

In 2007, an Associated Press investigation found that Comcast was blocking or severely slowing down BitTorrent, a website that allowed consumers to share video, music, and video game files. From 2007 to 2009, AT&T forced Apple to block Skype and other competing services from using AT&T's wireless network to encourage users to purchase more voice minutes. In 2011, Verizon blocked Google Wallet to protect a competing service it had a financial stake in developing and promoting.

There is no shortage of evidence that we need clear and enforceable rules of the road so that these discriminatory practices do not become commonplace schemes that consumers and small businesses must suffer through without any options for recourse.

This isn't the first time Congress has had to step in to protect the integrity of the marketplace. In the 1800s, we didn't have the information superhighway. We had railroads. American farmers used trains to deliver their products to consumers, and powerful railroad trusts started charging certain farmers higher rates to move their goods. Congress stepped in and passed the Sherman Antitrust Act to put a stop to this price discrimination.

Today, we have left the steam engine era, and we have moved into the search engine era. Internet service providers are the 21st century trusts controlling the channels of commerce. And in 2018, many American job creators aren't moving alfalfa seeds; they are moving kernels of ideas for the next big app, the next new startup.

Net neutrality is about continuing the American tradition of promoting competition and providing the level economic playing field we need to continue to prosper in this rapidly changing global economy. But net neutrality isn't just an economic issue; it is also central to the health of our democracy.

Over the past several months and years, Americans all over the country from all walks of life have mobilized and marched, fighting for progress and change—Black Lives Matter, the Women's March, the "me too." movement, high school students demanding gun control, teachers calling for fair pay. Today citizens of all walks of life are carrying the torch of American activism, and they are doing it online.

In 2018, this is how the American people are organizing. This is how the American people are doing the indispensable work of an active citizenry. This is how the American people are speaking truth to power.

Asking individuals to pay extra to speak out for what they believe in, allowing companies to stifle or even block access to certain ideas—that isn't who we are as a country. It isn't consistent with the values of nondiscrimination. Net neutrality is the free speech issue of our time, and the well-being of our precious democracy depends on the public having equal, unfettered access to the internet.

Today, the U.S. Senate will show its true colors. It will either heed the calls of thousands of small businesses that have written in support of this Congressional Review Act resolution and the millions of Americans who have sent letters, posted tweets, and made calls defending net neutrality or the Senate will give another present to the rich and the powerful.

The Senate will either follow the example of Governors, State legislators, and attorneys general all over the country who are fighting to save the internet as we know it or it will let President Trump, once again, break his campaign promise of putting average Americans ahead of swampy special interests. It will either stand up for the principles that have allowed the U.S. internet economy to become the envy of the world or it will make another unforced error that threatens our long-term competitiveness.

I urge my colleagues to make the decision our constituents—with one voice—overwhelmingly are asking us to make. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this Congressional Review Act resolution to restore net neutrality, to restore the principle of nondiscrimination, to restore the protections for small startups, for individuals in our country so that they cannot be discriminated against online.

This is net neutrality day here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. Today is the day of reckoning, when the Trump Federal Communications Commission is going to have their act judged by the U.S. Senate. My hope is that before the end of this day, the Senate will vote to overturn the Trump FCC and restore net neutrality, restore the principle of nondiscrimination, restore the principle of equality, restore the principle that small software and internet startups are given the same protections that the biggest companies in our country are provided.

Today is the day. Net neutrality is the vote that will determine whether we are going to give those protections to every American.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic Leader is recognized.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this week is National Police Week. It is a time to honor the brave men and women who put their lives on the line every day to keep our streets safe.

Every morning, police officers all across the country wake up, put on their uniform praying for the kind of day the rest of us typically enjoy: a routine one. Praise God, most days

that is the case, but sometimes our police officers are asked to put their own lives at risk in defense of others. Back in my hometown, New York, we are protected by the finest law enforcement organization in the world—the NYPD. Just 2 weeks ago, two rookie New York police officers, Flavio Chauca and Jason Truglio, rushed into a burning apartment building and up nine flights of smoke-filled stairs to pull several people to safety. It was an extraordinary act of heroism—and just another day in the line of duty for the over 35,000 men and women of the New York Police Department.

