, it has spent precious little time investing in diplomatic strategies and initiatives to end the conflicts that have necessitated these missions and would support their success. Doing so would be more cost effective, as well as having a positive impact on those impacted by conflict.

The situation is dire. In the absence of action by the administration, along with our partners in the international community, the risk of the CAR fully collapsing is high, but while it might be difficult to turn back the increasing tide of violence facing the country, it is not impossible. I urge the administration to take the following steps: fully staff senior leadership positions at the Department of State and USAID. It is well past time for this administration to put our foreign policy house in order to best advance American interests. The administration has not nominated an ambassador to CAR, leaving the post vacant for over 6 months. It also has not nominated an Assistant Secretary of State for Africa to coordinate policy and engage with counterparts in the region and among our partners in Europe and elsewhere. There is no Assistant Administrator for Africa at USAID at a time of unprecedented humanitarian needs on the continent. We need high-ranking diplomats and aid officials to bring fresh ideas and energy into policy discus-

sions in Washington and galvanize action in capitols of other countries. Quickly filling vacancies is an easily accomplished task that would have a significant impact; formulate an updated strategy for CAR. Fully staffed or not, given the situation on the ground, the administration must act. Three years ago, the Obama administration put forward such a strategy in response to legislation. This administration should follow up and respond to changing conditions on the ground by putting in place a multiyear, comprehensive strategy to support greater peace and stability in CAR as a foundation for future development and prosperity. Such a plan should include humanitarian and development goals in addition to plans for diplomatic actions and engagement; work with other donors and the United Nations to incentivize greater progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and security sector reform. The 2015 “Bangui Forum” called for all combatants to give up their weapons prior to national elections in 2016. This process was never undertaken. A renewed effort a year ago has yet to yield significant results. We must continue support for rule of law and accountability. Financial and diplomatic support for CAR’s nascent special criminal court is also critical to fulfilling this process.

Finally, we must signal our intention to follow through with commitments to the people of CAR and to our international partners by sending a high-level delegation from Washington to CAR and inviting President Touadera to the United States for an official visit.

None of the policy recommendations I am suggesting are particularly difficult. All it takes is time, attention, and, to be frank, an interest in being involved to devise a strategy and determine how to adequately fund it. I urge the administration not to let a tragedy occur due to indifference.

RECOGNIZING CLEAR SPRINGS FOODS, INC.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, today, along with my colleague Senator MIKE CRAPO, I wish to recognize fellow Idahoan Larry Cope who retired from Clear Springs Foods, Inc., in Buhl, ID, in March of this year. Larry, who is president and CEO of the company, has had an exemplary career as a visionary and selfless leader at Clear Springs for the past 45 years. He deserves to retire.

Idaho is very proud to be home to the headquarters of Clear Springs Foods, the world’s largest producer of aquacultured rainbow trout, supplying restaurants and major supermarkets throughout the United States and propelling fish farming well beyond our borders. Larry would tell us it has taken a great team to lead this originally privately owned small business into the immensely successful 100-percent employee-owned operation it is

today, but we know it was with Larry's cutting-edge leadership and distinguished commitment to the business that it has grown into such a global industry.

In 1973, with just \$10,000—money critical to the company at the time—and a true spirit of recognizing the value of good workers, Larry created an employee retirement plan and stayed committed to the plan. Today the retirement fund is more than \$60 million. Larry believes in taking care of his workers, many of whom go in every day to do difficult, routine work. Larry exhibits the type of leader every industry needs: focused while looking ahead, kind, fair, and employee friendly. No one has to tell him to serve in this manner; it is who he is, and he does it with a spring in his step.

MIKE and I have known Larry since the days Clear Springs had an annual production of 450,000 pounds of trout. Now, the company produces 24 million pounds every year, making it an exemplary industry leader.

Larry has been immensely valuable to the aquaculture industry worldwide. He has been in many leadership roles in business associations and boards, and he has won many awards. To name a few of his roles in the food industry and beyond, Larry has served as a board member and chairman of the National Fisheries Institute, the American Frozen Food Institute, the Idaho Association of Commerce & Industry, as well as St. Luke's Health System. In addition, he has served as a trustee at the College of Idaho, his alma mater.

Another important character quality Larry exhibits is believing in serving his community. He is a pillar of support and encouragement to the region, having helped bring St. Luke's Hospital into the Magic Valley, as well as supporting the growth of the region's food production industry. As food production grows, so does the number of jobs and residual businesses. This is good growth for Idaho.

MIKE and I are proud to recognize Larry Cope, our good friend and a strong, courageous, and dedicated leader in Idaho. As I said a minute ago, Larry has done so much in business and community service for more than 45 years that he has earned his retirement.

Larry, kick up your feet and go fishing.

Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CAROLYN LUMSDEN

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Carolyn Lumsden, who received the Sigma Delta Chi Award from the Society of Professional Journalists.

Ms. Lumsden, an opinion editor for the Hartford Courant, wrote an editorial series last year which revealed the breadth of the crumbling concrete

foundations issue in northeastern Connecticut. Her work, "Crumbling Foundations," gave a thorough look at this tragic situation where hundreds, potentially tens of thousands, of homes have foundations that need to be replaced because the concrete contains an iron sulfide that ultimately weakens the structure. Through her months of research, Ms. Lumsden spoke with homeowners, engineers, geologists, data analysts, bankers, and lawyers to understand the complete scope of this problem.

"Crumbling Foundations" initiated much-needed, positive progress for the people of Connecticut, thanks in part to the data and personal testimonies Ms. Lumsden gathered. In the months following the series' publishing, the Internal Revenue Service approved tax breaks for homeowners, and the State of Connecticut approved \$100 million in bonding over 5 years to help the homeowners suffering from crumbling foundations. I am working, along with my congressional delegation colleagues, on additional Federal relief to homeowners and funding for research into pyrrhotite.

Ms. Lumsden's dedication to using her position as a journalist to assist the people of Connecticut is deeply admirable. For over 200 years, the American press has uncovered and reported vital information to the public about our communities. Thanks to "Crumbling Foundations," our State is now acutely aware of this significant tragedy and is working actively to find a solution.

I applaud her tireless efforts to uncover the truth of this problem and hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Ms. Lumsden on her well-earned honor.●

TRIBUTE TO WAYNE HAVER

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate Mr. Wayne Haver, principal of Southside High School in Fort Smith, AR. Mr. Haver will retire at the end of this school year after 48 years of service to Fort Smith Public Schools.

Having started as a teacher at Southside in 1970, Mr. Haver has had a long, distinguished career as an educator and administrator. He became an assistant principal at the school in 1974 and, in 1982 was named principal and has served in that role ever since.

Enrollment at Southside now stands at over 1,500 students, and the community has witnessed how much the school has changed and grown under Mr. Haver's guidance. Thousands of students have graduated from the school during his tenure.

As principal for more than 35 years, some of those graduates have returned as teachers and now work alongside an educator who served as a mentor both while they were students and now as instructors. Southside has also been recognized three times as a School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of

Education, a testament to Mr. Haver's leadership.

In 2013, Mr. Haver was named Administrator of the Year by the National Association of Education Office Professionals. At the time, he was only the second Arkansas educator to have received the award.

Upon his retirement, Principal Haver will be leaving an incredible legacy of education and service to his community. He is only the second principal Southside High School has ever had in its 55-year history. He has spent his career devoted to education, seldom missing a day of work. He is admired by his staff, who say he is an incredible man to work for and will be greatly missed.

His musical ability has been cherished by students and faculty alike and will be remembered fondly after he retires. He learned to play the school's fight song on his harmonica, and his performances became a fixture at pep rallies and other school events.

I congratulate Wayne Haver on a remarkable career and admire his dedication to the students and families of Fort Smith and Southside High School. As a native of Fort Smith, I am incredibly proud of everything he has accomplished. His dedication and professionalism have certainly helped to make the community a better place to live. I wish him all the best in retirement and thank him for his countless contributions to Southside High School.●

RECOGNIZING ANFINSON FARM STORE

• Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Anfinson Farm Store, a small business in Cushing, IA, that has been a staple of the community for 100 years.

Like many businesses, Anfinson Farm Store will be receiving significant tax relief from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and they are using this as an opportunity to invest in their most important resource: their employees. After the legislation was signed into law, owner John Anfinson, who has owned the business for 46 years, announced that all seven of their full-time employees would receive \$1,000 bonuses and 5-percent pay increases. He was also able to purchase nearly \$400,000 in new equipment with 1-year expensing.

Small businesses make up 97 percent of employers in Iowa, and prior to the passage of tax reform, they were taxed at marginal rates that often reached as high as 45 percent. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is a monumental achievement for small businesses, reducing their tax burden so that they can grow and invest in their employees.

