

openly hostile to the collective bargaining rights of working people. Yesterday was Equal Pay Day, which symbolizes the number of extra days a typical woman who works full-time, year-round must work into 2018 to be paid what a typical man was paid in 2017. Women are still only paid 80 cents for every dollar paid to a man, a yearly pay difference of \$10,086, and the disparity is even worse for many women of color.

Based on an analysis of Census Bureau data, the National Partnership for Women and Families is releasing a study which concludes that, in sum, women employed full time in the U.S. will lose nearly \$900 billion to the wage gap this year. If the wage gap were closed, on average, a working woman in this country would be able to afford more than 1 additional year of tuition and fees for a 4-year public university, 74 more weeks of food for her family, nearly 7 more months of mortgage and utility payments, or 14 more months of childcare.

If Mr. Ring and Mr. Pizzella and President Trump are unwilling to protect female workers and try to close that pay gap, which seems likely, then let us let us arm women with the most powerful tool in our legal system: the U.S. Constitution. Let us finally pass the Equal Rights Amendment, ERA.

The ERA is barely longer than a tweet, but it would finally give women full and equal protection under the Constitution. Section 1 of the ERA states, quite simply, that "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

When Congress proposed the ERA in 1972, it provided that the measure had to be ratified by three-fourths of the States—38 States—within 7 years. This deadline was later extended to 10 years by a joint resolution, but ultimately only 35 out of 38 States had ratified the ERA when the deadline expired in 1982. Note that the deadline wasn't contained in the amendment itself; the deadline was in the text of the joint resolution.

Article V of the Constitution contains no time limits for the ratification of amendments, so the ERA deadline is arbitrary. To put the matter in context, the 27th Amendment to the Constitution, which prohibits congressional pay raises without an intervening election, was ratified in 1992, 203 years after it was first proposed.

The Senate should vote on a Senate Joint Resolution I have introduced—S.J. Res. 5—to remove the ERA deadline, and every State in our Union that has not yet taken up its consideration should do so without any further delay.

Nevada became the 36th State to ratify the amendment last March, leaving the ERA just two States short of the required three-fourths of the States threshold under the Constitution if the deadline were to be abolished.

The ERA would incorporate a ban on gender-based discrimination, explicitly

written or otherwise, into the Constitution. It could change outcomes in discrimination cases by requiring the Supreme Court to use the higher standard of "strict scrutiny" when assessing those cases, the same standard used in racial and religious discrimination cases.

I think many—perhaps most—Americans would be shocked to learn that our Constitution has no provision expressly prohibiting gender discrimination.

In a 2011 interview, the late Justice Antonin Scalia summed up the need for an Equal Rights Amendment best. He said, "Certainly the Constitution does not require discrimination on the basis of sex. The only issue is whether it prohibits it. It doesn't."

So I ask my Senate colleagues this question most sincerely: Are we willing to do what must be done to prohibit gender discrimination in the Constitution? The people being affected by systemic gender inequality are our constituents. They are our mothers, sisters, wives, daughters, and our granddaughters. They are American citizens who deserve basic respect and equality.

It is time to end the assault on working families in this country. Let's end discrimination by making it possible to ratify the ERA. Let's close the pay gap. Let's stop denigrating Federal workers. Let's support, not attack, the collective bargaining rights that are the cornerstone of a strong middle class. I regret that the Senate is poised to confirm two individuals who are unlikely to assist these efforts. We can and must do better.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

#### FAIR TRADE

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, let me do a quick history lesson with this body. In 1773, the Colonies we were getting more and more frustrated with King George. There were a lot of issues we raised with him—a lot of taxes, a lot of changes, things that were happening in the judiciary, things that were arbitrary that were coming down. Then it boiled to a head.

In December of 1773, a group of American colonists went out to Boston infuriated with the tariff policy over tea. The British East India Company had special access that no one else had. They had no taxes and everyone else had a tax—a tariff. It pushed out all of the other companies except for the British East India Company. A group of American colonists went out to one of the ships, grabbed all the tea in the harbor, and threw it overboard, creating the legendary Boston Tea Party.

That was an argument about tariffs. It was an argument about international trade. It was an argument about American companies and fair trade, and we still talk about it today.

