

simple boundary adjustment will encourage the preservation of the seven historic homes in the 1400 and 1500 blocks of Park Street and allow homeowners, on a case by case basis, to enter cooperative agreements with the National Park Service while retaining private property ownership.

We feel that this is an important step in the right direction for the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District as a whole. Please let me know if I may provide further assistance with this initiative.

Sincerely,

RACHEL PATTON,
Executive Director.

From: Patricia McGraw.
Subject: Washington Heritage House.
To Whom It May Concern: City Officials

DEAR MS. HARST: We, the owners of the properties, addresses listed above, located directly across Park Street in front of the famous and renowned educational facility, Little Rock Central High School, wish to express our gratitude and appreciation of all that you do for our neighborhood, our city, and our state, particularly in learning that the National Park Service wishes to expand their boundaries to include our seven houses. It is our belief that our houses add to the beauty and dignity of the structural and environmental beauty, dignity, and grace to this area of Little Rock.

In that we are greatly interested in the continuous celebrated dignity of this site, we are very supportive of direction to expand upon this historic city development, and we appreciate our being included in this significant idea. Please continue to keep us abreast of new developments and ideas which we intend to implement as wished by the city officials, and intend to seek funding to make this dream of our foreparents to come true.

Thanks again for including us, and please take care of yourselves and our city. Love and Deep Appreciation For All That You Do:

Sincerely,

DR. PATRICIA WASHINGTON
MCGRAW,
MRS. GRACE BLAGDON,
OTHER CONCERNED OWNERS.

Mr. COTTON. There is widespread agreement in the community and in our State that this site is not just a part of Arkansas' history, it is a part of our national heritage.

Central High stands as a reminder of an article Billy Graham published during the crisis, "No Color Line in Heaven." It was a hard-won lesson and one I think we should do everything we can to pass on to the next generation.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I have 8 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 ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., in open session, to receive testimony on worldwide threats.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 10 a.m., to conduct an executive session to vote on the following nominations: Ms. Sigal Mandelker, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes, U.S. Department of the Treasury; Ms. Mira Radielovic Ricardel, to be Under Secretary for Export Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce; Mr. Marshall Billingslea, to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, U.S. Department of the Treasury; and Mr. Heath Tarbert, to be Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of the Treasury.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017 from 2:15 p.m.–4 p.m., in room SH-219 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold a closed member briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWERS

The Subcommittee on Seapower of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in closed session, to receive a briefing on Navy readiness challenges, emerging threats, and the requirements underpinning the 355-Ship Force Structure Objective.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE, SCIENCE AND COMPETITIVENESS

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold a Subcommittee Hearing on "Reopening the American Frontier: Exploring How the Outer Space Treaty Will Impact American Commerce and Settlement in Space."

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR AND NUCLEAR SAFETY

The Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, "Making Implementation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ground-Level Ozone Attainable: Legislative Hearing on S. 263 and S. 452."

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

The Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration, is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on

Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Building America's Trust Through Border Security: Progress on the Southern Border."

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Wednesday, May 24; 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, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Sullivan nomination.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. 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 DURBIN.

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

The Democratic whip.

MANCHESTER ATTACK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me say at the outset that I offer my condolences to the families and friends of those who were killed or injured in last night's despicable attack at a concert in Manchester, England. Details are still coming in, but this looks like an act of terror in the heart of one of our key European allies. America is joining with the people of Great Britain in expressing our sorrow and sadness over the loss of these lives and the injuries that were sustained.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a separate note, it has been more than 5 months since the intelligence agencies in the United States reached a solid consensus on a critical issue. The agencies presented to the American people 5 months ago their damning assessment that Russia actively tried to interfere in our last Presidential election to help elect someone they thought would be a better friend to the Russian interests.

I think it is important to recall some of the key findings by our own intelligence agencies on a virtually unanimous basis. They said:

Russian efforts to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election represent the most recent expression of Moscow's longstanding desire to undermine the U.S.-led liberal democratic order, but these activities demonstrate a significant escalation in directness, level of activity, and scope of effort compared to previous operations.

We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election.

Our intelligence agencies went on to say:

Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess that Putin and the Russian government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump.

Moscow will apply lessons learned from its Putin-ordered campaign aimed at the U.S. presidential election to future influence efforts worldwide, including against U.S. allies and their election processes.

We have never seen anything like this in our history—nothing. What Vladimir Putin did—or tried to do—is staggering, momentous, and something we should not ignore. A foreign adversary intentionally manipulating America's democracy and election to try to get a result friendly to Russia but not consistent with American public opinion—that was his goal.

The dictionary defines an act of war as “an act of aggression by a country against another with which it is nominally at peace.”

Was the Russia attack on our election an act of war? Is sure seems close to the definition. At a minimum, it was an act of cyber war against America and an attack on our democracy. It should not go unanswered. Troublingly, there have been few answers forthcoming from this President and this Congress.

