

bill is a big percentage of any of their take-home pay.

We are already seeing early signs that tax reform will create an environment where wages will be higher and opportunity will be more abundant for years, even decades, to come.

President Trump and Republicans in Congress understand that when you make America a more attractive place to invest and create jobs, you are helping American families and communities.

We understand that the myth of an “us versus them” economy, where employers must lose for workers to win, is nothing more than a divisive political talking point with no basis in economics. That is why we seized this generational opportunity to provide a 21st century tax code that will give our country a fairer fight with our competitors overseas. We are already seeing new factories announced and new investments pouring into our country as a result.

Tax reform is far from the only way this President and this Congress have gone to bat for the future of our country. We have taken a machete to the forest of redtape that the Obama administration left behind.

To name just three examples, Congress and the White House have teamed up to roll back regulations that threatened hundreds of thousands of coal jobs, required States to give grants to Planned Parenthood, and had needlessly blocked oil exploration in a small portion of Federal land in Alaska.

After the Senate confirmed President Trump’s Cabinet, from Secretary Mattis at the Pentagon to Administrator Pruitt at the EPA, these fine officials have notched achievement after achievement for the American people, laying the groundwork for a stronger and safer nation.

We have made major progress for American veterans, like Cpl Matthew Bradford of Central Kentucky, a true American hero who will be attending tonight as a guest of the First Lady.

Congress has passed and the President has signed laws that will help our veterans access the healthcare options they need and the employment training programs they deserve. We have much more to do for our heroes, but these first steps are indeed promising.

We have taken big steps in the war against addiction and the scourge of opioids, an issue that is deeply personal for far, far too many American families.

In just his first year in office, the President has begun to transform the Federal judiciary. President Trump had more new circuit court judges confirmed in his first year than any prior President, a testimony to the fine quality of the nominees he sends here to the Senate, and we will vote to confirm another excellent judge later today. And the President rose to the occasion of a Supreme Court vacancy by filling it with a brilliant and experienced jurist in Justice Gorsuch.

On all of these fronts—from middle-class Americans’ pocketbooks to the ongoing fight against ISIL—there is more good news than I can begin to recite this morning.

I very much look forward to attending the State of the Union tonight and hearing from our President. On behalf of all the Americans we represent—men and women from coast to coast who are seeing the economy turn around and their country grow stronger before their eyes—I am glad there will be so much to applaud.

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 proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Ryan Stras, of Minnesota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING ELDER VON G. KEETCH

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise to honor the life of my friend Elder Von G. Keetch, legal counsel and leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His passing on Friday evening was sudden and unexpected, and I wish to extend my condolences to his family during this difficult time.

Elder Keetch served as a general authority and executive director of the LDS Church’s Public Affairs Department. He helped to shape community and government relations for the church as a recognized expert in constitutional law. His career was devoted to defending religious liberty for all religious institutions. His insight was particularly salient during this ever-changing world. As his daughter Steffani Keetch Dastrup said, “He wanted to defend and support all churches and all religious beliefs and all people’s rights to believe and act

the way they feel is right. That was a big part of his work.”

I consider it a privilege to have worked alongside Elder Keetch over the past several years. I was able to witness firsthand the love he had for his wife, the pride he had in his children, and the devotion he had for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am grateful for his guidance, for his counsel, and for his friendship.

His humble expertise and kind demeanor will be sorely missed by all those who knew him. His legacy of faith and love will bless his family for generations to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

REMEMBERING ED LORENZEN

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise with great sadness to remember Edward Lorenzen, who, along with his 4-year-old son Michael, perished this weekend in a house fire.

Ed was invaluable to my staff during last year’s tax reform debate. The Washington Post honored his contributions to Congress, saying: “Quietly and intelligently, Mr. Lorenzen provided objective, reliable fiscal information, even—or especially—when facts and figures were the last thing wishful thinkers in Washington [or the government] wanted to face.”

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, where Ed served as a senior adviser, said: “He was a brilliant budget mind—his guidance and expertise is a void that cannot be filled.”

The committee also remembered his deep love for his children, saying: “We worked every day with a kind, loving man who cherished his three kids, bringing them to the office on occasion and lighting up in their presence and at the sound of their names.”

I cannot imagine the grief Ed and Michael’s family and loved ones face. I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to them during this difficult time. May we all hold our families a little closer today.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, tonight the President will address a joint session of Congress in his first official State of the Union. I want to talk about what I expect the President to say and also what I suspect he will not.