It is interesting to note that in our letter that Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1776, which we now call the Declaration of Independence, in the long list of grievances that we wrote out to King

George, we included this line: We are cutting off our trade with all parts of the world as one of our big grievances. That grievance fell between the grievance of the British Government allowing British soldiers to murder inhabitants in America and our taxes without consent. In between those was cutting off our international trade. We have been free traders as a nation since even before we were a nation, and we have been passionate about keeping it fair but keeping it free and keeping it open.

Free trade is a big issue for us, and for some reason it has become this big national conversation again. Should we have free and fair trade? Should we continue to engage? What does it mean to have a deficit in our trade? Does it have to be equal with every country, that they buy from us as much as we buy from them? Suddenly, this has become a brand-new dialogue again.

I wish to bring a couple of real world moments to this, beginning with the history lesson, by stating that trade—and international trade, specifically—was important to us even before we were a country. We were gathering supplies from all over the world to be able to do our basic production. We are still doing that today.

For some reason I run into people that think this international supply chain is something new in this generation. I tell them that they should look at our history and see that the United States has always had an international supply chain.

We are also 25 percent of the world's economy. There is no nation in the world that can afford to buy as much from us as we buy from them. We are the largest economy in the world, by far. We are going to buy more from other countries.

The issue is, How does this work in our economy and how do we make sure we protect American manufacturing and the American consumer at the same time? Let me walk through what this looks like.

Charlie and Mary Swanson are Oklahomans and third-generation farmers and ranchers who live in Roosevelt, OK, with a whopping population of 241. The agricultural products they produce help feed the world. They raise wheat, cotton, cattle, and milo.

Every year their crops are harvested using John Deere equipment. We look at the John Deere tractor and its beautiful green and we think: That is a great American company, except that parts of the equipment also come in its original form from Mexico. Parts come from India, and parts from Germany. Most of the parts come from the United States. They employ 60,000 people in the United States.

It is a great American company—John Deere—but their cabs are made in Germany. Their hydraulic cylinders are made in Mexico. The castings from the foundry are from Iowa, but the guidance products are from California. Some of the transmission and electronic parts come from India, and

other parts are from Missouri. We see that as a great American tractor.

The crews that harvest some of the Swanson's crops are folks that come in—legally, by the way—from New Zealand, Ireland, or South Africa. The wheat they produce goes to export markets all over the world. Some of it goes to Egypt, some to India, Japan, and South Korea.

Their cotton is used all over the United States, but it is also shipped to China, as well, to produce fabrics. Some of the fabrics end up being made into garments that are shipped from Vietnam. Some of them end up right back here in the United States again, having started from the cotton from Roosevelt, OK.

The milo they raise goes to feed. Most of that feed goes to Texas. If you are from Oklahoma, you may consider that international trade, but it is still domestic trade. A lot of the feed goes to China.

They raise cattle, our great American beef. We eat as much beef as we can possibly eat in Oklahoma, and the rest of it we ship all over the world. Their beef is used in Oklahoma and all across the United States, but it is also sent to Japan, Korea, and Mexico.

Understand this, just as an aside: In 2017, U.S. beef producers exported 1.2 million metric tons of beef worth \$2 billion. That is just American beef going around the world. Two leading partners in that are Canada and Mexico—\$980 million in exports. It is a big part of what they do.

Charlie Swanson drives a Ford F-150 pickup. It is a great American product; isn't it? It is a great Ford truck. That F-150, by the way, is a fantastic vehicle. It is completely assembled in the United States, but the aluminum in that great American truck comes from Canada. About 15 percent of the components in that great American truck come from Mexico. Some parts even come from China. That F-150 is not only used extensively in the United States, but it is also shipped around the world. There are a lot of F-150 trucks on the roads in Mexico, Canada, and, yes, even in China.

That F-150 rides on four good, solid American-made tires, but the steel cord in those good American tires comes from all over the world. The steel in most of our tires is not made in the United States. A lot of the chemicals that go into the production of those tires are from Europe, Asia, and Latin America. They are good American tires. A lot of them are made in Oklahoma in the Goodyear facility—a phenomenal facility—or the Michelin plant in Ardmore. They make great American tires for a lot of vehicles all across the United States, but they have parts and pieces from around the world in those American-made tires, and they are shipping them out as well. So just speaking about Charlie and what is happening in Roosevelt, OK, population 241, the products they produce are going all over the world. The products

they use, such as the John Deere tractor and the Ford F-150 with the Goodyear or Michelin tires are American-made, but are dependent on trade from all around the world.

