

Republicans heard our marching orders loud and clear. We used the Congressional Review Act a record 16 times to root out invasive rules that tripped up small businesses. We uprooted key pieces of ObamaCare and Dodd-Frank that had burdened the middle class, and we delivered a long-overdue, comprehensive overhaul of America's Tax Code. It is helping to rejuvenate the economy and is letting American families keep more of what they earn.

Today, under this Republican government, the U.S. economy is healthier than it has been in a long time. We have the lowest unemployment in 18 years, and more open positions than workers seeking jobs for the first time since the Labor Department started collecting these data. There is record levels of optimism among small businesses and manufacturers. More Americans are saying that now is a good time to find a quality job than at any point in the last 17 years.

In the Obama years, prosperity was slower in coming. Opportunities were comparatively few, and what limited growth did occur flowed disproportionately into America's very biggest urban centers.

Now our economy is starting to work better for all kinds of communities. I recently heard a few inspiring stories from my friend Senator PORTMAN. In Zanesville, OH, the owners of GKM Auto Parts spent much of the last decade watching health insurance premiums soar. By 2016 they could no longer support coverage for their employees, but as Senator PORTMAN recently explained, one of the first things the company was able to do following the passage of historic tax reform last year was to restore that coverage.

He also shared that builders and manufacturers across his State, from Wolf Metals in Columbus to Advanced Industrial Roofing in Massillon, are increasing pay and benefits, investing in equipment, and creating jobs as a direct result of tax reform and this pro-growth economic climate.

We are hearing stories like these from every corner of our country.

American workers and job creators are turning the page on the last decade and writing brand-new success stories, and Republican policies are helping to make that happen.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kenneth L. Marcus, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Department of Education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from North Carolina.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I wish to speak briefly. I thank the Democratic leader for giving me the opportunity to speak for 5 minutes to do what I have done every week for the past couple of months and what I will do every week until we get a resolution; that is, to talk about Pastor Brunson, a Presbyterian minister who has been in prison in Turkey since October of 2016.

As best as we can tell, the only thing Pastor Brunson is guilty of is being a missionary who has committed 20 years of his life to working with people in Turkey who want to hear the Word of God. That is it. We can talk about—I will not today because my time is limited—all the trumped-up charges I witnessed when I spent 12 hours in a Turkish courtroom a couple of months ago or that I discussed with Pastor Brunson about 3 weeks earlier when I visited him in a prison.

Today what I want to talk about is relevant to the national defense authorization and the work we have done in committee to put Turkey on notice that this is unacceptable.

Turkey has been an ally of the United States since 1952. The NATO alliance commits every member of NATO to send their men and women in uniform into harm's way to defend the national security of a nation of the alliance. We have that with Turkey; we have since 1952.

Over the past month or so, we have seen a would-be adversary in North Korea release three prisoners, we have seen Venezuela release a prisoner, but in Turkey, since October of 2016, we have seen them hold a man for almost a year and a half without charges. Then I saw a man go before a court—and I witnessed for a whole day—being subjected to some of the most absurd charges possible. Next week, when I have more time, I will get into those.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who voted to put a provision in the national defense authorization that really makes us wonder whether we have to rethink our relationship with Turkey, particularly around the Joint Strike Fighter. The Joint Strike Fighter is one of the most sophisticated tactical fighters that has ever flown; arguably, the most sophisticated. Turkey is a NATO ally and, as such, they have access to that weapons system. In fact, they manufacture a lot of the critical parts for it.

What we offered in the NDAA is an examination of whether that relationship makes sense; No. 1, because of the way they are treating one of our American citizens, not letting him come back home, he and his wife; and No. 2, if that is the behavior of a NATO ally, is that really where we should be putting, in our supply chains and in our defensive systems, one of the most sophisticated weapons, one of the most important weapons in our arsenal. I, for one, think we have to look at it.

