

Daniel Webster said:

Good intentions will always be pleaded for every assumption of authority. It is hardly too strong to say that the Constitution was made to guard the people against the dangers of good intentions. There are men in all ages who mean to govern well, but they mean to govern. They promise to be good masters, but they mean to be masters.

Some of those Founding Fathers really knew what they were talking about, and Webster was certainly one of them in many respects.

All I can say is that we have a chance to work together to do what is right and in the best interest of the American people. I intend to see that we do that, and I hope we can because this country is worth it. Our system of government is the best this world has ever seen, and I want to see it continue to be.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

SPECIAL COUNSEL LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I watched the President on TV this morning, and like most Americans, so many Americans, I was aghast. The President seems to live in an alternative reality. He says things that are patently false, and he thinks that just by saying them, they become true. With the number of 180-degree turns—direct contradictions to what he has said before—the name-calling, and blaming, if you watched the President this morning and the way he acted, it was so unbecoming of a President, unbecoming of a democracy.

We believe in truth. People may have different value systems, but to just make up things as he goes along and to, without blinking an eye, contradict things that he said that were exactly the opposite a few hours, a few days, a few weeks ago is not who any President of any party of any ideology should be.

What the President said this morning was embarrassing to America, to democracy, and to any American who prizes truth.

One of the things the President said this morning was that he has decided not to be involved in the Russia probe but may change his mind. That is why it is so good this morning that the Judiciary Committee is marking up bipartisan legislation that will protect Special Counsel Mueller from political interference.

From the very beginning, Special Counsel Mueller's investigation has been about following the facts of how a

foreign, hostile power interfered with our free and fair elections—the wellspring of our democracy. That investigation must be allowed to proceed safely from the President's heavy hand. The President can't make this go away by name-calling. He can't dispute facts. He can't dispute the fact that Russia's interfering in our election is very dangerous and must be investigated no matter where it leads.

It is so abundantly clear from the President's remarks this morning and from so many other things he has said that he has little regard for the rule of law. He seems to have this view that the purpose of the Justice Department is to protect his interests and persecute his enemies. That is not a democracy. The purpose of the Justice Department is to defend the rule of law, and no man or woman is above the law. It is not, simply, to go after his friends. He is angry when the Justice Department does something he doesn't like even though it is following the law. Again, that is not the hallmark of our democracy.

I am so proud of our Judiciary Committee and Chairman GRASSLEY in their rising to the occasion—proposing and hopefully passing legislation that says we will protect the rule of law and that we will protect our democracy by not allowing the President to fire the special counsel at will because he simply doesn't like the results he comes up with.

Again, the Judiciary Committee, this morning, makes us proud. It rises to the occasion to tell the President that he cannot tamper with the very wellsprings of our democracy and that he will pay a bipartisan price if he does.

I particularly praise Chairman GRASSLEY. We have worked together on many things, and we have had our differences on many things, but this morning he is rising to the occasion. History regards such moments very favorably. I hope we will get a large vote this morning.

APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Madam President, while we are speaking about bipartisanship, there is another bit of good news. There are two shoots of bipartisanship springing up today—the Judiciary Committee's action on preventing the President from firing Mueller and an agreement between Senator SHELBY, Leader MCCONNELL, and me to try to begin moving appropriations bills the way we used to—in a bipartisan way.

We had a very good meeting yesterday in which we laid out the parameters of how to do this. We talked about not letting extraneous amendments disrupt the process. We talked about doing our job the way it used to be done—doing all of the appropriations bills this year and doing them in a bipartisan way, having the chairs and ranking members of the subcommittees work together to craft a bill that both sides can be happy with even though neither side will be happy with everything in it.

I hope that it moves forward. I pledge to the Members of this body and to the American people that I am committed to making that process move forward in a fair, bipartisan way and to trying to restore some of the semblance of bipartisanship that we used to have in this place and bring it back to actual action and reality, not just verbiage.