The President will be eager to defend the accomplishments of his nascent administration and take credit for a healthy American economy, pointing to low unemployment, job growth, and a soaring stock market, but the truth is, these trends were present before Donald Trump took office. President Trump was handed an already healthy economy by his predecessor. Like many things in his life, he inherited the healthy economy.

Here are two words we will not hear President Trump say tonight about the

economy—thanks, Obama—because much of the growth in 2017 was created by President Obama's policies and, by many measures, the growth under President Obama was better than under President Trump.

Under President Obama, employment was driven from over 10 percent down into the fours. The tightening of the labor market finally started to reverse the stagnancy of median income. The stock market President Trump often touts on Twitter was booming under President Obama as well.

In President Trump's first year, the economy created 2.06 million jobs. That is less than the 2.24 million jobs created in 2016, the last year of Obama's term.

Again, President Trump, President Obama created more jobs in the last year of his term than you created in the first year of yours. So if you are going to pat yourself on the back, give a shout out to Barack Obama because he did even better than you in job creation.

In 2017, under President Trump, average monthly job growth was lower than in 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, and 2011, all under President Obama.

Again, President Trump, job growth in the first year of your term was less than in each of the last 6 years of President Obama's term.

How about the stock market. In the first 6 months of 2017, the percentage growth of the S&P 500 was lower than during the first 6 months of President Obama's term. In the first year of the Trump Presidency, the percentage growth of the Dow was lower than during the first year of President Obama.

So, again, here are two words we would like President Trump to say tonight about the economy: Thanks, Obama. We may never hear President Trump say those words, but he ought to.

I also expect the President to speak about bipartisanship. President Trump understands there is a very low bar when it comes to the topic. His first year in office has been so divisive, even a mere appeal to bipartisanship sounds like progress, but the proof will be in the pudding. Will President Trump pursue real bipartisanship through his actions or will he fall back on empty rhetoric? When it comes to bipartisanship, President Trump has to walk the walk, not just talk the talk intermittently. Mr. President, when it comes to bipartisanship, actions speak a whole lot louder than words.

I would remind President Trump that this has been one of the most partisan administrations many of us have ever worked with. I have worked under President Reagan, President H.W. Bush, and President W. Bush—all Republicans. All of them were legions more bipartisan than President Trump's first year.

What have we seen? An assembly line of partisan CRAs designed not to need a single Democratic vote; a Supreme Court Justice picked by the hard-right

Heritage Foundation and Federalist Society, no consultation, not a consensus nominee; a partisan healthcare bill that failed under reconciliation, specifically designed not to include Democrats; a partisan tax bill that ultimately passed, also under reconciliation—no consultation with Democrats, not a single Democratic vote.

The reason these don't get Democratic votes is President Trump and his administration don't talk to us. They don't ask us what we might suggest. They don't try to create a bipartisan meld which great Presidents have done from the time of George Washington; they just act in a narrow, partisan way, and the American people know it.

There has been hardly a shred of bipartisanship in the Trump era, despite our many appeals for it. The President and congressional Republicans seem to think that bipartisanship happens when one side puts together a bill, pounds the table, and demands the other side support the bill, with no negotiation, no compromise.

They are missing the step where they consult with the other side and work with the other side to earn their support. That is the hard work of legislating in our democracy, but this administration eschews hard work. The Republican majority and the White House have been content to craft legislation on their own, demand Democrats support it, and then label us obstructionists when, without consultation, without compromise, we don't. That dynamic is the root of the ineffectiveness and gridlock in Congress. I sincerely hope that changes.

If the President calls for bipartisanship tonight, I welcome it. But we eagerly await action, not just a sound bite in a speech. We await the honest debate, the good faith give-and-take, and the eventual compromise that are the actual hallmarks of bipartisanship. If those things arise, even though they haven't in the first year, Democrats will gladly work with our Republican colleagues and the White House to get things done for the middle class. But we need to see it to believe it. Mere words in a speech tonight will not create bipartisanship; actions will.

Finally, here is something that President Trump should discuss tonight: Russia sanctions. He ought to impose the sanctions, as Congress voted for in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion, or at least explain why he hasn't done so yet. We call on President Trump in the State of the Union to tell Americans that he will support the sanctions 90 percent of America supports or tell us why he will not.

