

LGBTQ students feel welcome and crack down on campus rapists; it is not just the fact that when a bipartisan judicial selection committee asked him to disclose past controversies, he deliberately misled the committee and said there was nothing to worry about.

Now that his controversial writings have come to light, he refuses to retract or show remorse for his statements. Instead, he brushes them off as overbroad and overheated.

Ryan Bounds' writings show he does not believe in a tolerant and diverse America, where women and people of color are treated with equal respect. In my eyes, that alone disqualifies him from sitting on the Federal bench, but Bounds has not received the blue-slip approval of either Senator from his home State of Oregon. No judge in modern history has ever been confirmed without a blue slip from either home State Senator.

So a vote to confirm him is a direct attack on the Senate's constitutional responsibility to advise and consent. The blue-slip process is a critical function of the legislative branch. It gives every Senator a chance to have a say in the Federal judges who serve in their home State.

The nominee to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit will have a lifetime tenure. If confirmed, Ryan Bounds will have influence over our legal system for the rest of his life. Don't the American people and their elected officials deserve a say in whether he should be allowed to fill that seat?

This debate is not just about one unqualified judge and his racist ideas. It is about the duty of the legislative branch to serve as a check and balance on the President. Over the course of the Trump administration so far, we have seen an unprecedented attempt to undermine the blue-slip process and pack the courts with judges favored by corporations and special interests.

I urge my colleagues to take a stand against President Trump's attacks on our legal system. Protect the integrity of the blue-slip process and vote against Ryan Bounds' nomination. The power and independence of the legislature is at stake.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I think last week or the week before, you were presiding when I did a speech that I promised I am going to do every week we are in session until justice is served in Turkey.

It is a speech about this man. His name is Pastor Andrew Brunson. He was arrested in Turkey in October of 2016. If you want to sum up his crime, it is for being a missionary. He has been in Turkey for about 20 years, has served the community well, has provided aid and comfort to Syrian refugees, has provided a place for people in

Turkey who want to come into a Christian church to do just that. He has a small church in Izmir. You can only seat about 100 people in it, and he didn't even have that when he started his missionary work.

I should say he is from the Black Mountain area of North Carolina. He was part of the same church that Rev. Billy Graham was a part of. He went to Turkey to really pursue his passion and serve in Christ through missionary work.

In 2016, after the coup attempt, President Erdogan implemented emergency powers, and he swept up thousands of people and put them in prison. Pastor Brunson was in a Turkish prison for almost 19 months without charges—about 17 months in a cell that was designed for 8 prisoners that had 21 people in it.

I was in Turkey about 4 months ago—when I first met Pastor Brunson personally—to visit him in prison to let him know that as long as I am in the U.S. Senate, I am going to work hard for his ultimate release.

Then I went back about 6 weeks later, and I sat in a Turkish courtroom for about 12 hours, and I heard some of the most absurd charges that could ever be levied against someone to keep them in prison for what will now be going on 2 years. I told Pastor Brunson I would be back, and I will continue to be back, until justice is served.

I don't want to get into too many of the details so I will tell you he was in a courtroom today for another 5 hours. If it bore any resemblance to the time I was in the courtroom, it goes something like this: The defense gets to say nothing. They don't get to introduce witnesses to testify on his behalf. You have secret witnesses, many of them in a Turkish prison, testifying against him about things like a daughter posting a meal she had on a social media application that the Turkish authorities believe linked her to terror because they believe it is a meal certain terrorist organizations like. It also happens to be a meal that a lot of people in the Middle East like, but that was a charge that suggested he was involved in a coup attempt or conspiring with terrorists.

Having a light on in a church—by the way, in a room that doesn't have a window—that was supposedly observed by one of these secret witnesses who are in prison, saying: Well, clearly if there was a light on in this church, nothing good could have happened because it was in the middle of the night. Maybe somebody just left the light switch on, but I am still trying to figure out how they actually saw it because I have been in that room, and there is not a single window. There is no way you could have seen it from the outside.

Those are the types of charges that have been used to keep Pastor Brunson in prison since October of 2016.