All of us in Congress are indebted to the U.S. Capitol Police who spend long hours protecting us every day. We saw their bravery in action last year when a gunman attacked a congressional baseball practice. If it weren't for the grit and valor of Officers David Bailey and Crystal Griner, things would have gotten much worse.

We should all take a moment to thank the hard-working law enforcement officers at the FBI. Over the last year, our Nation's top law enforcement officers have been unfairly maligned by this President. It is unheard of, particularly on the Republican side, to be so anti-law enforcement, and it maligns the brave men and women who work under them too. Our FBI agents are patriots, just like the men and women out on the beat.

So, today, I salute the men and women in blue, particularly my friends at the NYPD and our fine Capitol Police, as we commemorate the lives of their colleagues lost in the line of duty.

NORTH KOREA

Mr. President, last night, we received reports that Kim Jong Un is threatening to pull out of a planned meeting with President Trump as a result of the routine and scheduled joint military exercise by American and South Korean forces.

After weeks of halting progress, it is a reminder that the North Korean regime has not suddenly moderated. Remember, all that has happened so far is, North Korea has announced it is closing a nuclear test site that was defunct anyway and returned American citizens they never should have detained. We are all thankful those three Americans have returned home, but it was not some major give by Kim Jong Un. Americans should never be imprisoned unlawfully by a foreign power and treated as diplomatic bargaining chips, and we, as a country, should not be giving huge kudos to a leader who does just that.

President Trump, on the other hand, made a significant concession when he agreed to meet with Kim Jong Un. We are rooting for the President's gamble, with this mischievous and dangerous regime, to work. Now that push is coming to shove, Kim Jong Un is baiting the President into making more concessions to ensure a meeting that was a concession to them in the first place.

I strongly urge President Trump: Mr. President, don't give Kim Jong Un anything for free. North Korea is threatening to cancel the summit over our joint military exercises with the South. That would be a mistake. It would be a mistake for the President to cancel this exercise, to begin making further concessions before Kim has dismantled a single nuclear weapon or agreed to a single inspector. If we show weakness—if the minute Kim Jong Un threatens, we go along, he will continue to take advantage of us. We must show strength and fortitude. By continuing these military exercises, we will do just that. I urge the President to not even blink an eye but say we are going forward with these exercises. We have seen North Korea play these games before. When North Korea wants or needs something, exercises are a problem. When they don't need something, the exercises are not a problem. Kim is clearly testing the United States and President Trump, trying to see if there is any weakness or desperation or division on our side. We must be strong. We must be resolute. This exercise should move forward.

The best way to head into these negotiations with the North is to make clear that we will not be bullied and to show strength. We have to be willing to walk away from an insufficiently robust deal, and making concessions before we even sit down at the table would send the opposite signal. To achieve an enforceable, verifiable, and enduring agreement to denuclearize the North Korean Peninsula, the United States cannot give away leverage before even getting in the room.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. President, on another matter, the Judiciary Committee report, this morning Republicans on the Judiciary Committee released the transcripts of interviews conducted as part of its investigation into Russian meddling. It was a perfunctory move, apparently intended to signal the end of the Judiciary Committee's on-again, off-again, halting investigation.

Senate Judiciary Committee Republicans are rushing to declare their investigation complete when they have barely scratched the surface. After more than a year of intermittent effort, Senate Republicans have interviewed only 12 witnesses in total. Today they are releasing the transcripts of the testimony of just five witnesses who were interviewed about the notorious June 2016 Trump Tower meeting. One of the witnesses, an infamous, Kremlin-connected lawyer, was allowed to provide only written answers—no followup questions, no probing. Astoundingly, our Republican friends decided not to even interview two of the other key participants in that meeting—Jared Kushner and Paul Manafort.