What did the White House and the majority party in Congress do to respond to this act of cyber war to protect against any future attacks? Virtually nothing. As more and more questions have emerged about possible collusion between the Trump campaign and these Russian actions against our election, possible Russian money, and the President's business interests, and troubling ties between those close to Trump and the Russians, this President has instead been trying to endear himself to the Russians, incredibly.

That is right. On May 10, he had a closed meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister and Ambassador in which the President reportedly boasted about sensitive intelligence and—this is truly incredible—also boasted about firing our Nation's FBI Director to relieve the “great pressure” on him over the Russia investigation.

In fact, he reportedly told the Russians:

I just fired the head of the FBI. He was crazy, a real nut job . . . I faced great pressure because of Russia. That's taken off . . . I'm not under investigation.

That is the end of the attributed quote to the President of the United States.

Let that sink in for a moment. The President of the United States was bragging to the same people who attacked our election and democracy that he had fired the top law enforcement officer investigating that attack. That is incredible, both for its obvious

appearance of obstruction of justice but also for what should have so obviously been said in that meeting instead.

President Trump, instead of a frivolous exchange with a dictatorial regime that attacked our Nation, should have had as his first message to the Russians the obvious: Do not ever interfere in our elections or those of our allies again or you will face serious consequences—end of meeting.

Then the President should have come out and related this conversation to the American press and to the American people.

Instead, the President let the Russians bring their own official photographer from the TASS Soviet news agency into the Oval Office and—get this—excluded all of the American press—just the friendly Russian cameras. Then, the Russians gleefully sent out victory tweets of the President's warm and friendly greeting.

This is totally upside down. Yet it only gets worse. Stunningly, it was just revealed Monday night that President Trump asked two of the Nation's top intelligence officials in March to help him push back against the FBI investigation into possible collusion between his campaign and the Russian Government.

The Washington Post reported that President Trump made separate appeals to the Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats, and the Director of the National Security Agency, Admiral Mike Rogers. Coats and Rogers both rightly refused to comply with President Trump's request, properly deemed as an inappropriate request from the President of the United States to leaders of our intelligence-gathering community. I applaud the respect of these two men for our democratic norms and system of government and the rejection of the President's reckless, selfish request.

This is breathtaking—an American President running from the Russians to our Nation's top law enforcement agency to our intelligence community, bizarrely pleading innocence on a matter of grave national security and trying to undermine ongoing investigations.

Former CIA General Counsel Jeffrey Smith said Trump's deeply troubling effort is an echo of President Nixon's “unsuccessful effort to use the CIA to shut down the FBI's investigation of the Watergate break-in on national security grounds” and, in his words, these actions were “an appalling abuse of power.”

I had argued that Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein should either appoint a special counsel to look at the allegations of collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russians or tender his resignation. I said this after he was set up by the Trump administration to write a memo explaining the firing of James Comey as Director of the FBI and giving as his reason to protect the honor and integrity of Hillary Clinton during the campaign.

That was a laughable assertion.

Rosenstein wrote it. For at least 24 hours, that was the official line from the Trump White House. Then, there was the Lester Holt interview on NBC, and the President came out and said: I wanted to get rid of him months ago; I wanted to put an end to this Russian thing.

I am pleased that Mr. Rosenstein made the right decision when he appointed former FBI Director Robert Mueller to fill the special counsel role.

Back in the year 2001, that ominous year of 9/11, I first met Robert Mueller. He was the Director of the FBI. We worked together on some important issues relative to the FBI. I came to respect him very much. He is a decorated veteran of the Vietnam war, where he served as an officer in the Marine Corps, a former Federal judge, a man of the opposite political faith, but a man who clearly loves his country above party, whenever he is asked. He is a man who has not only risen to the challenge of public service but who has excelled to the point where his term as Director of the FBI was extended—a rarity around Washington and, certainly, on a bipartisan basis almost unthinkable these days. But it happened with Robert Mueller. It happened because he is smart, he is principled, and he loves his country, and we know it. I don't think Rod Rosenstein could have chosen a better person.

I don't know if I will ultimately agree with his investigation of this critical issue, but I will respect his findings, whatever they may be, because I know that they are heartfelt, sincere, and principled.

While this special counsel investigation will be critical, it is not a substitute, however, for continued congressional action, as well, as some have suggested or perhaps hoped. I know the Senate Intelligence Committee is actively pursuing this matter, and I salute them for that effort, but I think we need to think about more. We need to think about an independent commission—a bipartisan, transparent commission—to deal with policy questions. For instance, what are we going to face from the Russians in the next election? What did we learn in the last election to protect ourselves?

The special counsel is going to focus on whether crimes were committed, but I am deeply concerned that there may be matters related to Russia's attack that may not involve crimes themselves but should be made public to the American people. It is Congress's responsibility, just as it was after the September 11 tragedy, to make sure the American people know as much as possible in a democracy. That is how it works.

Former Watergate investigator Scott Armstrong made this point in an op-ed in Sunday's New York Times. He pointed out how a select congressional committee and a special prosecutor overcame partisan and jurisdictional conflicts to get to the truth during Watergate. He noted:

A mature special prosecutor and a well-led congressional inquiry can coordinate over issues like witness immunity. Congress can creatively expand its witness list beyond prosecution targets and fill in critical details from satellite witnesses . . . If the committee is aggressive and truly bipartisan, it can not only educate and reassure the public, but also legislate solutions to prevent future abuses.