Today, he was back, as I said earlier, in a hearing in a Turkish courtroom for 5 hours. At the end of the 5-hour

hearing he was told that he is going to continue to be in prison until they have another hearing in October, and that hearing is scheduled for about 4 days short of 2 years that he has spent time in a Turkish prison.

He has been in prison for 649 days. He is in good spirits—as good as you can imagine for somebody who is enduring the trauma of being imprisoned, I think, unlawfully and unfairly.

His wife Norine is in Turkey. She refuses to leave because she is afraid if she leaves Turkey, Turkey will not allow her to come back into the country.

They have been separated from their three children for 2 years because they are afraid to have them come into the country and not be able to leave.

I am asking the Members of Congress to join with me to apply pressure on Turkey to have justice done. Justice is releasing Pastor Brunson and letting him come back home.

We have provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act that send a very clear message to Turkey that we are serious about this.

I have my own concerns about Turkey because they seem to be drifting away as a NATO ally and partner and more toward a position I don't quite understand. I certainly don't understand it in terms of our mutual interests as NATO allies or as economic partners.

But for right now, I want to focus on a man who has been in prison for 649 days. I want to focus on other people who worked with the Embassy who have been in prison for about the same time. I want to focus on a NASA scientist who happened to be visiting his family in Turkey—he is a Turkish American—who has been in prison for 2½ years. We have to educate the American people on a Turkey that has no resemblance today of what it was just 5 or 6 years ago.

I want to have a positive working relationship with Turkey. I want increased economic ties and increased military ties. But when you illegally imprison American citizens, no matter how important that strategic relationship is, at some point we have to question whether or not we can go further.

In the meantime, if any of you are planning on going to Turkey, I would think twice. Make sure that you don't take a picture of somebody that maybe Turkish officials think is involved in a coup, because that can sweep you up in it. Make sure that you don't eat a meal that other segments of Turkish society like, because that may make you a coup conspirator.

I hope that we solve this problem, but I will tell you that there are very few things that would ever take me away from coming to this floor and going into committee meetings and doing everything I can to put pressure on Turkey until Pastor Andrew Brunson is back in this country safe and sound with his family. Then I will

continue to work on all the other people who are being unfairly and unjustly held in Turkish prisons.

We need to have justice for Pastor Brunson. We need Turkey to be the ally that we want them to be, and we need President Erdogan to show the leadership and the compassion to bring Pastor Brunson home.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

TARIFFS

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about tariffs and their impact on Montana's family farmers and businesses. In Montana we have more than 27,000 family farms and ranches. Folks who farm and ranch these lands are descendants of homesteaders and pioneers, including myself. They are also young producers who may be preparing for their first harvest. Might I add that we don't have enough young producers in our State. The population of farmers is getting far too old.

These folks work 7 days a week, for long hours, to raise the food that feeds our families across this world, and they power our rural economies in this country. Farmers and ranchers are small business operators and owners who are always on tight margins and always are looking to make sure that they can make the books balance by being on the positive side of the ledger. Why? So they can keep their farms and ranches viable to be able to have the next generation take over their operation. Just like any other business—a local bar or a hardware store—you need to be able to make a profit to stay in business.

Producers need to make sure that they have predictability in input costs—we are talking about fertilizers, fuel, and seed—and predictability in markets, the places where we sell our grain, which has always been a challenge and which has become more of a challenge over the past 6 months. When farmers plant a crop, they need to know there is a market for that crop, because if there is not, it can put them in a world of hurt financially.

Unfortunately, in Montana, we are preparing to harvest winter wheat crops as we speak. Spring wheat crops will soon be coming, pulse crops will soon be coming, and oil seeds will soon be coming. The fact is that there is no certainty in any of those crops right now. Why? Because our farmers and our ranchers are being used as pawns in a trade war that I can guarantee not one of them asked for.

This trade war is eliminating access to foreign markets that have taken generations to develop and putting family farm and ranch operations in a financial pinch—such a severe financial pinch that we haven't seen anything like it since the 1980s, when we saw a mass exodus off the land due to bad ag prices.

The retaliatory tariffs against family farmers and ranchers is harming Mon-

tana's No. 1 industry, agriculture. Montana's grain producers produce about \$2 billion worth of wheat, barley, pulse crops, and oil seeds every year. Since the middle of June, the price of No. 1 Dark Northern Spring wheat in southeastern Montana has fallen more than 60 cents a bushel. That is more than 10 percent, and the same can be said throughout the State of Montana.

