

savings, the lost jobs, the closed factories, and the foreclosed homes. I see all of that in my neighborhood. I see all of that throughout my State. We all see it in all 50 States. Yet there is this collective amnesia in this body, as if none of that ever happened to this country. This administration and Republican leaders, again and again and again, side with Wall Street over workers, side with Wall Street over customers.

The lessons of a decade ago are clear. You don't grow the middle class by letting big banks take massive risks or by letting shady lenders prey on hard-working Americans. That is why we passed Wall Street reform, and that is why we created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—to hold big banks and other bad actors accountable when they cheat, to deter them from bad and risky behavior in the first place.

We need a new permanent Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau who will protect the consumers instead of handing big corporations a “get out of jail free” card. A cheater's version of Monopoly might sound like fun on game night, but we have already seen what it looks like in real life. Powerful special interests on Wall Street win big every single time, and everybody else loses.

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. BOOZMAN. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the impact that tax reform is having in my home State of Arkansas.

Despite what you may have heard from those who opposed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, including House Minority Leader PELOSI's infamous description of the tax plan's benefits as “crumbs” and the passage of the plan as “the end of the world, Armageddon,” the economy is responding incredibly well to the changes we made to the Tax Code.

I have long believed our economy has struggled under the weight of an outdated, inefficient, and ineffective tax system. Now, businesses are beginning to do the math and are realizing that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will mean more savings. As a result, many have announced they are passing some of these savings on to their employees or will now be seeking to grow and expand operations.

As of today, more than 350 companies have announced pay raises, bonuses

and/or 401(k) increases, benefiting over 4 million Americans. According to a recent National Federation of Independent Business survey, 32 percent of small businesses believe now is a good time to expand—the highest level ever recorded by this survey.

This is happening across the country and in Arkansas. Here are just a few examples of the companies headquartered in Arkansas, with a sizable presence in the State, that are passing along savings to their employees through wage increases, bonuses, and other benefits, are giving to charity, and/or making investments to grow their businesses and better serve customers:

BancorpSouth Bank is giving pay increases and/or one-time bonuses to nearly all noncommissioned employees. The investment of over \$10 million in 2018 will benefit 96 percent of the company's noncommissioned workforce. Pay increases were effective as of January 1, 2018.

Home Bancshares, Inc., of Conway, AR, is distributing a one-time bonus of \$500 to more than 850 full-time, tenured employees. Home Bancshares' chairman, John Allison, said “investing in these individuals is an important step to help support them, their families and the communities in which we operate.”

People's Bank of Magnolia, AR, provided a \$500 bonus to employees and contributed \$50,000 to its charitable endowment.

Little Rock, Arkansas-based Bank of the Ozarks is giving up to \$1,200 annual bonuses. Approximately 2,300 employees will be eligible under the plan.

Walmart, whose headquarters is located in Bentonville, AR, is a significant economic force not only in our State but nationwide, is increasing starting hourly wage rates in the United States to \$11 an hour, expanding maternity and parental leave benefits, and providing one-time cash bonuses of up to \$1,000. It also has created a new benefit to assist associates with adoption expenses.

Regions Bank is increasing its minimum wage to \$15, contributing \$40 million to the company's charitable foundation, and increasing the company's capital expenditures budget by approximately \$100 million, or 50 percent over the 2017 level.

Springdale, AR, is home to Tyson Foods' headquarters. The company recently announced that it is giving bonuses to more than 100,000 employees whose compensation does not include an annual bonus. Eligible full-time team members will receive a bonus of \$1,000, and eligible part-time team members will receive \$500.

In addition, Tyson will use savings resulting from tax reform to improve training and education opportunities for employees, including teaching English as a second language and general education development classes, and it will also be accelerating capital projects.

FedEx, whose freight headquarters is located in Arkansas and which employs over 3,500 Arkansans, is investing more than \$3.2 billion in growing its business, including raising wages and investing \$1.5 billion in pension plans.