As we celebrate National Small Business Week, I would like to recognize Anfinson Farm Store and all of Iowa's small businesses, who are the backbone of our economy. I would also like to express my gratitude to the President

and my colleagues in Congress for helping to reduce the tax burden on our small businesses.●

RECOGNIZING WEBCO INDUSTRIES

● Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, small businesses play an integral role in Oklahoma's economy. They consist of over 52 percent of all employees in Oklahoma. Additionally, within Oklahoma, over 84 percent of all exports come from small businesses. Today I have the distinct honor of recognizing one of the many successful small businesses in my home State of Oklahoma for National Small Business Week. While there are many businesses worthy of recognition, I am particularly proud of Webco Industries.

Webco Industries, based in Sand Springs, OK, has proven themselves as a leader in the metal tubing industry. Their philosophy of "continuously building" is a testament to how they have grown since 1969 into the 1,000-employee company they are today. With seven manufacturing plants and two distribution facilities, they provide the widest variety of tubing in North America. With engineering, metallurgical, production, and QA staff averaging 20 years of experience, Webco delivers exceptional tubing products and service to their customers.

I want to congratulate and thank Webco founder, Bill Weber, and CEO Dana Weber of Webco for their outstanding and devoted work in creating a shining business model. The Weber's dedication to making these products in America should not only make Oklahomans proud, but all Americans. Webco's success should be an example for all businesses, and I am proud to recognize their hard work and dedication.●

RECOGNIZING CANAL COFFEE

● Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is my honor to recognize Canal Coffee from Kinder, LA, as the Small Business of the Day for the 2018 National Small Business Week. Small businesses like minority and veteran-owned Canal Coffee exemplify the pursuit of the American dream.

Canal Coffee is owned and operated by Priscilla Mayfield and Rodrick James. James, affectionately known back home as Coffee Man, was born in Bossier City, LA. After serving in the U.S. Army for 8 years, James attended the Culinary School of America and worked as the executive chef at Coushatta Casino Resort. In the fall of 2016, the duo opened the original Canal Coffee on the corner of 4th Avenue and 9th Street in Kinder, LA. Since then, they have opened two more locations in Oberlin and Shreveport, with a third location coming soon. The goal is to open a total of 25 Canal Coffee shops in the next 5 years. James says his recipe for success is to "stay in front of God and work hard."

Canal Coffee should not only be admired for their business success, but

also commended for giving back to the local community. As a part of their Community Strong campaign, Canal Coffee donates a portion of their high school football game concession sales to schools in Allen Parish. They also extend the shop's closing time to midnight so that the kids have a safe place to socialize after games.

I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations to Canal Coffee on being recognized during the 2018 National Small Business Week. You make Louisiana proud, and I look forward to watching your continued growth and success.●

RECOGNIZING AMERICA'S FINEST FILTERS

● Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I first visited America's Finest Filters in 2015, after hearing about the incredible work this small business was doing in serving the members of Louisville's community. Founded by Michael White and now run by his daughter TaHondra Johnson, America's Finest Filters believes in the power of second chances and makes a conscious effort to employ ex-offenders, who currently make up over half of their employees.

What America's Finest Filters understands is that breaking the cycle of poverty, incarceration, and addiction can be done through providing opportunities for meaningful work and taking responsibility. When I visited with their employees, I listened to many stories of those who turned their lives around because America's Finest Filters gave them the tools to succeed.

April is also Second Chance Month, which is why I am proud to recognize this business for giving second chances to those who so truly deserve them. I am also recognizing this business in honor of late founder Michael White, who sadly lost his battle with cancer in 2016. He set a true example of what it means to be a role model and leader, and his philanthropic achievements and impact on the community will never be forgotten.●

RECOGNIZING SMITTY'S PANCAKE AND STEAK HOUSE

● Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, as you may know, small businesses make up a significant portion of the retail and food services economy, both in my home State of Idaho and around the country. In Idaho, small businesses employ 67 percent of workers in the food services sector. As chairman of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am proud to recognize Smitty's Pancake and Steak House as the Small Business of the Month for April 2018. Located in Idaho Falls, Smitty's Pancake and Steak House has provided exceptional service and quality food in a welcoming environment for decades.

Like many small restaurants, Smitty's began as just one location within a larger franchise network.

However, in 1971, Leo and Cleo Werner left their jobs to buy the franchise license, thus changing the structure of the restaurant. Right away, the Werners knew that, in order to build a successful restaurant and leave a positive legacy, they would need to build customer loyalty by emphasizing customer service and creating an environment that makes their customers feel at home. When the Smitty's chain rebranded, Mr. and Mrs. Werner decided to strike out on their own as independent owners. The Werners decided that they should continue focusing on the values at the center of their business, rather than sacrifice their restaurant's charm for the relative stability of being part of a chain. These values live on in the restaurant today, as the business is led by Mr. and Mrs. Werner's granddaughters, Katrina Lott and Amanda Rosenberg. They have kept the restaurant in the family, taking over when their mother, the Werner's daughter Darlene, retired.

The Werners were eager to lead their team of employees by example, taking up any task that needed to get done around the restaurant, no matter how big or small. Their attention to customer service created strong loyalty among their customers, which is one of the many reasons people return. The Werners know that their customers are coming back in part for the family atmosphere cultivated by their friendly staff. Smitty's is known for serving a high volume of people at all times of the day, with some people lining up before 6 in the morning in order to get a taste of their hand-cut steaks and buttermilk pancakes. They have truly lived up to their motto of "everybody's favorite."

The restaurant enjoys strong customer loyalty not only because of the superb service, but also because of the tasty breakfast and dinner offerings, which remain largely unchanged from when Leo and Cleo Werner took control of the restaurant over 46 years ago. Whether you are looking for a traditional American breakfast or a homestyle steak-and-potatoes dinner, visitors and native Idahoans alike know they can find it at Smitty's.

Smitty's Pancake and Steak House has become a landmark in the Idaho Falls community by having the friendliest service in town and maintaining a menu of favorite items that keep customers coming back for more. Mr. and Mrs. Werner knew what it would take to build a small business in the food service industry and ensured that their values have been passed down to their children and grandchildren, who maintain these values today. Smitty's embraces the values of loyalty, service, and hard work and serves as an example for all entrepreneurs.

With great pleasure, I extend my congratulations to the Werner family and all of the employees of Smitty's Pancake and Steak House. I wish you well as you continue serving the people of Idaho Falls, and I look forward to

watching your continued growth and success.●

RECOGNIZING DAIRY QUEEN OF MADISON, SOUTH DAKOTA

● Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, each year, a proclamation is issued designating National Small Business Week, a time to recognize the important contributions America's small business owners make to our economy and our local communities. South Dakota is home to many small businesses with a strong commitment to producing quality products while serving their community. Today it is my honor to recognize the Dairy Queen of Madison, SD, which serves as a testament as to what makes South Dakota's small business owners exemplary.

In 1964, the Mork family acquired the franchise license for the Madison Dairy Queen and continues to operate it successfully. Today DeLon Mork continues his family's business as the current owner of the restaurant. DeLon and his family are passionate about providing excellent service to their customers while giving back to the community that supports them. Each year, many Dairy Queens participate in Miracle Treat Day, to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network. For the past 11 years, DeLon and his team at the Madison Dairy Queen have worked to sell the most Blizzards of any Dairy Queen in North America on Miracle Treat Day. Their hard work on behalf of the Children's Miracle Network exemplifies the commitment to community service shared by the Mork family and the entire team at the Madison Dairy Queen. I commend the entire organization for their contributions to this great cause.

Small businesses like DeLon's play an important role in South Dakota's economy, and with this recognition, I hope to shine a light on his great work. His dedication to producing a quality product and serving his community makes all of South Dakota proud. I want to congratulate and thank DeLon and the entire Mork family for their outstanding devotion to our community. I send them best wishes as they continue to serve the community of Madison, SD.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the Secretary of the Senate, on April 25, 2018, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker had signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 4300. An act to authorize Pacific Historic Parks to establish a commemorative display to honor members of the United States Armed Forces who served in the Pacific Theater of World War II, and for other purposes.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:44 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 447. An act to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2809. An act to amend title 51, United States Code, to provide for the authorization and supervision of nongovernmental space activities, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4681. An act to limit assistance for areas of Syria controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5086. An act to require the Director of the National Science Foundation to develop an I-Corps course to support commercialization-ready innovation companies, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 111. Concurrent resolution recognizing and supporting the efforts of the United Bid Committee to bring the 2026 Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup competition to Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH) announced that on today, April 25, 2018, he had signed the following enrolled bill, which was previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

H.R. 4300. An act to authorize Pacific Historic Parks to establish a commemorative display to honor members of the United States Armed Forces who served in the Pacific Theater of World War II, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2809. An act to amend title 51, United States Code, to provide for the authorization and supervision of nongovernmental space activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 4681. An act to limit assistance for areas of Syria controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 5086. An act to require the Director of the National Science Foundation to develop an I-Corps course to support commercialization-ready innovation companies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 111. Concurrent resolution recognizing and supporting the efforts of the United Bid Committee to bring the 2026 Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup competition to Canada, Mexico, and the United States; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-205. A concurrent memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona petitioning the United States Congress to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Service Company to honor their unique and distinguished service with the Ghost Army during World War II; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2008

