

profile to assess how people might respond to political advertising and how they might vote in an election. When people access Facebook to trade pictures with families and friends or to communicate with family and talk about their most recent vacations, I doubt they realize that data could be acquired by a third party, like Cambridge Analytica, and that it can not only literally use that information but all of the personal data of their friends and relatives in order to target political messaging for its use in an election.

Facebook has historically been a platform for all ideas, as they say, but now the company realizes that because of its business model, it has more responsibilities. It is not just a neutral platform. It must defend against false information, foreign government subterfuge, and other destructive conduct, such as child pornography and human trafficking. We know, as a result of the most recent legislation we passed relative to human trafficking, that we have actually expanded the responsibilities of social media platforms in the human trafficking arena because of the threat it poses to so many innocent people.

The basic questions are whether Facebook is responsible for misinformation in its use of its platform, for outright falsehoods, or attempts by foreign governments to meddle in our elections by sowing discord and disinformation. There are also some important questions about whether Facebook is inconsistently using the data that it collects in a way that obviously benefits itself financially but is not sharing it on an equal basis with law enforcement or intelligence when the intelligence community needs that information to solve crimes or to keep the country safe.

A lot of ideas have been tossed around about how to respond to these difficult questions. Perhaps we should treat social media platforms as information fiduciaries and impose legal obligations on them, as we do with lawyers and doctors, who are privy to some of our most personal, private information.

To me, one of the most important questions is who owns that data that we share on social media platforms and whether the data that is shared is shared with one's fully informed consent so that consumers are protected against consequences they had no way of anticipating and that are damaging to their personal privacy.

Other ideas involve increased transparency, partnering with the Federal Trade Commission, or passing new data privacy laws. They involve giving consumers more control and requiring companies to disclose in plain English and in nontechnical ways what information they collect before users are presumed to have given their consent. I look forward to exploring these and other related ideas at the hearing later today.

Facebook and other social media platforms need to come clean with the American people. An apology, while necessary and welcome, is not enough. These companies must back up their words with actions that better safeguard the American consumer and their right to privacy. Technology can be a good thing, but it can also be abused in ways that we need to reckon with. This afternoon's hearing will be the beginning of those efforts in a very substantial and comprehensive way.

Mr. President, on a separate matter, we have a lot on our plate here in the Senate apart from conducting the hearing that I just mentioned. One of our items on our "to do" list is to continue to confirm the President's nominees, who have faced an unprecedented level of obstruction from the minority. The majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, has been forced to file cloture—a formal piece of paper—on six important nominees, many of whom will be confirmed with strong bipartisan support, but because our colleagues on the other side refuse to consent to the expedited consideration of these noncontroversial nominees, we will have to literally burn up a week of the Senate's time during which we could be doing other important work.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Mr. President, in addition to the six nominees whom we will confirm this week, I want to talk about two in particular, two outstanding individuals who have been nominated by the President to some of the most important positions in the Federal Government. These posts are the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Secretary of State.

Gina Haspel has been nominated for the first position. She joined the CIA in 1985, which was during the final years of the Cold War. She is a career intelligence officer and has served for more than 30 years overseas, around the world, and in Washington. She has held various leadership roles at the Central Intelligence Agency, including that of Deputy Director of the National clandestine Service. You can imagine this is some of the most sensitive and important work that is being done in the intelligence community, and she has been right in the middle of it. She has also worked in the Counterterrorism Center, where her first day of work was on September 11, 2001—that fateful day when the Twin Towers fell and the Pentagon was attacked.

Throughout her career, Ms. Haspel has held some of the most demanding and least publicly acknowledged assignments in the far-off reaches of the globe—in places like Africa and the Middle East. She did not always seek out these difficult roles; she took them because she saw them as her duty. That is the challenge, honestly, when it comes to somebody who has had an incredible career like Gina Haspel's, because so much of what she has done, she has done in a classified setting. We cannot really talk about the details

without jeopardizing the sources and methods of our intelligence-gathering or without revealing information which could undermine our national security.

There have already been some attacks on Ms. Haspel, which, I think, are, honestly, a caricature of her 30-plus years of service to the country. We ought to applaud, not denigrate, people who are willing to sacrifice their safety, their comfort, and their security to make us safer and more secure as the American people. Unfortunately, that doesn't always happen.

She has received numerous awards which lend credence to her reputation and illustrate that other accomplished professionals hold her in high regard. These awards include the Presidential Rank Award, which is the most prestigious award in the Federal civil service. She has also received the Intelligence Medal of Merit, among others.

Her integrity and professionalism are beyond question. A bipartisan group of intelligence officials who has served in previous administrations has testified to her qualifications and her fitness for this particular position as the Director of the CIA. For example, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, who served for 50 years in the intelligence community under Republican Presidents and Democratic Presidents, said he thinks the world of Ms. Haspel. She is capable, smart, experienced, and well respected by Agency rank-and-file and is a great person, he said.

Leon Panetta, who served as the Chief of Staff to Bill Clinton when he was the President and who later served as the CIA Director and the Secretary of Defense under President Obama, said that he is glad we will have the first woman as the head of the CIA and that Gina knows the CIA inside and out.

Former CIA Director John Brennan, who also worked under President Obama, has cited her ability to "provide unvarnished, apolitical, objective intelligence to [President] Trump and to others."

Just yesterday, 53 former senior U.S. officials sent the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence a letter in which they expressed their wholehearted support for Ms. Haspel. This group includes former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz and former Attorney General Michael Mukasey, among others.

As I said, we know that some partisans have already sought to twist and distort Ms. Haspel's record and the decisions that were made in real time by accomplished professionals at a time when our country was under attack.