Until the Turkish Government recognizes that they are illegally holding Pastor Brunson, and a number of others, then I think we have to put the spotlight on them and hold them accountable. If I have an obligation, as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate, to defend their integrity, they have an obligation to treat our American citizens with respect.

We have the amendment in the NDAA. We also have another amendment we may offer. We need to make Turkey know we believe our alliance with them is important, but it is also important to treat American citizens who are not guilty of a crime with respect and bring Pastor Brunson home.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

TURKEY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, I thank my colleague. I was asked by my colleague from North Carolina if I would agree with his remarks, and he said he thought so. I definitely do. I think Erdogan is doing very bad things to the Turkish people, to our NATO alliance in the Middle East. He has had a vehemently anti-Israel position. To allow him to get away with all of this stuff without putting maximum pressure on him makes no sense. So I thank my colleague from North Carolina.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Madam President, on other subjects, later today the Senate will move to the consideration of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act. The annual defense authorization is something our friend Senator MCCAIN cares deeply about and has talked to me about regularly, and we wish he were here to shepherd it on the floor as we have seen him do many times before.

It is important that we get this done for our military, for our broader national security, for Senator MCCAIN, and to ensure that this critical authorization bill moves forward on a steady track. Any time we say the name or see the name written, "John S. McCain," our hearts go pitter-patter a little bit, and we pray for his speedy recovery.

The NDAA is an opportunity to revise and improve our national security to meet the evolving threats of a world that is changing so very fast. I just

want to highlight a few provisions in the bill that are important.

Just this morning, Secretary Ross announced that the Trump administration will relax penalties on Chinese telecom giant ZTE. Instead of permanently crippling ZTE, the administration will settle for a smaller fine than the company paid in 2017 and a reorganization of the company's board. It is essentially a slap on the wrist.

As a reminder, ZTE has been a threat to our national security, and that was stated by the Republican-led FCC, Republican-led FBI, and Republican-led Pentagon. This is not a partisan issue. ZTE was guilty not only of evading U.S. sanctions but lying to U.S. officials about it afterward. ZTE has been deemed such a threat to our telecommunications networks that the FCC recommended forbidding the sale of any ZTE products in the United States.

But, inexplicably, President Trump, after talking tough, did a total reversal. Once again, it seems President Xi has outfoxed President Trump. There is absolutely no good reason that ZTE should get a second chance, but with this deal, the President has inexplicably thrown him a lifeline. President Xi must be laughing all the way to the forbidden palace. He has once again taken advantage of President Trump on an issue vital to our security.

Many believe ZTE could be a mechanism for spying on our military and on lots of different parts of the United States. China has shown no reluctance to do that in the past, and we are just rolling over for no reason, having gotten nothing in return. This is a serious mistake, a 180-degree turn away from the President's promise to be tough on China. Donald Trump should be aiming his trade fire at China, but instead he inexplicably aims it at allies, such as Canada and Europe. When it comes to China, despite his tough talk, this deal with ZTE proves that President Trump just shoots blanks. This guy—the art of the deal? He has gotten taken to the cleaners by President Xi, and the rest of the world is probably laughing at him.

We cannot allow the damage from this action by Secretary Ross to stay. We must undo it. It will be up to Congress to reverse this deal if the President goes forward with it, which he has announced this morning he will.

The Banking Committee already adopted an amendment that would prohibit the administration from weakening sanctions against the Chinese telecoms, including ZTE; however, the President has rushed to undo the sanctions before that bill could pass, so it won't affect ZTE because the sanctions have just been lifted by the administration.

Now that the President has rushed to give this company relief, we will offer a bipartisan amendment, led by Senators Cotton and Van Hollen, that retroactively imposes the sanctions

originally leveled against ZTE, reversing the consent agreement signed this morning. This is a bipartisan bill. Senator COTTON and Senator VAN HOLLEN don't agree on much, but thank God, when it comes to national security, they are agreeing. This Chamber should overwhelmingly vote for the Cotton-Van Hollen amendment, which I am proud to cosponsor, as I believe Senator CORNYN and others on the other side will do. We must do that. We hope Leader MCCONNELL will allow a vote or, at minimum, put it in the managers' package. We cannot move forward with this danger to national security without doing something about ZTE.