Whereas, during World War II in the European Theater of Operations, the American GIs of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Service Company wielded creativity and illusion to fool the German Army on the battlefield; and

Whereas, using inflatable tanks and artillery, sound equipment and impersonation, Ghost Army soldiers contrived to confuse the enemy about where the real Allied fighting units were located; and

Whereas, in so doing, these unsung heroes risked their own lives to draw fire away from American troops on the battlefields of Europe; and

Whereas, these soldiers carried out more than 20 deception missions on or near the front lines in France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany and Italy, which cost them dozens of casualties, including the loss of three lives; and

Whereas, the men of these United States Army units are credited with saving thousands of American GIs and helping win World War II; and

Whereas, their daring battlefield deceptions were kept secret for more than fifty years after the war, and, because of that secrecy, they never received public recognition for their valor; and

Whereas, the veterans of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Service Company made significant contributions to our nation but never sought praise or honors for themselves for their wartime exploits; and

Whereas, these men literally serve as an inspiration to the latest generation of soldiers serving in intelligence roles as the United States Army uses the story of the Ghost Army in the Intelligence School at Fort Huachuca; and

Whereas, several soldiers who called Arizona home before or after the war served in these deception units, including Glenn Uhles, who is buried in the National Memorial Center of Arizona, and painter Hal Laynor; and

Whereas, this state is deeply grateful for the extraordinary courage and remarkable ingenuity of the Ghost Soldiers in facing the enemy, and the people of Arizona laud these veterans for their proficient use of innovative tactics during World War II, which saved lives and made significant contributions to the defeat of the Axis powers; and

Whereas, the extraordinary accomplishments of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Service Company deserve belated official recognition now, while some of the soldiers are still living. Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

1. That the United States Congress award a Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Service Company to honor their unique and distinguished service with the Ghost Army during World War II.

2. That the Members of the United States Congress enact H.R. 2701 and S. 1256 to honor

the achievements of the Ghost Army in conducting deception operations in Europe during World War II.

3. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies of this Memorial to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and each Member of Congress from the State of Arizona.

POM-206. A concurrent memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona urging the United States Congress to allow the Department of Transportation to provide additional Essential Air Service (EAS)-specific waivers for the 1,500 flight-hour training requirement to airlines to allow second-in-command commercial airline pilots the flexibility to serve EAS communities; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2005

Whereas, the City of Prescott is an Essential Air Service ("EAS") community; and

Whereas, the United States Congress instituted a requirement following the February 2009 airline accident involving Colgan Air Flight 3407; and

Whereas, the National Transportation Safety Board concluded that the cause of the crash was pilot error and inability to properly handle the aircraft; and

Whereas, following the crash, Congress implemented a requirement that all second-in-command commercial pilots obtain roughly 1,500 hours of flight time; and

Whereas, the first pilot in command of Colgan Air Flight 3407 had logged 3,379 total hours of flight time and the second pilot in command had logged 2,244 hours of flight time; and

Whereas, the pilots involved in the Flight 3407 crash met all the requirements under the new rule but were unfamiliar with the aircraft that crashed; and

Whereas, the current flight-hour requirement is the same regardless of the aircraft in use; and

Whereas, the current flight-hour requirement emphasizes quantity of flight hours over quality of flight hours; and

Whereas, EAS communities are often small or rural in nature and rely on smaller regional airlines using smaller aircraft, including smaller turboprop or jets, to support their communities; and

Whereas, without these smaller airlines and the pilots to fly the aircraft, rural communities would lose their connectivity to the rest of the nation; and

Whereas, many pilots cannot justify the high cost of education with several years of low salaries and unpredictable schedules to obtain the required 1,500 hours of flight time before being able to advance to a regional or major airline; and

Whereas, the 1,500 flight-hour rule incentivizes many pilots, on achieving the minimum requirement, to work for large commercial airlines in an effort to pay off their student loan expenses instead of remaining in EAS communities; and

Whereas, before the rule's implementation, second-in-command commercial pilots needed only approximately 250 hours of flight time; and

Whereas, the current 1,500 flight-hour rule has reduced the number of pilots working in EAS communities.

Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

1. That the United States Congress act expeditiously to allow the United States Department of Transportation to provide additional EAS-specific waivers for the 1,500 flight-hour training requirement to airlines

to allow second-in-command commercial airline pilots the flexibility to serve EAS communities.

2. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies of this Memorial to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and each Member of Congress from the State of Arizona.

POM-207. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho urging the Secretary of Transportation to revise regulations to provide that the weight of a trailer being pulled by a commercial motor vehicle may not be included in the trigger weight of 26,001 pounds, requiring the truck's operator to have a commercial driver's license; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 12

Whereas, Congress has delegated authority to the United States Secretary of Transportation to prescribe regulations on minimum standards for written and driving tests of an individual operating a motor vehicle; and

Whereas, Congress granted authority to the United States Secretary of Transportation to prescribe different minimum testing standards for different classes of commercial motor vehicles; and

Whereas, Congress provided by law in 49 U.S.C. 31301 that one factor in establishing whether a vehicle is a commercial motor vehicle is whether the vehicle has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of no more than 26,001 pounds, but made no mention of combination vehicles pulling trailers; and

Whereas, the United States Secretary of Transportation has prescribed regulations that apply the trigger weight to a combination of vehicles if a vehicle being towed exceeds 10,000 pounds. For example, the operator of a commercial truck weighing 15,500 pounds that tows a trailer weighing 11,000 pounds would be required to obtain a Class A commercial driver's license; and

Whereas, many small businesses use trailers in their work, such as landscape work and construction or repair work; and

Whereas, requiring small business owners to obtain commercial driver's licenses in order to pull trailers behind their trucks poses an unnecessary obstacle to the ability of small business owners to earn their living. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the members of the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that the United States Secretary of Transportation is urged to revise regulations to provide that the weight of a trailer being pulled by a commercial motor vehicle may not be included in the trigger weight of 26,001 pounds, requiring the truck's operator to have a commercial driver's license. Be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the United States Secretary of Transportation, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.

POM-208. A concurrent memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona urging the United States Congress to reauthorize Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act funding; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SENATE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 1007

Whereas, rural communities and schools in and around national forests have historically

relied on a share of receipts from timber harvests to support education services and roads; and

Whereas, in the 1980s, federal restrictions substantially diminished the revenue-generating timber harvests permitted in these forests; and

Whereas, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) was passed in 2000 to stabilize and transition payments to counties and schools away from the declining and unreliable share of timber sales; and

Whereas, the failure of Congress to honor the more than 100-year-old contract between the federal government and heavily forested communities by not reauthorizing SRS funding for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 and other years created budgetary shortfalls for rural counties and school districts.

Wherefore your memorialist, the Senate of the State of Arizona, the House of Representatives concurring, prays:

1. That the United States Congress immediately reauthorize SRS funding for fiscal years 2019 and 2020 and work toward a long-term solution.

2. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit a copy of this Memorial to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and each Member of Congress from the State of Arizona.

POM-209. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho memorializing its opposition to any new federal national monument designations or further designations of wilderness in the State of Idaho without the approval of the United States Congress and the Idaho Legislature; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 14

Whereas, the Antiquities Act was passed by the United States Congress and signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt on June 8, 1906. The law gives the President of the United States the authority to, by presidential proclamation, create national monuments from federal lands to protect significant natural, cultural or scientific features. The law has been used more than one hundred times since its passage; and

Whereas, the Wilderness Act was passed in 1964 and, since that time, the United States Congress has designated nearly 110 million acres of federal wildlands as official wilderness, which has the highest form of protection of any federal wildland; and

Whereas, almost sixty-two percent of land in Idaho is federal land; and

Whereas, residents of the State of Idaho support multiple use of public land. Current multiple use and private land protection policies governing the management of public land in Idaho have generally served and sustained the interests of Idaho residents; and

Whereas, ranching and agriculture play a substantial role in the state's heritage and identity and should be preserved; and

Whereas, ranching, agriculture, mining, the forestry industry and recreation are primary economic drivers in the state, with agribusiness and recreation each contributing an estimated \$7.6 billion, the mining industry contributing \$1.3 billion and the forestry industry contributing \$2 billion to the economy annually in recent years, all of which would be substantially impacted by any land management changes; and

Whereas, Idaho residents, families and visitors currently enjoy multiple use on federal lands and have generations of family traditions. Changing federal land designations would impact local wildlife management as well as opportunities to hunt and fish; and

Whereas, changes in federal land designations or classifications would affect land use by imposing restrictions on development, resource extraction, recreation and land exchanges that would result in diminished economic opportunities and restrictions on access and multiple use; and

Whereas, the people of the State of Idaho value abundant water resources and water rights and have concern that new national monument designations or further designation of wilderness by Congress could affect those resources and rights; and