Finally, UPS is investing \$12 billion to expand the company's Smart Logistics Network, and it also made a \$5 billion tax-qualified contribution to the company's three UPS-sponsored U.S. pension plans. This represents about \$13,000 per participant. The company has more than 2,200 active employees in Arkansas in addition to around 390 retirees who reside in the State.

The numbers speak for themselves. Clearly, when Washington helps to create an environment that makes businesses more globally competitive, it benefits Arkansas, and it benefits the entire country.

The law is already helping hard-working Arkansans keep more of their money in their own pockets. By nearly doubling the standard deduction, lowering rates, eliminating loopholes, and creating a climate that incentivizes business to boost wages and give employees bonuses as a result of the reduction in the corporate tax rate, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is providing much needed tax relief to Arkansans.

Additionally, our Governor, Asa Hutchinson, has instructed the Arkansas Public Service Commission to examine how the new lower tax rates will benefit utility providers in Arkansas. He is encouraging the commission to instruct utilities to pass savings down to ratepayers, which could mean possible lower utility rates for those in the Natural State.

That is not all. Arkansas-based companies like ArcBest and Murphy USA are already reaping the benefits of the new tax system with higher revenues and incomes.

This is only the beginning. I believe we will continue to see positive trends and reactions to the tax law that will help grow our economy and spur even more investment in Arkansas and across the country.

One provision included in the law that I believe can have an enormous impact on average Arkansans is a new incentive for employers to offer paid family leave benefits to their employees. Now employers can offer 12 weeks of paid family leave in exchange for a tax credit.

My friend and colleague from Nebraska Senator FISCHER fought to get this idea included in the bill. Thanks to her vision and perseverance, families in Arkansas and across the country who most need access to this type of benefit will now have that chance. This is just one more example of tax reform delivering results that will help the middle class.

I want to reiterate how well tax reform is working for my State. We are seeing growth, higher wages, and other positive benefits. Employees are getting bigger paychecks and businesses are investing in their workforces and

expanding their operations. Those are not “crumbs.” It is “not Armageddon.” It isn’t an attack on working Americans. It is opportunity, it is upward mobility, and it is what Americans deserve. I am proud to have cast my vote for tax reform.

Learning about how it is helping our economy and benefiting American families just confirms what we predicted would happen if we made American businesses more competitive and let average individuals and families keep more of what they earn.

Moving forward, I am committed to ensuring that the changes we made to the Tax Code help increase economic activity and spur growth, address our national debt, and create jobs. I am confident it will have lasting, positive effects on our economy.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOOZMAN. 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.

KENTUCKY FLOODING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, over the last week, heavy rains and strong winds caused widespread destruction across Kentucky. Sustained rainfall has led to devastating flooding in many communities, especially along the Ohio River.

The high waters have closed dozens of roads, and some areas are reporting dangerous mudslides. The extent of this flooding hasn’t been seen in my State since the 1997 flood.

In addition, the National Weather Service has confirmed that three tornadoes touched down in western Kentucky. The entire Commonwealth is under a state of emergency because of the damage caused by this severe weather.

I was saddened to hear reports this morning that these destructive storms have claimed the lives of three Kentuckians. Many are still struggling to stay safe.

As they always do, Kentucky’s emergency personnel responded quickly and professionally to the storms and the aftermath. Rescuing many individuals from their homes or their cars, these dedicated men and women continue to do everything they can to protect Kentuckians in need. They have our sincere gratitude.

Although the sky has cleared, there is more rain in the forecast for this week.

My staff in the State and I will continue to monitor this situation as it develops throughout Kentucky.

HONORING COMMANDER PAUL BAUER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise with a heavy heart to pay tribute to Chicago Police Commander Paul Bauer, who gave his life to protect the city he loved. We use the word “hero” far too often, but in this case, that word is fitting. Commander Paul Bauer is a true American hero, and his loss is a tragedy.

On February 13, Commander Bauer was at an “active shooter” training session in downtown Chicago, but he didn’t hesitate to help out his fellow officers when they were pursuing a fleeing suspect. Commander Bauer was shot several times by the suspect and died from his wounds. Commander Bauer’s story is a reminder to us all that our heroes serving in blue risk their lives every day, and even routine calls can turn into tragedy in an instant.