To call the Senate Judiciary Committee's Trump-Russia investigation halfhearted is too generous. It has been no different from the effort taken by

Representative NUNES. It is designed to let the President and his lawyers interfere with the Mueller probe and to get a peek at any potential evidence.

That is why the Democrats on the committee, led by Senator FEINSTEIN, have today released a document detailing the open threats of the committee's investigation—the interviews not conducted, the leads not followed. The information Judiciary Committee Democrats provided today shows one thing: Committee Democrats have made crystal clear that committee Republicans are prematurely saying “pencils down.” There is much left to investigate, many witnesses still to be heard, and many facts left to follow.

The message of Senate Republicans on this investigation is “Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain.” The American people will not be fooled. They know the difference between a genuine search for truth and a whitewash.

I remain hopeful that Senators Burr and Warner are running down every lead and every thread, but there is no doubt that the Senate Intelligence Committee's investigation will be the next target of the President's talking heads on FOX News.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. President, finally, on prescription drugs, I read a headline in this morning's Washington Post: “Trump's drug price retreat adds to list of abandoned populist promises.” That headline is spot-on. The President has repeatedly talked like a populist but governed like a plutocrat.

On taxes, the President said that his bill would be for the middle class. It turned out to be a trillion-dollar boondoggle for the rich and powerful.

On prescription drugs, it is no different. After saying that pharmaceutical companies were getting away with murder and that he would bring down prices, President Trump proposed only the policies most palatable to the drug industry.

Just today, I read about a company that proposed tripling the price of a widely used cancer drug. They ultimately backed down after a public outcry, but it shows that this problem isn't going away anytime soon.

We Democrats have proposed an independent group to go after egregious increases in drug prices, such as the one mentioned about cancer drugs today. Where is the President on this issue? He has to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

As President Trump was giving his speech last Friday outlining his plan on prescription drugs, guess what the reaction was. The stocks of major pharmaceutical companies shot upward. That says all you need to know about how tough President Trump's plan on prescription drugs really is. Just like the issues of taxes, healthcare, infrastructure, and draining the swamp, on the issue of prescription drugs, President Trump continues to fail to deliver for the middle class.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, today the Senate is finally voting to confirm a well-qualified nominee, BG Mitchell Zais, to serve as Deputy Secretary at the Department of Education. I worked to get a time agreement for this vote because General Zais did not deserve to be subject to the Democrats' unreasonable and unnecessary obstructions and delays. For example, General Zais was nominated on October 5, 2017, 223 days ago, and the HELP Committee approved his nomination for the first time on December 13, 2017, 154 days ago. Because the Democrats forced his nomination to be returned to the President at the end of the session in December, the HELP Committee had to approve his nomination again on January 18, 2018, after he was renominated.

It is time to confirm General Zais and give Secretary DeVos a Deputy Secretary. He has extensive experience working in education and in government. From January 2011 to January 2015, General Zais served as South Carolina's elected State Superintendent of Education. Before that, he was president of Newberry College in South Carolina for 10 years. He also served as a commissioner on South Carolina's Commission on Higher Education for 6 years. Further, after 31 years in the U.S. Army, he retired as a brigadier general. He graduated from West Point, has a Ph.D. from the University of Washington, as well as an honorary doctorate of education from the Citadel.

As Deputy Secretary, his job will be to help the Secretary manage the Department of Education, which includes implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act. I am glad we are having this vote today. I support his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to support him as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, this is National Police Week, and I join my colleagues in saluting all of our law enforcement personnel and our brave men and women who have put their lives on the line every single day to keep our communities safe.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. President, turning to another subject, net neutrality, protecting a free and open internet is something every American should care about. Restoring net neutrality protections is about more than just what shows we can watch on Netflix and Hulu. We depend on the internet for nearly everything in our lives—from staying in touch with loved ones on social media to communicating with doctors and paying our bills. It is also about preserving access to information in times of need.

Over the past month, Hawaii residents have depended on the internet to access lifesaving information and to communicate with their friends and family during a series of devastating