Whereas, the Idaho Roadless Rule is Idaho's 2006 plan that provides a framework for use and protection of more than nine million acres of federal public backcountry. The rule is viewed as a nationwide model of collaboration among groups and individuals with diverse interests and concerns; and

Whereas, the Roadless Rule specifically prescribes protective management under the wildland recreation theme, and it is feared that utilization of the Antiquities Act for new national monument designations or further designation of wilderness by Congress would overturn the agreement reached in the formulation of the Idaho Roadless Rule, with no effort to reach consensus through coordination as required by federal law; and

Whereas, several years ago, advisory votes relating to a suggested new national monument designation and a wilderness designation in Idaho were held in a number of potentially affected counties in central and eastern Idaho, both showing over ninety percent opposition to such designations. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the members of the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that we oppose any new federal national monument designations or further designations of wilderness in the State of Idaho without the approval of the United States Congress and the Idaho Legislature. Be it further

Resolved, That the Idaho congressional delegation is urged to introduce and support legislation to oppose any new federal national monument designations or further designations of wilderness in the State of Idaho without the approval of the United States Congress and the Idaho Legislature. Be it further

Resolved, That any efforts to reach decisions regarding lands and resources of the State of Idaho administered by federal agencies or their designees be made through the lawful coordination process as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the National Forest Management Act, the 2012 Forest Service Planning Rule and other federal acts requiring coordination, rather than by unilateral administrative processes that exclude the residents of the State of Idaho. Be it further

Resolved, That, nothing in this Joint Memorial is intended to conflict with the maximization of the collaborative process and the Good Neighbor Authority, together with the tools available to address stakeholder interests in the management of federal lands. Be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.

POM-210. A concurrent memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona urging the United States Congress to immediately conduct a full and transparent investigation into organ transplant and procurement practices in the People's Republic of China; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Whereas, since July 1999, the People's Republic of China has persecuted practitioners of Falun Gong—a spiritual practice with key values of truthfulness, compassion and forbearance for achieving physical and spiritual well-being through exercise and meditation—as documented by the United States Department of State, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House and many other governmental and third-party organizations; and

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2004

Whereas, the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners involves the widespread use of torture, forced labor work, illegal detention centers and prisons, and these illegally detained prisoners of conscience experience forced medical examinations, including blood and urine testing, x-rays, ultrasounds and CT scans; and

Whereas, the official reported transplant numbers in China increased threefold nationwide between 1999 and 2004, parallel to the onset of the persecution of Falun Gong; and

Whereas, the organ transplant system in China does not comply with the World Health Organization's requirement for transparent and traceable accessibility of organ procurement practices, and the People's Republic of China has prevented any independent or impartial inspection and verification of its transplant system; and

Whereas, the current chairman of China's Human Organ and Transplant Committee, Dr. Huang Jiefu, claimed that China would stop sourcing organs from executed prisoners on January 1, 2015, yet no official agency of the People's Republic of China has made such a declaration nor has this claim been verified by any independent researcher. In May 2016, Dr. Jiefu announced via state-run media that China would increase the number of transplant centers from 169 to 300 over the next five years; and

Whereas, the People's Republic of China has not officially repealed provisions implemented in 1984 that allow the harvesting of organs from executed prisoners, and the use of organs from executed prisoners therefore remains legal; and

Whereas, large discrepancies exist between the People's Republic of China's officially reported transplant numbers and those estimated by independent researchers; and

Whereas, updated evidence estimates that between 30,000 and 100,000 transplants occur annually in China without identified organ sources; and

Whereas, updated evidence suggests that a significant number of Falun Gong practitioners may have been killed for their organs since 1999; and

Whereas, recipients for these transplants are Chinese citizens and individuals from abroad, including the United States; and

Whereas, in 2015, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom's annual report again listed China as a "country of particular concern" due to severe human rights violations and illegal organ harvesting practices, stating that "imprisoned Falun Gong practitioners are particularly targeted"; and

Whereas, in 2015 and 2016, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China condemned ongoing, unethical forced organ harvesting practices in China; and

Whereas, in March 2015, the Council of Europe passed a Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs that stated "trafficking in human organs violates human dignity and

the right to life and constitutes a serious threat to public health"; and

Whereas, in May 2016, the Minnesota Legislature passed Resolution S.F. No. 2090, "expressing concern over persistent and credible reports of systematic, state-sanctioned, forced organ harvesting from nonconsenting prisoners of conscience, primarily from Falun Gong practitioners imprisoned for their spiritual beliefs, and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups in the People's Republic of China"; and

Whereas, in June 2016, the United States House of Representatives passed House Resolution 343 expressing concern over China's organ procurement from nonconsenting prisoners of conscience, including "large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups"; and

Whereas, in September 2016, the European Parliament passed Written Declaration 0048, which states that "the international community has strongly condemned organ harvesting in China and actions should be taken to end it"; and

Whereas, the charitable medical ethics advocacy association Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting, which has monitored and objectively reported on the transplant situation in China for the last decade, was nominated for the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize; and

Whereas, the killing of prisoners, including religious or political prisoners, to sell their organs for transplant is an egregious and intolerable violation of the fundamental right to life.

Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

1. That the United States Congress immediately conduct a full and transparent investigation into organ transplant and procurement practices in the People's Republic of China.

2. That the United States Congress prohibit the entry into the United States of doctors involved in unethical organ procurement or transplant surgery using organs harvested from prisoners in China.

3. That the United States Congress enact legislation to prohibit United States citizens from receiving organ transplants abroad if the organ sourcing is neither transparent nor traceable according to international ethical guidelines.

4. That Arizona's medical community caution patients against traveling to China for organs and strive to raise awareness among health care providers, students, patients and the public of the unethical organ transplant practices in the People's Republic of China.

5. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies of this Memorial to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Executive Director of the Arizona Medical Board and the Dean of the University of Arizona College of Medicine.

POM-211. A joint memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho urging the Department of State to support several positions in negotiations with Canada regarding any modification or future implementation of the Columbia River Treaty; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 11

Whereas, since it was implemented in 1964, the Columbia River Treaty has provided for a coordinated management of the Columbia River to reduce flooding impacts and increase power generation throughout the Columbia River Basin; and

Whereas, the treaty provides that either the United States or Canada may terminate

the treaty by providing written notice at least 10 years in advance of termination; and

Whereas, the U.S. and Canadian entities previously reviewed the treaty and determined that the treaty should be modified; and

Whereas, on December 7, 2017, the U.S. State Department issued a press release stating that the United States and Canada will begin negotiations to modernize the treaty in early 2018; and

Whereas, the U.S. Entity Regional Recommendation of 2013 concluded that the purposes of a “modernized” treaty should be expanded to include consideration of “ecosystem-based function” in addition to the original flood control and hydropower purposes of the treaty; and

Whereas, unless otherwise agreed to, the treaty provides that, in 2024, flood control operations will automatically shift from providing guaranteed flood control space in Canadian reservoirs to “called upon” flood control operations; and

Whereas, the U.S. and Canadian entities have provided differing interpretations of the “called upon” flood control provisions, with the U.S. Entity asserting that “called upon” operations apply only to dams in the Columbia River Basin specifically authorized for “system-wide flood control,” and the Canadian Entity taking the position that all U.S. storage projects in the Columbia River Basin must be utilized for system-wide flood control before Canadian reservoirs are called upon to provide any flood control space; and

Whereas, altered flood control operations could have devastating impacts on reservoir storage and operation levels, irrigation, recreation, hydropower, local flood control and other authorized purposes in Idaho; and

Whereas, the Canadian Entitlement, whereby the U.S. and Canadian entities share the increased power production created by coordinated river operations, has proven to be imbalanced in favor of Canada; and

Whereas, including ecosystem-based function in a modernized treaty could have adverse impacts on existing beneficial uses of the river and create greater uncertainty in a river system that is already heavily regulated; and

Whereas, the Regional Recommendation fails to recognize the substantial investment in ecosystem-based function made by Northwest region hydropower producers and their customers, including billions of dollars invested in fish passage and habitat efforts and the development and implementation of robust environmental mitigation plans; and

Whereas, navigation should be protected, and adverse flows should not impact the transportation channel or lock system operations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the members of the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-fourth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that we urge the U.S. Department of State to support the following positions in negotiations with Canada regarding any modification or future implementation of the Columbia River Treaty:

(1) Recognize and protect the authorized purposes and water rights for storage projects in Idaho, including irrigation, recreation, hydropower and local flood control;

(2) Advocate that only storage projects specifically authorized by Congress for system-wide flood control may be required to provide such benefits under the treaty, with no increased flood control burden placed on projects in Idaho;

(3) Recognize a need to review and rebalance the Canadian Entitlement;

(4) Recognize the ecosystem benefits that have already been provided by storage projects in the United States pursuant to the

other federal laws and refrain from advocating for additional ecosystem contributions from U.S. projects;

(5) Recognize that ecosystem restoration, as that term has been used by some proponents of modernization, is intentionally vague and if incorporated into an international treaty could be used as a vehicle to override and infringe upon existing federal environmental laws and usurp state sovereignty over water and, therefore, require any treaty modification to preserve federal environmental protection laws and state water laws and reject any additional mitigation requirements;