There is also a provision in the Defense bill to expand the jurisdiction of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, known as CFIUS, so that the board can review minority-position investments and joint ventures in critical technology and infrastructure companies.

Too often, foreign companies—usually Chinese—backed by some hostile foreign governments—usually the Chinese Government—and they are hostile to us economically, make no mistake about it. That word is not too strong. They try to gain controlling or minority positions in critical American technology companies to pilfer their intellectual property and reproduce it in their own countries. They don't allow us to sell the goods; they instead buy minority interests in American companies, learn how to do it, produce it in China, and then undercut us and sell it here. No wonder we lose millions of jobs to China.

This must be stopped. Because these foreign companies go to great lengths to avoid a CFIUS review and sneak in under the radar, we ought to widen the scope of cases that CFIUS can look at, better protecting our national security and our economic security, and the Defense bill, fortunately, is the first opportunity to do that.

Now back to ZTE, the ZTE example is perhaps the best example of how this administration's trade policies are in shambles. The President has talked tough on China. President Trump and I agree very strongly—or we had agreed. I don't know where he is now, but in the past, we have agreed. We just had a conversation a few weeks ago about the need to combat China's rapacious trade practices. Initially, I was hopeful the President would follow through. He seemed to do this out of conviction. But it seems that even though President Trump roars like a lion on China, he behaves like a lamb. Instead of ramping up pressure on China, he tells them he is weak. He tells them he will back off. He tells them he is not for real. President Trump has directed far too much of the administration's energies on trade toward punishing allies such as Canada and Europe instead of focusing on the real menace, the No. 1 menace—China.

So if President Trump is listening this morning, I tell him: Be strong on

China. Don't trade away our leverage for anything short of real concessions on intellectual property theft and market access—the two things that most threaten our long-term economic standing, that most threaten the American economy, the American worker, and American jobs.

#### EMOLUMENTS CLAUSE

Now on another matter, Madam President, today the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia will hear oral arguments in a case concerning the potential violation of the emoluments clause by the President of the United States—none other than the President of the United States violating this clause. The emoluments clause of the Constitution of the United States—written over 200 years ago into the Constitution by our Founding Fathers—prohibits any member of our government from profiting from their office, accepting any present, emolument, office, or title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign state.

The reason for the emoluments clause is plain: The Framers were worried that members of our government could be co-opted or influenced by the bribery of foreign capitals and thus prohibited even the potential for self-enrichment. They knew then what we know now: We don't want double-dealing by our elected officials, and when they have private interests, you never know—are they acting in what they believe is the national interests or what will help make them a profit?

With President Trump, we sincerely hope that no such self-enrichment is going on, but it remains a great concern to millions of Americans that President Trump has maintained a stake in vast business empire holdings all over the world. President Trump continues to profit from these holdings while he refuses to divest—an appalling departure from well-established practices of past Presidents. It shows a degree of selfishness that we haven't seen in Presidents. The President still refuses to disclose his tax returns and the precise extent of his foreign holdings—another radical and disturbing departure from past Presidents. This President acts like he is in the swamp, not like he is cleaning it up.

The President's actions certainly present the possibility of exposure to violation of the emoluments clause, so I believe it is a good thing that the courts are looking at this issue and taking it seriously. That is what our Constitution says they should do. It is a good thing the courts are taking it seriously. We cannot afford to have the Office of the Presidency of the United States corrupted for narrow, selfish means.

President Trump could easily—if you want to be President, you give up all the stuff you own. Every President has done it. There are blind trusts. There are all kinds of ways to do it. But this President seems to think he is measured by a different standard than anyone else. Everyone else makes their tax