Over a year ago, the U.S. intelligence community concluded that Russian President Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. Presidential election. That is a fact. That is a fact that is shocking. A hostile foreign power interfered with an American election and likely influenced it in measurable ways. The Founders of our country feared this

very possibility. They knew that for a democracy to work, the election of the people's representatives must be free, fair, and legitimate, and that foreign powers, even back then, would try to corrupt the process. They wrote safeguards into the Constitution to protect it.

Last year, the American people were the victim of such an attack by an antagonistic foreign power: Russia. I call on President Trump tonight to use his State of the Union to tell Americans what he plans to do about Russian attacks on our democracy.

Implement sanctions, President Trump, or at the very least tell us why you haven't.

Today is the day the President is supposed to obey the sanctions issue Congress voted on overwhelmingly a while back. There is no subject more worthy of a thorough and unbiased investigation than the Russian interference in our elections. Yet the President and his allies have waged a scorched-earth campaign to discredit the investigation in any way possible—by assassinating the character of career civil servants, assailing the credibility of the media, attacking our own law enforcement agencies and officers, even denigrating the institutions of American Government.

The White House and congressional Republicans' attacks on Mueller and his investigation make you believe it was taking place in a banana republic, Erdogan's Turkey, or Putin's Russia, not in the United States of America. What has been done by House Republicans and gone along with by just about the whole Republican establishment is not worthy of this democracy. It makes us look like a banana republic, and it is shameful.

A different kind of President would be encouraging Special Counsel Mueller's investigation and shouting down those forces who tried to interfere with it. A different kind of President would want to know how precisely Russia meddled in our election and would have severely punished Putin for it to discourage him from ever trying it again.

Here we are, 180 days since the President signed the historic Russia sanctions bill passed by this body by a vote of 97 to 2, and he hasn't even implemented those sanctions. He is supposed to do it today, the day of the State of the Union.

Again, Mr. President, implement the sanctions tonight, or at least tell the American people why you are not, opening an invitation to Russia to do it again.

Why won't Donald Trump use the power given to him by a near-unanimous vote in Congress to hold Russia accountable?

The administration refused to implement secondary sanctions against the Russian defense and intelligence sectors. Last night, the administration released a mandated report of Russian

oligarchs that seems to match a list already put together by Forbes magazine. This is a reflection of the lack of seriousness with which they took up this task.

When it comes to sanctions, the White House has engaged in a dangerous Kabuki theater that tries to show strength when in fact there is none. These actions are not good enough. They are for show.

Why is the President so afraid to sanction Putin, his associates, or other corrupt Russian actors and officials? Why is President Trump giving Putin a free pass after he attacked our democracy? What is he so afraid of? The American people are asking that question, and they have their answers.

Only a year after a hostile foreign power shook the very bedrock of our democracy, any other President would spend his first State of the Union talking about efforts that were underway to punish the abuser and prevent such an attack from ever recurring. Why not this President?

If President Trump wishes to save his Presidency from the shame of having failed to address one of the gravest threats threatening our country, he will announce this evening in no uncertain terms that he is sanctioning President Putin. Any other President would have already made it their priority to take decisive action in their first year, but this President is paralyzed when it comes to Putin and his cronies in Russia.

Here are two words the President may not say tonight: "Russia sanctions"—but he ought to.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

HONORING SHERIFF'S DEPUTY HEATH GUMM

MR. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a horrible tragedy that occurred in Adams County, CO, on January 24, just last week. Adams County sheriff's deputy Heath Gumm was pursuing a suspect when he was shot and killed in the line of duty.

Heath was 31 years old and is survived by his wife and other loving family members. He had served with the Adams County Sheriff's Office since 2012, which was not a surprise to those who knew him best, because of his upbringing.

He grew up in a family of first responders. His father is a retired West Metro Fire Protection District engineer. So his teachers and classmates who knew Heath as a student at Mullen High School, in Denver, were not shocked to learn that he had decided to become a law enforcement officer.

As reported by the Denver Post, Heath's ninth grade English teacher, Sean Keefe, said:

By all accounts, he lived his life as a grown man as he did as a kid. He was a good guy. That didn't change. That only got more accentuated as he grew up. He lifted his friends. He made his friends the best version of themselves, and they did that to him as well.

Heath's cousin remembers him as the "kind of man you wanted out there protecting our streets. He was there, fair, funny and friendly to everyone."