(6) Require any treaty modification to recognize the primary authority and state sovereignty of Idaho and its sister states over their respective water resources;

(7) Reject any attempts through the treaty modification process to incorporate the re-introduction of anadromous species above Hells Canyon or Dworshak, as such efforts are outside the scope of the treaty purposes; and

(8) Protect navigation so that adverse flows do not impact the transportation channel or block system operations; and be it further

Resolved that the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States, the U.S. Department of State, the Columbia River Treaty Negotiator, the U.S. Entity Coordinator, Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

POM-212. A concurrent resolution adopted by General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky urging the United States Congress to amend the federal Controlled Substances Act to remove hemp from the definition of marijuana; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 35

Whereas, for several years, hemp, a non-narcotic low-concentration THC variety of the cannabis plant, has been listed along with marijuana under the federal Controlled Substances Act; and

Whereas, in 2014, Congress enacted a provision of law, now codified as 7 U.S.C. sec. 5940, authorizing state departments of agriculture and institutions of higher education to grow or cultivate industrial hemp in jurisdictions where it is allowed by state law for purposes of research conducted under an agricultural pilot program or other agricultural or academic research; and

Whereas, since 2014, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture has conducted a hemp research pilot program that is widely regarded as a model for other states to emulate; and

Whereas, Kentucky’s farmers planted 33 acres of hemp in 2014, a total of 922 acres in 2015, some 2,300 acres in 2016, and 3,200 acres in 2017; and

Whereas, from 2014 to 2017, the number of farmers in Kentucky growing hemp increased from 20 to 204, with even more interest in hemp production anticipated in 2018; and

Whereas, from 2014 to 2017, the number of hemp processors increased from nine to 49; and

Whereas, in 2017, the General Assembly amended Kentucky’s Controlled Substances Act to exclude many hemp materials and products from the Commonwealth’s definition of illegal marijuana; and

Whereas, processors in Kentucky and other states have proven that hemp is an economi-

cally viable agricultural commodity that can be used to make a wide variety of useful products, including products for human consumption; and

Whereas, removing hemp from the federal definition of marijuana would allow Kentucky’s community of hemp farmers and processors to take full advantage of this promising agricultural crop; Now, Therefore,

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Senate concurring therein:

Section 1. The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky urges the United States Congress to take action by enacting legislation that:

(1) Encourages large-scale commercial cultivation of hemp by removing it from the list of controlled substances under the federal Controlled Substances Act;

(2) Prevents the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) from sending DEA agents onto farms and other sites where hemp is being grown, stored, and processed;

(3) Creates legal protections for depository institutions that provide financial services to legitimate hemp businesses; and

(4) Instructs the federal Food and Drug Administration to accelerate clinical trials and other research on the health effects of cannabidiol (CBD) and other cannabinoids found in hemp.

Section 2. The Clerk of the House of Representatives shall send a copy of this Resolution and notification of its adoption to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Minority Leader of the United States Senate, and each member of Kentucky’s delegation to the United States Congress.

POM-213. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming urging the United States Congress to enact legislation permitting western states to enter into a voluntary compact to establish a graduated commercial driver licensing program that would allow commercial drivers between eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) years of age to operate a commercial motor vehicle in a consenting, contiguous states; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1

Whereas, federal law requires drivers to be at least twenty-one (21) years of age to operate a commercial motor vehicle between states; and

Whereas, drivers who are between eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) years of age may operate a commercial motor vehicle intrastate within the states of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming; and

Whereas, the trucking industry delivers goods across state lines and faces a severe shortage of drivers because of increased shipping demand and a high number of retiring drivers; and

Whereas, it is difficult to recruit drivers who are twenty-one (21) years of age or older into the trucking industry because they have already entered another career path; and

Whereas, the unemployment rate for persons between eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) years of age is higher than that of other age groups; and

Whereas, the safety performance statistics for noncommercial drivers who are between eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) years of age do not necessarily reflect the safety performance of the same group who hold a commercial driver’s license; and

Whereas, the safety benefits of graduated licensing for noncommercial vehicle drivers are well documented and similar safety benefits may be possible with a graduated commercial licensing program that expands commercial driving privileges; and

Whereas, legislation allowing a voluntary compact between Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming could include a conditional lowering of the twenty-one (21) year old commercial driver age requirement and would allow these contiguous states to establish a graduated commercial driver licensing program to allow drivers between eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) years of age to operate a commercial motor vehicle in a consenting, contiguous state. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Members of the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:

Section 1. That Congress enact legislation permitting Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming to enter into a voluntary compact to establish a graduated commercial driver licensing program to allow drivers who are between eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) years of age and who hold a commercial driver's license issued by a compact state to operate a commercial motor vehicle in a consenting, contiguous compact state.

Section 2. That the Secretary of State of Wyoming transmit copies of this resolution to the President and the Majority Leader of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, the Wyoming Congressional Delegation and to the congressional delegations and the legislative bodies of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota and Utah.

POM-214. A concurrent memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona petitioning the United States Congress to enact into law the proposed Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2007

Whereas, United States service members who served in the territorial seas of Vietnam during the Vietnam War were exposed to more than 20 million gallons of the herbicide Agent Orange, a toxic chemical linked to a variety of detrimental health effects; and

Whereas, the Agent Orange Act of 1991 allowed the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expeditiously deliver veterans' benefits to veterans who suffer from any of the diseases the federal government linked to Agent Orange, but this act was limited in 2002 to only those veterans who could provide proof of "boots on the ground" in Vietnam; and

Whereas, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act would restore the presumptive coverage for blue water veterans and lift from these individuals the burden of having to prove their exposure to Agent Orange; and

Whereas, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act would lessen the suffering of veterans who are currently enduring diseases they received as a result of their honorable service to this nation.

Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

1. That the United States Congress enact into law the proposed Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act.

2. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies of this Memorial to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of

Representatives and each Member of Congress from the State of Arizona.

POM-215. A proclamation adopted by the Mayor and City Council of Hawaiian Gardens, California, memorializing its support of Falun Gong practitioners in China and condemning practices of forced and non-consenting organ harvesting; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

POM-216. A resolution adopted by the City Commission of the City of Miami, Florida, urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to reinstate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitians and affected Central American immigrants from El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua residing in the United States, to extend TPS to Venezuelans fleeing the circumstances of their country, to either reinstate or extend the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program, and to adopt legislation necessary to permanently protect Dreamers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 1335. A bill to establish the Ste. Genevieve National Historic Site in the State of Missouri, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-233).

S. 1446. A bill to reauthorize the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation program (Rept. No. 115-234).

H.R. 648. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to amend the Definite Plan Report for the Seedskaadee Project to enable the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir (Rept. No. 115-235).

H.R. 1135. A bill to reauthorize the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation program (Rept. No. 115-236).

H.R. 2888. A bill to establish the Ste. Genevieve National Historic Site in the State of Missouri, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-237).

By Mr. ALEXANDER, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 382. A bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a voluntary registry to collect data on cancer incidence among firefighters.

By Mr. ALEXANDER, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, without amendment:

S. 2597. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the program of payments to children's hospitals that operate graduate medical education programs, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Alan E. Cobb, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority for a term expiring November 22, 2023.

*Patrick Fuchs, of Wisconsin, to be a Member of the Surface Transportation Board for the term of five years.

*Michelle A. Schultz, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Surface Transportation Board for the term of five years.

*Rebecca Kelly Slaughter, of Maryland, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of seven years from September 26, 2015.

*Rubydee Calvert, of Wyoming, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2022.

*Laura Gore Ross, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2022.

*Coast Guard nomination of Vice Adm. Karl L. Schultz, to be Admiral.

*Coast Guard nomination of Vice Adm. Charles W. Ray, to be Admiral.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2744. A bill to establish a grant program to provide assistance to States to prevent and repair damage to structures due to pyrrhotite; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 2745. A bill to establish a grant program to provide assistance to prevent and repair damage to structures due to pyrrhotite; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HARRIS, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2746. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to establish a pilot program to provide grants for job guarantee programs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 2747. A bill to provide for the study and evaluation of net metering, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. COONS):

S. 2748. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require members of the Armed Forces to receive additional training under the Transition Assistance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. THUNE):

S. 2749. A bill to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural commodity programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 2750. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the supported housing program of the Department of Veterans Affairs has not fewer than one program manager for every 35 rental assistance cases under such program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 2751. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6 Doyers Street in New York, New York, as the "Mabel Lee Memorial Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2752. A bill to provide a Federal charter to the Fab Foundation for the National Fab Lab Network, a national network of local digital fabrication facilities providing universal access to advanced manufacturing tools for learning skills, developing inventions, creating businesses, and producing personalized products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2753. A bill to establish a commission for the purpose of studying the issue of retirement security; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Mr. KAINE, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 2754. A bill to establish a grant program to address the impact of substance use-related trauma on children and youth in public schools; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 2755. A bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to provide that the United States Postal Service may provide certain basic financial services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. 2756. A bill to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to revise the regulations of the Commission regarding the qualifications of natural persons as accredited investors; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. COONS):

S. 2757. A bill to require a national economic security strategy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 2758. A bill to amend title 36, United States Code, to provide for the display of the National League of Families POW/MIA flag at the World War I Memorials; considered and passed.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. HATCH):

S. 2759. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to reauthorize and expand the National Threat Assessment Center of the Department of Homeland Security; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. COONS, and Ms. SMITH):

S. Res. 483. A resolution recognizing the contributions of senior volunteers and designating the week of April 29 through May 5, 2018, as "National Senior Corps Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. Res. 484. A resolution supporting the designation of April 2018 as "Parkinson's Awareness Month"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. GARDNER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAMHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. HYDESMITH, Mr. INHOPE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. JONES, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCOTT, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. Res. 485. A resolution honoring the life of First Lady Barbara Bush; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 451

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 451, a bill to amend the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 to reauthorize grants for and require applied water supply research regarding the water resources research and technology institutes established under that Act.

