

Peters	Shaheen	Warner
Reed	Stabenow	Warren
Sanders	Tester	Whitehouse
Schatz	Udall	Wyden
Schumer	Van Hollen	

NOT VOTING—2

Hirono	Tillis
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 47.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority whip is recognized.

AMERICAN LAW ENFORCEMENT HEROES ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I know people outside the beltway think nothing ever happens here—and certainly that nothing ever happens on a bipartisan basis—but they would be wrong on both counts.

Last night, the Senate passed a piece of bipartisan legislation called the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act. It is a great example of legislation everyone can agree on and get behind.

The main goal is to connect veterans—those who have served in our military and have a passion for public service—to opportunities in State and local law enforcement. When we think about it, who better than our retiring military personnel who are accustomed to wearing one uniform, moving then into the civilian law enforcement world wearing another uniform but continuing their legacy of public service. That way, those who have voluntarily put themselves in harm's way to keep the peace and promote American interests abroad and defend our homeland can continue the record of public service at home.

For veterans, that can mean a rewarding job in law enforcement. Through their training, experience, and sacrifice, there is no doubt that our veterans are equipped with valuable skills to keep our communities safe. By prioritizing existing Federal funds for State and local law enforcement agencies to hire veterans, we can better serve them as they transition into civilian life. We know that can be a challenging transition, but that is exactly what the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act that we passed yesterday does.

For State and local law enforcement groups, that means they can attract the best qualified men and women who are eager to serve their country in a new way. So this is really a win-win.

Fortunately, this legislation builds on the good work already underway in places like my home State of Texas. Over the last several months, I have had a chance to visit cities and counties all over the State that are actively recruiting veterans to serve as police officers or sheriffs. That includes law enforcement leaders from San Antonio to Houston, to Fort Worth. As my colleagues may recall, following the terrible killing of five police officers and shooting of seven more in Dallas, Police Chief David Brown made an appeal for people who were protesting or otherwise concerned about the law enforcement agencies involved to sign up and join them—to be a part of the solu-

tion and not just protesting the problem.

Thankfully, we have set a tremendous example in Texas of how hiring veterans to serve as law enforcement officers benefits all of our communities. I am glad this bill will follow their inspiration and help communities across the country hire more veterans.

I said before that this legislation is something everyone can agree on, in a polarized political environment, and that is of course evident by the broad bipartisan support it has received.

Let me express my gratitude to the senior Senator from Minnesota, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, as well as the senior Senators from Connecticut and California—all Democratic colleagues—for being my original cosponsors on the bill. I am also grateful to my Republican colleagues, including Senator CRUZ, as well as the junior Senator from North Carolina and the senior Senators from Iowa, Utah, and Nevada, for working with us on this legislation.

My friend Congressman WILL HURD on the House side introduced the same bill there, and I am hopeful it will pass sometime today so we can get this to the President's desk for his signature without delay.

I would also note that the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act is backed by major law enforcement groups across the country, including the Fraternal Order of Police, the Major County Sheriffs of America, the Major City Chiefs Association, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I have been grateful for their help along the way toward passage of this bill.

I look forward to this bill becoming a law—hopefully, this week, as we continue to celebrate Police Week honoring the service of the men and women in blue who keep our communities safe—and making it clear that this Congress cares not only about our veterans but also our law enforcement officials as well.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, just last Wednesday, I spoke on the Senate floor about the extremely suspicious timing of the firing of FBI Director James Comey by President Trump.

In the past few days, President Trump's actions, statements, and changing of his story on the Comey firing has only strengthened the case for the appointment of a special counsel to investigate ties and collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russian Government in the 2016 Presidential election. Congress should also establish an independent commission to get to the bottom of the Russian interference in our election. In addition, there needs to be an independent investigation into whether Mr. Trump abused power and played a role in obstruction of justice in terms of the ongoing criminal investigation at the Department of Justice.