In Ms. Haspel's case, there have been questions about interrogation tactics that had been used in the early days of the War on Terror following 9/11. These questions are really pretty easily answered. The program complained of was investigated twice by career lawyers in the Justice Department—one under President Bush and another

under President Obama. Ms. Haspel and others were found to have done nothing unlawful. As my colleague, the junior Senator from Arkansas, has said, Ms. Haspel did not go rogue or make these policies on the fly. She dutifully executed the approved policy as determined by the Department of Justice. Moreover, she did so at one of the most dangerous moments in our Nation's history.

I am confident that Ms. Haspel will be confirmed because if she is not, it will send a horrible message to other highly qualified people who feel the call to serve our Nation, and it will send a horrible message to other CIA officers who follow lawful orders and protect our country on a daily basis. It will make our intelligence professionals more risk averse and consequently endanger our national security and American lives.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Mr. President, I also commend to the Senate the nomination of Mike Pompeo as the next Secretary of State and express my support for his nomination.

After graduating first in his class at West Point and serving in the U.S. Army, Mike Pompeo attended Harvard Law School. He had a successful career in law and business before transitioning into public service as an elected official. He served as a Congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives for Kansas's Fourth Congressional District, and he served in the U.S. House on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He was, of course, named by President Trump to lead the CIA after President Trump was elected.

Director Pompeo is smart and well respected by all. He has developed a keen sense of the delicate nature of global diplomacy and the crucial and indispensable role that America plays in world affairs. I know he has great personal rapport and the confidence of the President, and I think he will make an excellent Secretary of State.

Earlier this month, a group of influential conservatives sent a letter applauding Director Pompeo's nomination. They praised his management of the CIA and the trust he has earned of career officials there. They noted Director Pompeo's firsthand knowledge of the legislative process, something that is always handy for an executive branch official. They noted his congressional relationships—as we know, relationships are very important here, as well—but also his experience serving in the military, which gives him a unique perspective on a wide variety of issues.

I have worked with the Director on a number of occasions, including recently, when we worked together on the reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act section 702 program, which the intelligence community uses to monitor the communications of terrorists and other people who are a threat to the national security of the United States. Without the

Director's stalwart support, we would not have been successful at renewing that program for 6 more years this last January.

The Director never waivers from a fight, even under pressure, and he understands the important role that our intelligence officials have in responding to national security threats. That characteristic of his—not backing down from a fight—is important for a Secretary of State because inevitably they are involved in controversial matters. I believe he has the personal tact, skill, and intelligence to be able to deal with our allies and to address our adversaries on the world stage in a way that would help the United States and help us lead in the world.

Once he is confirmed, Americans would be fortunate to have Mike Pompeo's critical eye trained on difficult conflicts like that in Syria, upcoming negotiations on denuclearization with North Korea, the growing threat posed by China and its dictatorship, and the new and evolving forms of Russian aggression, including meddling in our elections. Mike Pompeo is not naive about these dangers. He is thoughtful, and I expect that, once confirmed, he will be direct, respectful, and collaborative in working with the White House and the Congress.

I strongly support the President's nomination of Mike Pompeo for Secretary of State, and I urge my colleagues to do likewise.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. DAINES pertaining to the introduction of S. 2640 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

NOMINATIONS OF JOHN RING AND PATRICK PIZZELLA

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I am here today to urge my colleagues to oppose the confirmation of two Trump nominees—John Ring, who has been nominated to the National Labor Relations Board, and Patrick Pizzella, who has been nominated Deputy Secretary of Labor. These two nominees have been selected to hold critical jobs to protect workers. That is what these jobs are about.

I will be blunt. I start with a pretty high bar here since, despite his campaign rhetoric from 2 years ago, the President's track record on standing up for workers has been absolutely miserable. From the day he nominated Andrew Puzder—an executive who delighted in mocking and belittling his

own low-wage workers—to run the Department of Labor, this administration has delivered one gut punch after another to America's working people.

The National Labor Relations Board is responsible for protecting the rights of workers to organize and bargain for better wages and benefits, so as we consider President Trump's latest nominee for the Board, it makes sense to look at what his nominees so far have already done.

Look at the new Republican majority's very first week back on the job back in December. In just 5 days, the Board mowed its way through a giant wish list of areas where giant companies were begging to be let off the hook for violating workers' rights.

Allowing employers to shirk their collective bargaining obligations by contracting out workers? Check.

Making it easier for employers to control the outcome of union elections. Check.

Opening the door for workplace rules that chill workers' ability to join together on the job. Check.

Allowing cases to be "settled" without input from the workers whose rights are affected by the settlement. Check.

Just as troubling as these anti-worker decisions themselves are the egregious conflicts of interest behind them.

From the moment he was nominated by President Trump, I have repeatedly raised concerns about Board Member William Emanuel's history of representing big corporations that have abused their workers and about his mile-long list of potential conflicts of interest. Sure enough, after just a few months on the Board, NLRB's inspector general determined that Mr. Emanuel participated in not one but two important decisions involving his former law firm, which directly violated his ethics pledge. In response, the Board vacated one of its most consequential decisions of the last year, and Member Emanuel lost any remaining credibility that he could be an impartial Board member. So I called on him to resign.

Now the President wants us to put John Ring on the Board. I have asked Mr. Ring to provide a list of clients and cases that might require his recusal. To his credit, he has done so. But Mr. Ring's long list of clients is a huge red flag. Either he will ignore the ethics rules when they are inconvenient—like Mr. Emanuel did—or he will likely have to recuse himself from important cases.

A large number of potential conflicts of interest isn't the only thing Mr. Ring has in common with Mr. Emanuel. Like Emanuel, Mr. Ring has also spent his career representing large employers against workers, and his few public statements on the NLRB express a belief that the Board has been too friendly to workers and that corporations have gotten the short end of the stick.

After decades of stagnant wages and skyrocketing corporate profits, does