S. 452

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 452, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to delay the enforcement and implementation of the 2015 national ambient air quality standards for ozone.

S. 896

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 896, a bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

S. 1503

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1503, a bill to require the

Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

S. 1589

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1589, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Small Business Act to expand the availability of employee stock ownership plans in S corporations, and for other purposes.

S. 1803

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1803, a bill to improve medical research on marijuana.

S. 1879

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1879, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1895

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1895, a bill to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, and for other purposes.

S. 2076

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2076, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the expansion of activities related to Alzheimer's disease, cognitive decline, and brain health under the Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2101

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2101, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the crew of the USS Indianapolis, in recognition of their perseverance, bravery, and service to the United States.

S. 2205

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2205, a bill to improve access by Indian tribes to support from the Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support program (E-rate) of the Federal Communications Commission, and for other purposes.

S. 2221

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2221, a bill to repeal the multi-State plan program.

S. 2471

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr.

DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2471, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to improve the compassionate release process of the Bureau of Prisons, and for other purposes.

S. 2497

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2497, a bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriations of funds to Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 2625

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2625, a bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to provide for the payment of performance royalties to certain producers, mixers, and sound engineers of sound recordings, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 401

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 401, a resolution designating May 5, 2018 as the "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls".

S. RES. 440

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 440, a resolution designating April 2018 as "Second Chance Month".

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 2758. A bill to amend title 36, United States Code, to provide for the display of the National League of Families POW/MIA flag at the World War I Memorials; considered and passed.

S. 2758

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DISPLAY OF NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES POW/MIA FLAG AT THE WORLD WAR I MEMORIALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d)(3) of section 902 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by striking "The World War II Memorial," and inserting "The World War I Memorials, the World War II Memorial,".

(b) DAYS FOR DISPLAY.—Subsection (c)(2)(A) of such section is amended by inserting "the World War I Memorials," before "the World War II Memorial,".

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 483—RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SENIOR VOLUNTEERS AND DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF APRIL 29 THROUGH MAY 5, 2018, AS "NATIONAL SENIOR CORPS WEEK"

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. COONS, and Ms. SMITH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 483

Whereas volunteers in the United States who are 55 years of age and older (referred to in this preamble as "senior volunteers") provide much-needed services to their communities, neighbors, and friends;

Whereas Senior Corps, through the RSVP, Foster Grandparent, and Senior Companion programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, provides meaningful opportunities to 220,000 senior volunteers and recruits thousands of additional community volunteers;

Whereas, for more than 5 decades, RSVP volunteers, Foster Grandparents, and Senior Companions have played an important role in strengthening communities by contributing their experience, knowledge, and accomplishments in order to—

- (1) help their neighbors recover from natural and manmade disasters;
- (2) provide nutrition services;
- (3) mentor and tutor schoolchildren;
- (4) support veterans and military families; and
- (5) provide respite care to caregivers;

Whereas, in 2017, Senior Corps volunteers provided 54,000,000 hours of direct service through more than 25,000 nonprofit, educational, and faith-based community groups nationwide;

Whereas structured volunteering by senior volunteers—

- (1) keeps those senior volunteers active, healthy, and engaged;
- (2) helps the United States by saving taxpayer dollars and reducing health care costs; and
- (3) supports the ability of seniors to live independent and productive lives;

Whereas the RSVP, Foster Grandparent, and Senior Companion programs have proven to be cost-effective ways to engage senior volunteers in service that meets pressing community needs;

Whereas the United States should expand senior volunteer service opportunities to take advantage of the talents and experiences of the 10,000 baby boomers who will retire each day for the next 20 years; and

Whereas, at a time of mounting social need and growing interest in service by older individuals in the United States, the United States has an unprecedented opportunity to harness the talents of senior volunteers to address community challenges: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of April 29 through May 5, 2018, as "National Senior Corps Week"; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to recognize the contributions of senior volunteers and join in the celebration of National Senior Corps Week.

SENATE RESOLUTION 484—SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF APRIL 2018 AS "PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH"

Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Ms. STABENOW) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 484

Whereas Parkinson's disease is a chronic, progressive neurological disease and is the second most common neurodegenerative disease in the United States;

Whereas there is inadequate data on the incidence and prevalence of Parkinson's disease, but it is estimated to affect nearly 1,000,000 individuals in the United States, with that number expected to more than double by 2040;

Whereas Parkinson's disease is the 14th leading cause of death in the United States according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

Whereas millions of individuals in the United States are caregivers, family members, and friends who are greatly impacted by Parkinson's disease;

Whereas research suggests the cause of Parkinson's disease is a combination of genetic and environmental factors, but the exact cause in most individuals is still unknown;

Whereas there is currently no objective test or biomarker to diagnose Parkinson's disease;

Whereas there is no known cure or drug to slow or halt the progression of Parkinson's disease, and available treatments are limited in their ability to address the medical needs of patients and remain effective over time;

Whereas the symptoms of Parkinson's disease vary from person to person and can include—

- (1) tremors;
- (2) slowness of movement and rigidity;
- (3) gait and balance difficulty;
- (4) speech and swallowing disturbances;
- (5) cognitive impairment and dementia;
- (6) mood disorders; and
- (7) a variety of other non-motor symptoms;

Whereas volunteers, researchers, caregivers, and medical professionals are working to improve the quality of life of individuals living with Parkinson's disease and their families; and

Whereas increased research, education, and community support services are needed to find more effective treatments and to provide access to quality care to those living with Parkinson's disease today: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 2018 as "Parkinson's Awareness Month";

(2) supports the goals and ideals of Parkinson's Awareness Month;

(3) continues to support research to find better treatments and a cure for Parkinson's disease;

(4) recognizes the individuals living with Parkinson's disease who participate in vital clinical trials to advance the knowledge of the disease; and

(5) commends the dedication of organizations, volunteers, researchers, and millions of individuals across the country working to improve the quality of life of individuals living with Parkinson's disease and their families.

SENATE RESOLUTION 485—HONORING THE LIFE OF FIRST LADY BARBARA BUSH

Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr.

ALEXANDER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BAR-
 RASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL,
 Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN,
 Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL,
 Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER,
 Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. COLLINS,
 Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Ms. CORTEZ
 MASTO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr.
 DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms.
 DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI,
 Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs.
 FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. GARDNER,
 Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr.
 GRASSLEY, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN,
 Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms.
 HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO,
 Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr.
 INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr.
 JONES, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr.
 KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD,
 Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr.
 MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL,
 Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr.
 MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY,
 Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL,
 Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PORTMAN,
 Mr. REED, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr.
 ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr.
 SASSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCOTT, Mrs.
 SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. SMITH, Ms.
 STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER,
 Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY,
 Mr. UDALL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WAR-
 NER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr.
 WICKER, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. YOUNG) submitted the following resolution;
 which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 485

Whereas Barbara Pierce was born on June 8, 1925, in New York City;

Whereas Barbara Pierce became engaged to George Herbert Walker Bush and, while awaiting his return from combat during World War II, supported the war effort by working at a nuts and bolts factory in Port Chester, New York;

Whereas Barbara Bush was married to President George H.W. Bush for 73 years, and together they had 2 daughters, 4 sons, 17 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren;

Whereas as Second Lady of the United States, Barbara Bush became a passionate champion for family literacy and published "C. Fred's Story: A Dog's Life", which raised \$100,000 for Literacy Volunteers of America and Laubach Literacy Action;

Whereas, in January of 1983, Barbara Bush joined the board of the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia, and worked with Dr. Louis Sullivan to help raise \$10 million for the school's first capital campaign;

Whereas First Lady Barbara Bush founded the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy in 1989, and over the course of 30 years raised more than \$110 million to support family literacy programs in every State across America;

Whereas while serving as First Lady, Barbara Bush visited facilities for AIDS victims and held infected babies and hugged adults, and in so doing, helped erase the stigma of that disease;