Let me start by going back to the beginning of the Trump administration.

According to news reports, on January 27, Mr. Trump invited Mr. Comey to a private dinner with him at the White House. Mr. Trump then asked Mr. Comey for his "loyalty," but Mr. Comey only promised to provide his "honesty" or his "honest loyalty." Why did the President allegedly ask Director Comey for his loyalty?

On March 4, President Trump tweeted without evidence that "how low has President Obama gone to tap my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!" On March 20, Mr. Comey testified he has "no information" to support Mr. Trump's claim. Why did the President try to distract the public's attention by blaming President Obama for the Russia investigation?

On April 12, in an interview, Mr. Trump said Mr. Comey "saved Hillary Clinton" during the campaign and said that "it's not too late" to remove Mr. Comey. Mr. Trump continued: "But, you know, I have confidence in him. We'll see what happens, you know, it's going to be interesting."

What changed between Mr. Trump having confidence in Mr. Comey in April and firing him in May?

On May 3, Mr. Comey testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee and said "it makes me mildly nauseous to think that we might have had some impact on the election."

On May 8, former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates and former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper both testified before the Judiciary Committee.

Ms. Yates testified about the warnings she gave to White House Counsel Don McGahn about how National Security Adviser Michael Flynn was compromised by the Russians and was lying to White House staff and the Vice President about his conversations and interactions with the Russians.

On May 9, we witnessed a series of three letters, all dated that day. The first letter was from Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein to Attorney General Jeff Sessions. The Rosenstein letter concludes that the FBI's reputation and credibility had suffered "substantial damage" due to Mr. Comey's actions during the Clinton email investigation. Notably, Rosenstein's memo does not explicitly recommend Mr. Comey's removal. That same day, Attorney General Sessions, who has recused himself from the Russia-Trump campaign investigation, sent the Rosenstein letter to the White House, along with his own letter, concluding that "a fresh start is needed at the leadership of the FBI." Again, on the same day that Mr. Trump fired Director Comey, the Trump letter includes a curious aside: "I greatly appreciate you informing me, on three separate occasions, that I am not under investigation." Did Director Comey really give those assurances to President Trump when the criminal and counter-intelligence investigations into the

Trump campaign and Russia connections are still active and ongoing?

At the same time, we heard from White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer and we heard from the Vice President of the United States that the reason for the firing of Mr. Comey was the recommendation of the Department of Justice. That is what they said it was, only to find the next day President Trump saying:

In fact, when I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said ‘You know, this Russian thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story, it’s an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should have won.’

Then he talked about Mr. Comey and said he had decided to fire him. So it was not the memos; it was what Mr. Trump had decided. So there is a lot of misinformation being sent out, which raises a lot of questions.

Over the weekend, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper stated:

I think in many ways our institutions are under assault both externally—and that’s the big news here is the Russian interference in our election system—and I think as well our institutions are under assault internally.

So we have the former Director of National Intelligence, Mr. Clapper, saying we have some problems internally.

The only way we are going to get to the bottom of this, the only way we are going to find out what this loyalty oath is all about or how Mr. Trump came to the conclusion to fire Mr. Comey or, more recently, where we hear Mr. Comey has memos of a meeting in which the President asked him to go easy on an investigation, which could rise to obstruction of justice—the only way we are going to get to the bottom of all this is by having an independent special counsel prosecutor appointed by the Department of Justice. That is what needs to be done. The facts need to go where they take us, but we also have to have an investigation that has the credibility that it will not be interfered with by the President of the United States. The only way to do that is by having special counsel appointed by the Department of Justice. It is the only way to restore the reputation of the Department of Justice.