A 31-year veteran of the Chicago Police Department and the commander of the 18th Police District in the Near North Side, Paul Bauer was a pillar of that community. Last year, he was commended by the city council for a charity holiday party he helped host for underprivileged kids. Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson said it best: “This department didn’t just lose an exemplary police officer. The City lost a piece of itself.”

Last week, when the charges were announced against the alleged shooter, an impromptu memorial developed outside the Thompson Center. People brought flowers, left crosses, and displayed signs reading, “RIP CDR Bauer.” One woman on her lunch break even left a plush stuffed dog that she hoped would make it in to the arms of Paul’s teenage daughter. It was a tremendous show of love, respect, and gratitude.

A few years ago, I gave a commencement address and asked the students to think about what they wanted people to say about their lives. I asked them, “What will you be remembered for? What service did you render to your community? Your nation? Your world?” The great thing about living in America is we can choose the answers to those questions. Commander Bauer will be remembered for his service to his community. He gave what Lincoln called, “the last full measure of devotion” and did so for the people and city he loved and served, but he will be remembered for so much more. A friend described Paul as “every bit the good guy he’s being made out to be,” but also added: “You can’t capture his goodness.” What a beautiful legacy.

For all Paul Bauer’s professional accomplishments, the highlights of his life were his family. Paul met his wife, Erin, met at a fundraiser for a Chicago police officer who was also killed in the line of duty. The Friday following Paul’s death, February 16, would have been the couple’s 16th anniversary. Together, Paul and Erin raised a bright and wonderful 13-year-old daughter

Grace. Paul’s family will carry on his legacy of love and his devotion to service and community.

Commander Bauer was the quintessential officer, a role model in his department and his bravery inspires the rest of us, especially his friends and family. After his memorial service Commander Bauer’s wife, Erin, sent a touching message to all who paid tribute to her husband. She wrote: “One man almost stole my faith in humanity, but the City of Chicago and the rest of the nation restored it, and I want to thank you for that.”

We are all humbled by her strength, and our thoughts and prayers are with Erin, Grace and all who loved and knew Paul. Commander Paul Bauer was one of our best.

REMEMBERING MAURY DUANE GEIGER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on February 18, 2018, New Hampshire lost one of its finest lawyers and humanitarians, Maurice Duane Geiger. He was 83 years old.

Some might ask why, as a Senator from Vermont, I would call the Senate’s attention to a resident of our neighbor to the east. In fact, Maury Geiger not only had close ties to Vermont where, in 1982, he cofounded the Rural Justice Center in Montpelier, he was in every respect a global citizen. Over his long career, he worked to improve access to justice in Haiti, Bangladesh, Rwanda, and several other countries.

I met Maury Geiger years ago and will never forget going with him, my wife, Marcelle, and my staff member Tim Rieser to visit the national penitentiary in Port au Prince, Haiti. A more squalid example of a corrections facility would be hard to imagine. It was overflowing with thousands of impoverished men of all ages, sweltering in the heat and humidity, crammed into cement rooms with nothing to sleep on but the floor, with little food and vulnerable to AIDS, tuberculosis, and other dangerous diseases, and the vast majority had never been formally charged with any crime. Some had languished there for 2 or more years, far longer than any sentence they would have received if tried and convicted. Almost none had lawyers.

After first laying eyes on that unforgettable scene of inhumane neglect, Maury returned to Haiti year after year, determined to do whatever he could to help improve the lives and protect the rights of those caught up in Haiti’s corrupt, dysfunctional justice system. It was that same passion for justice that took him to the courts and jails of rural America and to distant places like Addis Abba and Tbilisi.

As his obituary describes, Maury was born into poverty, and that experience, and his mother’s guidance, shaped his character. He served as a naval aviator and then at the Department of Justice. He was as patriotic and as fierce a defender of the Constitution and Bill of