Whereas, in 1991, Barbara Bush and other advocates worked for the passage of the National Literacy Act of 1991, which created the National Institute for Literacy and permitted the use of libraries and other municipal property as evening literacy centers for adults;

Whereas after leaving the White House, Barbara Bush continued to support a broad range of important organizations and causes, including AmeriCares, the Mayo Clinic

Foundation, the Leukemia Society of America, the Ronald McDonald House, and the Boys & Girls Club of America;

Whereas three primary schools and two middle schools in Texas have been named for Barbara Bush, along with an elementary school in Mesa, Arizona, the Barbara Bush Library in Harris County, Texas, and the Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at Maine Medical Center in Portland, Maine;

Whereas Barbara Bush shares the rare distinction with Abigail Adams of being both a wife to, and mother of, a President of the United States, and is also the mother of a Governor of Florida and a Governor of Texas; and

Whereas Barbara Bush was a truly great American, First and Second Lady of the United States, literacy advocate, author, mother, and "Ganny": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) extends its sympathies to the family of Barbara Bush; and

(2) honors the life of First Lady Barbara Bush and her contribution to the United States of America.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I have 7 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at 9:45 a.m. to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at 3 p.m. to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Andrew S. Oldham, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, Alan D. Albright, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas, Thomas S. Kleeh, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of West Virginia, Peter J. Phipps, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania, and Michael J. Truncale, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during

the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at 3:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS, ATMOSPHERE, FISHERIES, AND COAST GUARD

The Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled, "Enhancing the Marine Mammal Protection Act."

COMMEMORATING THE 59TH ANNIVERSARY OF TIBET'S 1959 UPRISING AS "TIBETAN RIGHTS DAY"

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 363, S. Res. 429.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 429) commemorating the 59th anniversary of Tibet's 1959 uprising as "Tibetan Rights Day," and expressing support for the human rights and religious freedom of the Tibetan people and the Tibetan Buddhist faith community.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 429) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 8, 2018, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

PROVIDING FOR THE DISPLAY OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES POW/MIA FLAG AT THE WORLD WAR I MEMORIALS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2758, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2758) to amend title 36, United States Code, to provide for the display of the National League of Families POW/MIA flag at the World War I Memorials.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be

read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 2758) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2758

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DISPLAY OF NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES POW/MIA FLAG AT THE WORLD WAR I MEMORIALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d)(3) of section 902 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by striking “The World War II Memorial,” and inserting “The World War I Memorials, the World War II Memorial.”

(b) DAYS FOR DISPLAY.—Subsection (c)(2)(A) of such section is amended by inserting “the World War I Memorials,” before “the World War II Memorial.”

NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED NATIVE WOMEN AND GIRLS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 401 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 401) designating May 5, 2018 as the “National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls.”

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 401) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 12, 2018, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 483, S. Res. 484, and S. Res. 485.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to recon-

sider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2018

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, April 26; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed. Finally, I ask that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Pompeo nomination, with the time until 12 noon tomorrow equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator BLUMENTHAL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

DARK MONEY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here to talk about money in politics and, even more insidiously and potentially perniciously, money in government.

The money in politics begins with the President's nominee to be Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo. I suggest to my colleagues that they read an article that appeared in opensecrets.org from the Center for Responsive Politics. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[OpenSecrets.org, Center for Responsive Politics, March 24, 2018]

TRUMP PICKS TOP KOCH RECIPIENT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

(By Megan Janetsky and Matthew Kelly)

President Trump nixed Rex Tillerson as secretary of state Tuesday in favor of CIA Director Mike Pompeo, a former Kansas congressman whose political career was paved by Koch Industries.

Headquartered in Pompeo's former Wichita district, the privately held company run by conservative megadonors Charles and David Koch has funneled more money to the Trump pick than any other federal politician.

The oil-and-gas conglomerate built a reputation for using a network of “dark money” to exert political influence and was Pompeo's top donor over the course of his former congressional career.

That “in” may work to the advantage of the Koch brothers, who hold a significant interest in global affairs, especially with Trump's recently imposed tariffs.

TOP DONORS TO MIKE POMPEO

[Career Totals]

Donor	Total
Koch Industries	\$400,500
Textron	\$79,810
Mull Drilling	\$70,350
Club for Growth	\$64,817
Ritchie Exploration	\$55,954
INTRUST Bank	\$55,300
McCoy Petroleum	\$52,550
AT&T	\$51,250
Cox Enterprises	\$47,300
Emprise Bank	\$44,555

Since his first bid for Congress in 2010, Pompeo has received \$400,500 from Koch Industries—\$335,500 from individual employee contributions and \$65,000 from its corporate PAC, Center for Responsive Politics data shows.

Each election cycle leading up to his confirmation as CIA director in 2017, Pompeo led all federal politicians in Koch-related donations. He's also received more money from the oil interest than any candidate since 1989.

Trump's announcement came in a surprise tweet Tuesday morning, adding Tillerson to a growing list of White House officials to unceremoniously leave the administration.

Tillerson thanked members of the State Department in a news conference that afternoon, saying “the world needs selfless leaders such as these.”

“I will address a few administrative matters related to my departure and work towards a smooth and orderly transition for secretary of state-designate, Mike Pompeo,” Tillerson told reporters.

Pompeo's relationship with the Kochs has held strong over the years. In 2014, when he faced a tough primary challenge, the Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity group spent over \$409,000 supporting Pompeo.

Other congressional leaders who trailed Pompeo in career donations from Koch Industries include House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) with \$274,172 and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) with \$148,350.

But Pompeo's ties to the Koch brothers predate his political career.

He used investments from the Koch empire to help kick-start a Wichita-based company, Thayer Aerospace. After leaving the company, Pompeo acted as head of Sentry International, an oil drilling manufacturer with Koch ties.

Those investments seem to have paid off.

When Pompeo entered Congress, he brought with him a former Koch Industries lawyer as his chief of staff. Within his first week on the job, Pompeo proposed measures considered top legislative priorities for Koch Industries.

The proposals included cutting funding for an Environmental Protection Agency registry of greenhouse-gas polluters and a database of consumer complaints about unsafe products. The Washington Post reported.

Along with Koch support, Pompeo has been bankrolled by other oil-and-gas interests, including Textron, Mull Drilling and McCoy Petroleum. The industry has given him a total of \$1.2 million, the most by any industry, CRP data shows.

Now Pompeo enters the role of the White House's chief diplomat, a position that can affect the financial interests of multinational companies.

TOP POLITICIANS SUPPORTED BY KOCH INDUSTRIES
(Career Totals)

Politician	Last Office Sought	Total
Mike Pompeo (R-KS)	House	\$400,500
Todd Tiahrt (R-KS)	House	\$388,766
Paul Ryan (R-WI)	House	\$274,172
Pat Roberts (R-KS)	Senate	\$258,850
James M. Inhofe (R-OK)	Senate	\$187,150
Jerry Moran (R-KS)	Senate	\$175,900
Roy Blunt (R-MO)	Senate	\$168,600
Sam Brownback (R)	President	\$168,050
Pete Sessions (R-TX)	House	\$162,000
Mitch McConnell (R-KY)	Senate	\$148,350

The Koch brothers already have a broad international presence. According to the company's website, Koch companies alone "employ more than 120,000 people across about 60 countries."

While Pompeo has yet to take a stance on Trump's recently rolled out tariffs, Charles Koch harshly rejected them, saying in a press release last week that "History is filled with examples of administrations that implemented trade restrictions with devastating results."

"One might assume that, as head of Koch Industries—a large company involved in many industries, including steel—I would applaud such import tariffs because they would be to our immediate and financial benefit," he wrote. "Corporate leaders must reject this type of short-term thinking, and we have."

Late last year, the Charles Koch Foundation embarked on a multimillion-dollar project to promote the realist school of foreign policy in programs at elite universities such as Harvard, Notre Dame and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Koch is an outspoken libertarian when it comes to foreign policy, and the realist school of foreign policy champions restraint on the world stage and taking a backseat on humanitarian intervention and nation-building.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. The article has the headline "Trump picks top Koch recipient for secretary of state." The article says that "former Kansas congressman whose political career was paved by Koch Industries" received more money than others in similar situations.

The reasons to vote against Mike Pompeo are many, but one of the principal ones is that he was one of the chief recipients of money from the Koch brothers or their organizations. In fact, since his first bid for Congress in 2010, Pompeo has received \$400,000 from Koch Industries, \$335,000 from employee contributions, and \$65,000 from its corporate PAC, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

The Pompeo nomination is a poster boy for the impact of money in politics, the influence of the Koch brothers on this administration, and the enduring effect of campaign contributions, of influence-buying and pettiness in government.

The Koch brothers are blatantly using their influence in the Trump administration to advance an agenda based on their own self-interests at the expense of our democracy, and they have reached into the uppermost levels and echelons of this administration through individuals they have supported over years and years, such as Mike Pompeo.