I could talk about Dr. Brent Hancock, born and raised in Kiowa County, OK. He left Kiowa County and went to the big city of Stillwater to attend Oklahoma State University, where he received his doctor of veterinary medicine degree. He returned back to Kiowa County and opened a veterinary clinic in Hobart in 1995. For over 20 years, Dr. Hancock has been taking care of vaccinations for sheep, cattle, pigs, goats, cats, and dogs. It is also rumored that Dr. Hancock can operate on your rabbit, but that is a whole different story.

He vaccinates these animals with vaccines to provide some of the safest agricultural products in the world. Some of those vaccines come from companies like Bayer, which is an international company based in Germany. He also uses products from Merck. They have offices in 50 countries, and they produce and ship their products to 140 countries around the world.

Again, we look at him and say that he is a good American veterinarian. He must be all American, but he actually depends on products from all over the world to provide basic things.

I cannot talk about Oklahoma without talking about oil and gas. Most of the pipe that goes down the hole in most of our wells is produced from steel that is not made in America. That particular type of steel that is down holding those wells is produced around the world but not here. We are dependent upon oil and gas that goes in the F-150 pickup and the John Deere tractor, and a part of it relies on steel from around the world.

I can take you to Tulsa, OK—slightly larger than Kiowa County, I would say—to a manufacturing plant called SWEP. They employ 100 people and produce components for refrigerators and air conditioners. They import products from Europe, and they combine them with products that they are making in the United States and assemble them. That final product is sold all over the country and is also sold to Canada and Mexico—all from one company in Tulsa, OK.

Drive up the road from Tulsa to Bartlesville to a manufacturing plant operated by ABB. They create a lot of products that are in wells, pipelines, and refineries all across America. That company imports products from suppliers from Canada and Mexico, and they create a final product that is sold all over the United States, and they sell it right back to Canada and Mexico as well.

This shouldn't be shocking to anyone. This is the same structure that we have had since the 1700s as Colonies. We produce some of our products and ship them out. We buy some to be able to use in manufacturing. This is a nation that is very interconnected to the

world, and it is exceptionally important that our trade agreements get resolved as fast as possible.

I want fair trade. We had unfair trade in 1773 that we protested in the Boston Harbor. We still want fair trade agreements right now, but those trade agreements need to be resolved as fast as possible. Farmers and ranchers in Oklahoma cannot wait a year to find out what is going to happen in our trade policy. Some of them are on the edge of the knife right now of bankruptcy. They can't get anything on the futures market to try to figure out what is happening in the now to be able to make the basic investments they need to make for this year's crops.

Predictability helps us, just like fair and free trade does. So while I understand full well that the administration is engaging in trade negotiations around the world, I encourage them to move from talking about these trade agreements to settling them—getting them resolved with Mexico and Canada and getting the best deal that we can have, resetting this agreement with NAFTA for another generation to prepare us for the future. Let's get that resolved. Those are our two largest trading partners. Resolve our trade agreement with Korea, locking that one in and finishing out all the area around Asia as well. Twelve of those nations have already resolved the trade agreements they are into, putting us behind. Those nations are forming contracts now. We need to engage as soon as we possibly can.

There are big issues with China and trade. They have not been fair in all their trade agreements. We need to resolve our issues with China, and I am pleased that this administration is leaning in to resolve a long-term issue with China trade. It is about time someone does it, but we also need to get it resolved. We don't need retaliatory tariffs moving across every industry in our Nation destabilizing what we are doing in the economy. Let's get these issues resolved.

Quite frankly, many of the trade issues that we have with the rest of the world aren't their tariffs, but they are our regulations. When our regulations and American redtape from our own government slow down our own economy, let's deal with our own house to make sure what we produce is competitive around the world, but in the meantime, let's move our trade conversations to trade agreements so we can continue to move on toward doing the same thing we have done since the 1700s as Americans; that is, trading with the entire world and leading the world with it.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The Senator from Alaska.

CHINA

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, as we all know, our country is facing a lot of challenges, particularly overseas, and a lot of them are in the news—Iran, Syria, North Korea. When you