VA SECRETARY NOMINATION

Madam President, we just received word that the President's nominee to be the next Secretary of the VA has withdrawn his nomination. The allegations swirling around the nomination of Dr. Jackson were troubling and raised lots of questions, but the real blame here falls on the administration for once again being sloppy and careless in the vetting process. Dr. Jackson didn't go through a careful vetting. Some of these things might have been discovered beforehand, and he wouldn't have had to go through the process he went through.

The Veterans' Affairs Committee did the right thing. They didn't seek to go after Jackson; people came to them. When people come to them—particularly military folks—with serious and troubling allegations, they have an obligation to investigate. I salute Chairman ISAKSON and Ranking Member TESTER for pursuing those allegations.

Dr. Jackson went through a maelstrom, and he should tell his patient, I guess, the President, that he, the President, caused this problem by not properly vetting, by making these decisions on the fly, by making sure they don't count.

Our obligation above all is not to any one individual but to the millions of veterans in America. They deserve a department that treats them well. They deserve the best healthcare, and we need someone to run the VA who is up to the job.

I hope the President learns his lesson. I hope the next nominee is thoroughly vetted before he or she is sent to the Congress. Most of all, I hope our veterans can get the kind of leader they deserve.

HEALTHCARE

Madam President, finally, on another matter—healthcare—next week, health insurance companies will begin to announce their initial proposed rates for 2019 in each State across the country. When they do, every American should remember that President Trump and congressional Republicans have spent the last 1½ years trying to sabotage our healthcare system in a way that would increase costs and decrease access to quality healthcare.

It is true that last summer the Senate Republican effort to repeal our current healthcare system and gut Medicaid—an effort that would have left tens of millions uninsured and raised costs on millions more—ended, thankfully for the American people, in failure.

Despite that legislative failure, President Trump, his administration, and congressional Republicans have

committed several other acts of sabotage—raising premiums and hurting healthcare—all, it seems to me, for a political vendetta.

For a long time, the President refused to guarantee that the administration will honor the cost-sharing program, which reduces premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for low-income Americans. He eventually canceled payments for that program, causing major uncertainty and confusion in the markets.

Then, Republicans repealed the healthcare coverage requirement as a part of their tax bill and put nothing in its place. The CBO projects that repealing the coverage requirement could cause rates to increase by as much as 10 percent and result in millions more people without insurance. So if you can't get insurance, Mr. or Mrs. American, or if your premiums are going up, you know who caused it—the President and congressional Republicans by sabotaging the law that a majority of Americans want to see stay on the books.

Making things worse, earlier this week, the comment period ended for a proposed Trump administration rule that is perhaps the most radical sabotage of our healthcare system yet—a rule that would expand the availability of junk insurance plans. These junk insurance plans would force higher premiums on people with preexisting conditions, impose an age tax on older Americans, and once again could subject Americans to the devastating effects of medical bankruptcy, which too many people go through now. Many plans might not cover essential services, such as prescription drugs, maternity care, and mental health services.

Each of these actions taken by President Trump and Republicans in Congress will raise costs and reduce access. We are truly living under TrumpCare today, with no effort by the President or congressional Republicans to make it better.

Unfortunately, starting next week, the American people could well see the devastating consequences of 1½ years of healthcare sabotage reflected in the 2019 rates.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

Finally, Madam President, I would like to add a word about an event taking place today in Montgomery, AL. Today in Montgomery, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, dedicated to the legacy of enslaved Black people, victims of lynching, and African Americans who have been victimized by White supremacy, will open its doors.

I read about the new memorial in the newspaper. It was touching. It was moving. So many innocent people were lynched for no reason—walking behind a White woman, other kinds of things like that. Having read and watched the accounts about the memorial, it will be a harrowing experience. Much like the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, it forces visitors to confront the

human toll of racism, America's original sin. And it allows each county to get a replica of a list on a block—sort of like a tombstone—of who was lynched. So maybe those counties can look into their souls, too, and do better, as we all can, at trying to eliminate racism.