There are a lot of parallels between the Watergate era and what we face today, but, sadly, one major difference from the Nixon era to the Trump era is the willingness of members of the President's own party to stand up and speak out.

Back in Nixon's day, there came a moment when a handful of Senators from this Chamber changed history, and one of them was Barry Goldwater. He met with President Nixon and he said: There are only so many lies you can take, and now there has been one too many.

Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania joined him, as well as another Republican—John Rhodes, a Republican leader in the House. They made it clear to President Nixon that what he had done was unacceptable by any standard and they would no longer stand by him. It took courage for them to do that. The President saw the writing on the wall, and he resigned.

We are looking for similar leadership today from both sides of the aisle—not just Democrats but Republicans as well—to stand up and defend our democracy from Putin's interference.

There have been months of relative inaction. It is clear that the President is not going to stand up to Russia. It is time for all of us—Democrats and Republicans in Congress—to act for the good of this Nation and get to the truth of what happened and make sure Russia can never do this to our democracy again.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Trump administration released its fiscal year 2018 budget this morning. For all the talk on the campaign trail of standing up for the forgotten Americans in this country, the President's budget takes aim at the exact programs that many rely on. From healthcare and food stamps to student loans and disability, President Trump's budget is nothing less than an assault on seniors, low-income Americans, children, and the disabled.

The President's budget calls for more than \$3.6 trillion in cuts to Federal spending over the next 10 years, with more than \$1 trillion of these cuts coming from some of the most vital pro-

grams in our Nation's social safety net. Nothing is more essential to our Nation's low-income, disabled, and elderly Americans than Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP. But the President's budget slashes more than \$600 billion from Medicaid, despite the President's repeated promises on the campaign trail to protect the program. More than 3 million people in my State—20 percent of the people who live there—currently depend on the Medicaid Program for healthcare, including 1.5 million children and more than 300,000 seniors and disabled people.

The budget cuts \$193 billion from SNAP by making it harder for people to qualify for this assistance in putting food on the table. Forty-four million children, disabled, and low-income people around the country accessed food through the SNAP program last year.

Also weakened in the President's budget is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant that helps States provide financial assistance to families who are literally struggling to survive. And the budget cuts about 20 percent of funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, providing health insurance for poor children. Isn't that incredible? The President doesn't believe that is a priority—health insurance for poor children.

It is often said that the President's budget reflects our values, and this budget shows that President Trump clearly values tax cuts for the upper income individuals in America over the lives of poor and middle-class Americans.

The President's budget also includes historic cuts in nondefense discretionary spending. Over the next 10 years, President Trump proposes to cut domestic spending so significantly that spending on defense would exceed spending on domestic priorities by almost \$300 billion. To pay for an increase in defense spending and to build his big, beautiful wall, the President would slash funding from programs essential to hard-working Americans—programs that support affordable housing, home heating bills, Meals on Wheels, student loans, clean drinking water, preserving the Great Lakes, early childhood education, and infrastructure.

Even medical research is on the Trump chopping block. President Trump has proposed cutting one-fifth of the budget for the National Institutes of Health, including \$1 billion from the National Cancer Institute. President Obama, with Vice President Biden, with strong bipartisan support,

put together a moonshot—a Cancer Moonshot—to do something significant in cancer research. President Trump's budget virtually eliminates it.

NIH has helped cut U.S. cancer death rates by 11 percent in women and 19 percent in men. It has helped ensure HIV/AIDS is no longer a death sentence. It contributed to the near eradication of polio and smallpox, but make no mistake, these changes didn't just happen. They occurred because of sustained Federal investment in medical research.

I salute my colleague on the other side of the aisle, ROY BLUNT, the Appropriations subcommittee chair when it comes to NIH. For 2 straight years now, 2 fiscal years, he has given more than 5 percent real growth in NIH spending. I have praised him on the floor and back home and publicly over and over again. That Republican Senator, and many Democratic Senators, stood together because we believe in medical research. The Trump budget does not.

We cannot afford these devastating cuts, and we can't afford to sit on our hands and face the millions of families across America who count on us to have the right priorities. Clearly, the President's budget is far from a new foundation for American greatness. This budget would have a devastating impact on Americans most in need of a helping hand, on everything from healthcare to food access, to quality education and affordable housing.

They always say the President's budget is dead on arrival. This budget, I hope, will be dead on arrival. It doesn't deserve the light of day or a breath of life.

We need to come together, as we did in this year's budget, on a bipartisan basis, order the priorities that America sent us to prioritize, and then work together to pass it. I hope it is done on a bipartisan basis. That is what America wants, both parties to work together. We can do it. We did it for this fiscal year. We can do it for the next, but our first step in reaching an agreement is to make sure there is a sound rejection of President Trump's budget. His budget will not make America great again.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:18 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, May 24, 2017, at 10 a.m.