In July of 2015, 2 weeks before he kicked off his campaign for President,

the President said through a tweet: "I really like the Koch Brothers (members of my [Palm Beach] Club), but I don't want their money or anything else from them. Cannot influence Trump!" Well, they are good friends. They are members of the club. And nobody can deny their influence on Donald Trump, their impact on this administration, or their enduring reaches and effects on public policy.

If you have ever wondered where Republican ideological positions originated on lowering corporate taxes, undercutting healthcare, or loosening environmental regulations, look no further than a Koch front group called Americans for Prosperity. Americans for Prosperity is the recipient of the largest grants made by another organization called Freedom Partners. POLITICO describes Freedom Partners as "the Koch brothers' secret bank." The group peddles dark money to front groups to drum up public support for policies that benefit the richest of the rich.

The Americans for Prosperity organization has been called by the Washington Post "the third largest political party in the United States." It was founded in 2004 by David Koch, who serves as the chairman of the board, and he has crammed the group with Republican operatives. Many of them work for the Vice President. They operate in 36 States. They are heavily involved in electoral activities, spending millions of dollars on TV ads that spread disinformation, falsely claiming that the middle class will benefit from policies designed to enrich the millionaire backers and billionaire backers of Americans for Prosperity.

The organizations backed by these two groups and others have consistently claimed that tax cuts for the wealthy will benefit all Americans. They have consistently argued for measures that cause environmental degradation. In fact, the Koch brothers have an enormous stake in repealing regulations that protect the environment and put limits on polluting fossil fuel companies, repealing those regulations designed to accomplish that goal.

Americans for Prosperity drives the Koch energy agenda. The group spent millions lobbying for its industry-backed champion, Scott Pruitt, to head the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as others nominated for EPA and Energy Department positions. Once they were in place, these cronies wasted no time in seeking to dismantle the environmental regulations prohibiting oil and gas drilling on Federal lands, withdraw from the Clean Power Plan, which is aimed at cutting U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, and revoke a moratorium on new coal leases.

There are other examples of influence by an American in modern political history but none so egregious as the Koch brothers in this administration.

Most recently, we saw their influence on the judiciary in suppressing votes.

The Koch brothers are throwing a lot of money behind the nomination of judges who are poised to rule in their favor, undermining judicial precedence and the rule of law. Its network is helping Donald Trump stack the courts with far-right ideologues.

Donald Trump entered office with more than 100 vacancies on the Federal bench—an opportunity created in part by Senate Republicans who blocked many of Barack Obama's nominees before he left office. Judges enjoy lifetime appointments. If the Koch brothers succeed in rigging the judiciary against the needs of everyday Americans, the effects will be felt for generations to come.

Americans for Prosperity is also behind shameless efforts to suppress votes. It has launched disinformation campaigns, sending out bogus registration mailings with incorrect deadlines in swing States like North Carolina and Wisconsin. When challenged, Americans for Prosperity claims that these blatant lies were the result of clerical error.

Our Nation needs prosperity but not an influence-peddling organization that claims to be for prosperity but, in fact, leads to policy that undermines the prosperity of everyday Americans.

My reasons for opposing Mike Pompeo's nomination go well beyond the campaign contributions he has received. His views are contrary to American values. He has repeatedly devalued and dismissed religious tolerance. He has allied himself with anti-Islam and anti-LGBT groups. At a time when the environment our children will inherit hangs in the balance, he is a career-long climate change denier, drowning in dark money from the Koch brothers' oil industry. His regressive views on reproductive rights jeopardize the healthcare of millions of women around the world. If confirmed, he will be responsible for executing Donald Trump's misguided policies, and he will reinforce Donald Trump's misguided instinct, expanding, for example, the global gag rule that prevents foreign aid from being provided to global health programs that discuss or provide abortion services. He will cut programs covering everything from HIV prevention, to maternal and child health, to epidemic disease response, putting our lives at risk.

Money in politics has reached its apex in this administration, not only in politics but in government. Just within the last day or so, the President's Director of the Office of Management and Budget gave a speech to a group of bankers in which he said:

We had a hierarchy in my office in Congress. If you were a lobbyist who never gave us money, I didn't talk to you. If you were a lobbyist who gave us money, I might talk to you.

That quote from Mick Mulvaney, the head of the Office of Management and Budget, was made to a group of about 1,300 bankers in plain view and hearing of the American public.

First, the idea that a lobbyist would have to pay in order to have access to a Member of Congress or his administration raises the potential of bribery, extortion, and perhaps pay-to-play. It is pay-to-play and the image of it that has so sullied this town and government in general that President Trump swayed so many people by describing it as a swamp. Well, the swamp has been deepened, and it has been further polluted by exactly this kind of talk.

I will say to Mick Mulvaney: You are destroying the credibility and trust of the American people and our honest colleagues, who come to work every day and try to help and serve the American people. Some of them still work in the Federal Government at high levels, in fear of losing their jobs because they adhere to a standard of integrity that no longer prevails.

In fact, the mindset and mentality of pay-to-play has become the new normal in this administration. It is filled with people at the highest levels who regard unbridled and unapologetic graft as the new normal. That is what that quote says to the average American.

It is typical of the practices of the Administrator of the EPA, who accepts virtually free lodging from a lobbyist who has access to him, as well as takes luxury flights and stays in exorbitantly expensive hotels at taxpayers' expense. Conflicts of interest, ethical violations, and other kinds of betrayal of the public trust have become commonplace at the top levels of the EPA.

It is the mindset of a President of the United States who literally every day accepts benefits from foreign governments and payment in violation of the U.S. Constitution, specifically in violation of the emoluments clause that prohibits such benefits and payments without the consent of Congress. Donald Trump has never come to the U.S. Congress seeking approval for the payments and benefits that go to the Trump Organization, which he still owns. That failure is a violation of the emoluments clause of the U.S. Constitution, and it is the reason that 200 of us Members of Congress have brought legal action to vindicate our trust and the trust of the American people that the Constitution will be followed and that we will do our job. We have standing to bring that action

because the President of the United States is preventing us from reviewing those payments and benefits that go to him, which we have an obligation to review under the U.S. Constitution. That case will be heard in court in June.

I hope the courts will vindicate the rule of law. I hope we will see an end to this corrosive and corrupting impact of money in politics and money in government through a web of deceit and contempt for the rule of law that betrays the trust of the American people.

The Washington, DC, that is conveyed by these quotes and actions by officials at the very top of our government are not my Washington. They are not the Washington, DC, of many of our colleagues—honest and hard-working in this Chamber, in the House of Representatives, and in the executive and judicial branches—who continue to do their job. Among them are two of our colleagues: JOHNNY ISAKSON and JON TESTER.

Senator ISAKSON of Georgia and Senator TESTER of Montana have helped to lead the Veterans' Affairs Committee over the past few days as it raises concerns and questions about the serious allegations made by men and women in uniform or retired Active-Duty military. These concerns go directly to the ethics and integrity and character and ability of the President's nominee to be VA Secretary, Ronny Jackson, a rear admiral in the U.S. Navy. There is no realistic path at this point to confirmation of Admiral Jackson. He should have a hearing if he wishes. He should be considered if he chooses. But the administration owes the American people, as well as the Senate, answers to questions raised by the chairman and ranking member of the VA Committee. I have talked to both of them, as well as the staff, about this investigation, and I have participated in their thinking and support their efforts to uncover the truth. Facts are stubborn things. That is what Ronald Reagan said. It remains true even more so today in this inquiry.

The administration has failed to vet this nomination. It failed abjectly to uncover the truth before it submitted this nomination. It owes the truth and the facts now to the Senate before there is any hearing. Documents and evidence should be provided, and the administration should reverse course,

if necessary, and make sure that full access is provided to all of these documents and evidence.

As recently as yesterday, members of the VA Committee were barred from viewing the FBI background check. The Inspector General's report of 2012 on Rear Admiral Jackson was not provided to our committee, and other relevant evidence and documents may exist, but they have been denied.

I urge the administration to provide the facts, respond to the questions, and address the serious allegations that have been made, because they are consistent and credible and compelling. The more time goes on, the more serious and substantial these allegations become in their detail and depth and power. Time is not on their side, and so far, the administration has abjectly failed to respond.

I thank Senators Isakson and Tester for their leadership and for their insistence on integrity and character because our veterans deserve it. Most importantly, our veterans deserve the very best leader, not one who will be encumbered by the baggage of allegations, unrefuted and un rebutted so far. Our veterans deserve the very best in healthcare and employment opportunities and skill training. Our veterans deserve that we keep faith with them and choose the very best leader, with experience in management, as well as a commitment to the high standards of integrity that befit the Veterans' Administration. It has seen problems. It needs improvement and reforms. The path forward for the VA is with a person and a leader who has unimpeachable integrity.

I thank Senator ISAKSON and Senator TESTER for their leadership and insistence on that high bar in the Veterans' Administration for the sake of our veterans.

Thank you, Mr. President.
I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:31 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 26, 2018, at 9:30 a.m.