I might say that we also need to understand exactly what Russia was doing here in the United States. There are so many examples of Russia being aggressive in our campaign. We know they wanted to discredit the American campaign. We know they took sides in favor of Mr. Trump over Mrs. Clinton. We know they hacked information. We know they used misinformation. We know they used cyber and social media in order to further their advancements. We also know they met with representatives of the Trump campaign. The American people have a right to understand exactly what those contacts were all about. That is why I filed the resolution, which is supported by many of

my colleagues, to set up a 9/11 independent commission in order to get to the bottom of what is happening. That can be done simultaneously with the work being done by the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is important work for us to do, but we also need to have an independent commission in order to determine exactly what Russia was doing so we can take the necessary steps to prevent this from occurring in the future.

There are a lot of unanswered questions. People say: Well, how can you call for action if you don’t know all the facts? I am calling for us to know all the facts. I am calling for us to understand exactly why on one day the White House sends out one story that the Department of Justice recommended the firing of Mr. Comey, and then on the next day the President said: No, I decided that before I met with the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General.

We need to understand why there was a conversation in which Mr. Comey has notes that indicate Mr. Trump wanted him to go easy in an investigation. That is a pretty serious charge. We need to understand this information. That is why it is impossible for the Department of Justice to do an independent investigation. It will always be suspect as to whether that investigation of the President of the United States or the White House will have impact as to how that investigation is being done because there is already evidence that they tried to do that previously in this investigation.

The law is clear; the law is clear as to how special prosecutors and counsel are appointed where conflicts exist. The Department of Justice has this authority. We know that Attorney General Sessions has recused himself from the Russia investigation. Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein now has the authority to make that decision. He should clearly make that decision, not because it is the right thing to do—which it is, which it is—and we have the obligation to make sure the American people get all the facts as to what happened here, but it is also the reputation of the Department of Justice that is at stake.

I urge my colleagues to continue. I know we will have a chance tomorrow in our meeting with Mr. Rosenstein, but I would urge us to listen to what the American people are saying and recognize that we are an independent branch of government, and one of our principal responsibilities is oversight—and oversight of the executive branch of government. I urge us to carry out that responsibility by collectively—it shouldn’t be partisan—collectively telling the Department of Justice: Get all the facts, do it in an independent way, appoint an independent prosecutor, let the facts lead us where they are going to lead us, and let’s not pre-judge. But this is a serious, serious matter.

In order to protect ourselves from an aggressive enemy—and that is Russia,

which is trying to bring down our democratic government, which has now been acknowledged not just by the intelligence community over and over again, but their ability to try to compromise our system is now much better understood—we need to have that independent commission devoted to giving us the recommendations to keep America safe.

I urge my colleagues to exercise that independent function and to set up an independent commission.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I rise today to honor our law enforcement officers during National Police Week and to talk about the importance of supporting law enforcement, including their mental health.

During National Police Week, we recognize and remember the sacrifices of the law enforcement officers we lost in the line of duty in 2016. Every day and through every night in communities across Indiana and our country, law enforcement officers are patrolling our streets, arriving at the scenes of challenging and often traumatic incidents, and even putting themselves in harm’s way as they do their best to keep our families safe. They help ensure that our children can be safe at the neighborhood playground and our seniors can sit peacefully on their front porch. They help keep drugs off our streets, they are called to the scenes of opioid and heroin overdoses, and they help stem the violence and crime that has plagued many of our communities for far too long.

Our law enforcement officers put on the uniform every day. They head out the door to serve us, while their family members say a prayer hoping they come back safely into their family’s loving arms at the end of their shift. Sadly, sometimes they do not.

In my home State of Indiana, our law enforcement lost one of their own last year when the Howard County sheriff’s deputy, Carl Koontz, was shot and killed during a raid in Russiaville, IN, last March.

Deputy Koontz was only 27 years old, in the prime of his life, and had dedicated himself to serving and protecting the communities he loved. He left behind his wife Kassie and their young son Noah.

Deputy Koontz’s loss was felt not just in Kokomo, not just in Howard County, but in cities and towns across our State. He represented the very best our State has to offer. He was smart, talented, and service driven, working