America's original sin is racism and the vast and terrible numbers of African Americans who were brutally murdered for simply being Black. This museum forces us, as Martin Luther King did, to look into the mirror and see what the country has done wrong and move to correct it.

I truly salute all the folks who put this wonderful, wonderful museum together.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I would like to make a very short comment with regard to the distinguished minority leader's remarks this morning.

In the midst of his remarks, Mr. SCHUMER mentioned something that I think is terribly important. Yesterday, the Rules Committee—and the distinguished Senator used to be the chairman of the Rules Committee. I think I was ranking member at that particular time. He spoke of an agreement to move appropriations bills. I want to thank him for that, and also Senator DURBIN, who indicated that as of yesterday.

We did reach an agreement in a bipartisan way to do something about filing cloture 86 times and other things going on and reducing that time period. We will get to that.

The breakthrough could be an agreement that Mr. SCHUMER has agreed to with regard to appropriations bills. If we can do that, we might be able to get back to the regular order that both of us experienced when we first came to the Senate. Many Members here have not experienced that.

Mr. SCHUMER. The majority, I think.

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes. Consequently, I want to thank you for that. And I know Senator SHELBY is eager to do the 12 appropriations bills, and I know Senator DURBIN is as well. I think that one statement in the midst of your comments, sir, is terribly important, and I want people to be aware of it, and I thank you.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you. I appreciate very much the remarks of my friend from Kansas. I hope these sprouts of bipartisanship can grow into mighty oaks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I take this time because I know that shortly we are going to be voting on Mr. Pompeo's nomination as Secretary of State, and I want to explain to my colleagues why I cannot support his nomination.

As I said in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during his nomination hearing, I appreciate Mr. Pompeo's public service throughout his career—his service in the military and his service in Congress and as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. I also appreciate the fact that he is willing to serve our Nation in this most important post as Secretary of State.

In the United States, we urgently need a confirmed Secretary of State, but it is our responsibility in the U.S. Senate to advise and consent on the President's nominations and to act as an independent branch of government.

I must state that we are in this urgent need because of Mr. Trump's abrupt dismissal of our former Secretary of State in the midst of many international challenges. In my view, though, Mr. Pompeo is not the right person. I reached that conclusion by his actions and his rhetoric.

If Mr. Pompeo is confirmed, he will be the top diplomat for the United States. He must be an independent voice in the White House. I have questions as to whether he will be that independent voice. He needs to engage our allies. That is how our diplomacy works. He has to be the loudest voice for diplomacy in our national security, in the use of our tools, and the military needs to be a matter of last resort.

I was reminded of this challenge for America when President Macron addressed the joint session of Congress yesterday. President Macron pointed out that the United States established multinational world order in the aftermath of World War II, which is embodied in the transatlantic partnership, and we, the United States, must lead in order to preserve that national security blanket. So it is incumbent upon the Secretary of State to work with our allies—particularly our European allies but all of our allies.

As just one example, when I look at Mr. Pompeo's record in regard to the nuclear agreement with Iran, during that discussion as to whether we would have diplomacy, it was Mr. Pompeo who said that the solution rests with 2,000 sorties to destroy the Iran nuclear capacity. That is not diplomacy. That is not leading with diplomacy. Now he is espousing that, if necessary, we should pull out of the agreement if we can't change it, even though Iran is in compliance with the agreement. That is not diplomacy, and that is certainly not working with our European allies.

Yesterday, we heard President Macron assert that it is critically important that that agreement move forward if Iran is in compliance. Yes, we can build on it, but to walk away from it would be wrong.

Another example that gives me great concern is Mr. Pompeo's position in regard to the Paris climate talks. I know we all have different views about climate and what our individual policy should be in order to deal with the realities of climate change, but one thing should be clear: that we want to be in