Keefe went on to remember Heath as "someone people gravitated towards, and he was someone who people could count on."

It is these qualities that made Heath such an incredible sheriff's deputy.

At a press conference last Thursday, Adams County sheriff Michael McIntosh read parts of a letter he had received from a stranded motorist whom Heath had recently helped when he was out on patrol.

The resident wrote: "Heath made the interaction enjoyable and easy to get through instead of acting like I was in trouble or a nuisance."

Heath showed what it means to be a law enforcement officer who selflessly serves and protects a community. He went to work each and every day—ready to walk that thin blue line.

When we lose an officer in Colorado, I come to this Chamber to honor his sacrifice and recite the words of LTC Dave Grossman, who wrote that American law enforcement is the loyal and brave sheepdog who is always standing watch for the wolf that lurks in the dark.

Unfortunately, many in this Chamber have heard me read that quote far too often in the last weeks.

Across Colorado and across the country, we owe so much to Heath and law enforcement officers for their service. Instead of fleeing to safety, they run toward danger to save lives. They provide hope and safety to our families in the worst of times.

I thank Heath for answering the call. He protected his community. I, along with Coloradans across the State, are forever grateful. We will never forget his sacrifice, and we will always honor his memory.

We also lost a sheriff's deputy on New Year's Eve in Colorado, just a few weeks before. In a tribute to him, I read something that former State Representative Joe Rice had written during his service in the Army. I think it is appropriate to share it now because, each and every day they wake up, I know the thoughts of many in law enforcement are reflected in the words of Representative Joe Rice:

In a few hours, it will be Christmas in Afghanistan. I spent 3 Christmas Days in Iraq. Only on one of them did I have to go out on Christmas Day, itself. I found myself praying that I didn't want to die this day and ruin every future Christmas for my family. I realize that most of the other soldiers I was with were quietly or openly saying the same thing.

So, for all of those around the world who are in harm's way, we pray with you: Please God, just not today.

To our men and women in law enforcement, please know that I pray with you each and every day: Please God, just not this day.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KENNEDY). The Senator from Florida.

DISASTER AID

MR. NELSON. Mr. President, I am absolutely shocked that FEMA has announced that on Wednesday it will stop distributing food and water to Puerto Rico. Cutting this aid to the people of Puerto Rico, while still almost a third of them do not have electricity, is unconscionable and a travesty.

I urge the administration to reverse this disastrous decision immediately and to continue providing the people of Puerto Rico with the help they need as they are trying to recover from two disastrous hurricanes.

This Senator has been speaking on the floor over and over of their desperate needs, but here I am again to remind our colleagues that Puerto Ricans are American citizens, that they are just like the people of any State, including those in the States of Kentucky, Texas, Wyoming, and in so many of the other States where needs might be forgotten. They are our fellow countrymen, and they deserve the same care and protection that we would provide any other citizen in his time of need. They have supplied some of the greatest warriors of our U.S. military in World War I, World War II, Korea, and on up to the present.

If the people of any other State were being neglected like the people of Puerto Rico have been in the wake of this storm, there would be an absolute outrage in this Senate. The people of Puerto Rico need help, but they are not the only ones. Millions of people were affected by the storms that hit last year in my State of Florida, in the State of Texas, in, of course, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and in Puerto Rico, and many were affected by the wildfires in California.

Right now, many of them are desperately waiting for the Senate to act on a disaster supplemental package to help them recover. We are trying to pass it, and it keeps getting shuffled off into the future. We are trying to add to the supplemental—the necessary disaster aid that is needed in agriculture, particularly for the citrus industry in Florida—the financial assistance that is needed in Puerto Rico. I hope our colleagues in the Senate will understand the urgency of this matter. We cannot keep pushing this off into the future. The need to act is now.

In addition, people in Florida are struggling. We should not neglect what is happening on the mainland. It is true in Texas. It is true in California. It is true in Florida. It is true on the islands. The storm destroyed homes and damaged apartments all around Florida, but we haven't seen any real attempt to address the housing needs of the hurricane victims in the State—by the way, including those coming to Florida from Puerto Rico.

Florida received about \$600 million out of the \$7.4 billion, which was made available in the CDBG-DR, in the September supplemental. What percentage is that of \$7.4 billion? It is much less than 10 percent. It defies comprehension. Florida was one of the places that