To put that in perspective, just think what would happen in your business if your prices were reduced by 10 percent right off the top. It would put you in a world of financial hurt, and that is where Montana's farms and ranches are today. If prices continue to plummet, some of these families who have been on the land for over 100 years will be forced to make some very difficult decisions in the next 6 to 8 months.

These tariffs are eliminating producers' access to foreign markets—markets that are in Asia and Europe and markets in Canada and Mexico. In Montana, we sell our grains and our beef to these countries and others: China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Pacific Rim countries, and European Union countries. These exports didn't just pop up overnight. They came to fruition after years of hard work, good faith and trust, and negotiations.

Negotiations and trust are being thrown out the window with these tariff fights. In some cases—Japan, for example—it has taken multiple generations to establish these export markets. If we lose them, it will take many generations to get them back. Countries such as Argentina and Russia are circling the markets like sharks, wanting to strike the minute we lose a grip on them to fill those voids.

Take, for instance, Mexico. Mexico is the largest importer of Montana barley in the world. For years, Mexico bought Montana's barley to be able to make beers, like Corona and others. These tariffs have put those markets at risk to the point that one Mexican barley buyer told one of the folks from the barley association of Montana: I don't know that we can depend on America to supply our barley anymore because these tariffs have put our markets at risk.

As a result, Mexico, which is a huge importer of American wheat, just this last spring turned toward Argentina for their wheat for the first time ever. They signed a contract for Argentine wheat to take the place of the wheat from this country, of which Montana is a part and will no longer be supplying.

The real question is, How long is this going to have to go on? We are faced with enough uncertainties in production and agriculture with weather, drought, hail, bugs, and disease. The list goes on. Unfortunately, this is a manmade problem.

I get it. I think the President is right when he talks about holding China accountable. They have stolen a lot of intellectual property. They manipulate their currency. But to put on tariffs where retaliation comes on ag products

is not the right direction to go. We can get their attention by other ways.

I would also say that these tariffs aren't just felt by farmers and ranchers. They are felt by other businesses too. For builders, for example, their costs are going up. In 2016, the voters of Missoula, MT, approved a \$30 million bond to build a new city library. They started the project, but tariffs on steel sent material costs soaring. Now the cost of rebar alone has increased the cost of the project by \$100,000. Library officials have told me that as a direct result of these tariffs, they are preparing with a need to go out and raise another \$500,000 to finish this project. The people of our State have to pay that price.

One of Montana's fastest growing industries is microbreweries. It is a real success story, employing a lot of folks and adding value to grains in our State. They are being hit hard by tariffs on aluminum. These emerging businesses have no other option but to pass that cost on to their patrons.

So we are paying both ways, folks. We are paying on the tariffs coming in, and we are paying on the tariffs being put on our products going out.

In agribusiness, for example, everything that is made of steel is going up and going up significantly. From I-beams to cattle guards, to posts for fencing, to metal for storage bins, anything made out of steel is going up significantly. Manufacturers who have been on the rebound since the 2008 financial crisis now have a hard time bidding contracts on materials. Less of their money is going into their pockets, if there is any left at all, because of these tariffs. Every sector of our economy is feeling the pinch of this escalating trade war.

Fair trade is really important. Getting manufacturing back to this country is really important, but it doesn't appear that we are doing those things. Instead, we are putting our existing businesses—whether it is in production or agriculture, construction or manufacturing—at risk with these trade wars.

We should have open markets. Those markets need to go in both directions, but we shouldn't be driving people into bankruptcy in the meantime. That is what is happening.

I ask: What is the end game? If this trade war continues, I had an ag banker tell me that family farms and ranchers have about 18 months before they have to start liquidating. That is the reality we are facing, and that is not very long.

That is the reason why this body needs to understand that we need to send strong messages to the administration that they can't use farms, ranches, and small businesses as bargaining chips. Their livelihoods are on the line.

Earlier this month, I hosted a roundtable discussion on tariffs at the Billings Chamber of Commerce. I was able to meet Montanans eyeball to eyeball,