

while the middle class is waiting for the trickle-down effects that may never come.

Imagine if all the money that went into tax breaks for corporations and the superrich went to the middle class instead. If that were the case, then President Trump would actually have something to boast about in Ohio today.

This weekend Speaker RYAN showed just how far Republicans will strain credulity to claim their tax bill helps working Americans. He tweeted: "A secretary at a public high school in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, said she was pleasantly surprised her pay went up \$1.50 a week . . . she said [that] will more than cover her Costco membership for the year."

Someone must have told him how out of touch that was because Speaker RYAN soon deleted the tweet. As high school secretaries get \$1.50 a week in savings, the wealthiest 0.1 percent of Americans are getting an average of about \$3,000 a week—high school secretary, \$1.50; top 0.1 percent, \$3,000 a week. Because of the tax bill, the Lancaster secretary may well be able to afford a membership to a big-box store, but the top 0.1 percent can now afford a new Bentley. Is that fair? Is that right? Is that what the American people wanted? No way. No way.

All the propaganda and millions of dollars of ads from the Koch brothers and all these other rich people—the handful of rich people who have so much say on the Republican side—all the ads they will pay for will not make up for that fact, and the American people see it.

The fundamental unfairness at the center of the Republican tax bill is this. Corporations and the superrich are having a bonanza while American workers are left with paltry savings. Considering the Republicans spent \$1.5 trillion in Federal resources to pass their tax bill, the middle class should have gotten a whole lot more—a lot more than \$1.50 a week.

When President Trump takes the stump in Ohio, we can expect to hear a lot of talk about how his tax bill is helping American workers, but every American should know that the reality is different.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on Friday, the Trump administration declassified and released the contents of the deceptive Nunes memo. It is the latest distraction concocted by Republicans to protect the President of their party from the conclusions of a truly independent investigation. Shamefully, it is the latest abuse in a long line of partisan broadsides against the FBI, the Nation's premier law enforcement agency. These attacks erode faith in the rule of law.

At least the American people can now see the Nunes memo for what it truly is: an impotent document of GOP

talking points. Far from being the smoking gun that many Republicans, rightwing media outlets, and Russia-linked bots claimed it would be, the Nunes memo just blows smoke. It is full of misleading conclusions based on innuendo.

What it does confirm does not vindicate the President or prove bias at the Department of Justice. It confirms that the Steele dossier was not the catalyst for the Russia investigation, debunking a favorite rightwing talking point. Let that sink in. The FBI was concerned about Trump campaign advisers linked to Putin's spy services before—let me repeat, before—the Steele dossier existed. This idea that the Steele dossier created all this is just plain wrong, and even their own memo admits it.

The Nunes memo also confirms that a three-judge panel, on multiple occasions, thought it was in the best interest of our national security to monitor a Trump campaign adviser for his troubling links with the Kremlin.

Seeing as House Republicans saw fit to release the contents of their partisan memo, they should certainly support the release of the memo prepared by Ranking Member SCHIFF. If House Republicans had any semblance of fairness, they would vote to release the Schiff memo. It is based on the same underlying documents. If it was all right to release the Republican memo on these documents, it should be all right to release a Democratic memo based on the same documents.

Meanwhile, President Trump still refuses to implement the sanctions that passed by an overwhelming bipartisan majority in Congress. I have to say, if President Trump and his allies spent half the time standing up to Putin as they do attacking our own FBI, we might actually get somewhere with Putin. But the administration seems to fear doing anything to upset him. The American people ask: Why? Why is Donald Trump so afraid to upset Mr. Putin?

What are they so afraid of? It is inexplicable to me that the President of the United States and his allies are far more concerned with attacking American law enforcement agencies than standing up to Russia. President Putin interfered with our sacred democratic process. The very process we exalt—correctly so—in our schools and teach our children is so wonderful, Putin is trying to make a sham of. He is trying to interfere with it. We hardly hear a peep out of President Trump and so many Republicans on this side of the aisle who used to go after Putin, to their credit, regularly.

We have an investigation into the matter of Putin's engagement in our elections by one of the most trusted and nonpartisan civil servants in Washington, but because that investigation might include some wrongdoing by the President or his close associates, too many Republicans in Congress and, of course, the conservative media have

turned on the FBI rather than on Putin.

It is far more than disquieting. It is the worst place that partisan politics can go. The vital interests of our Nation are being subverted to the benefit of a foreign hostile power. A Congressman says that we are witnessing a "coup" on the House floor. A Senator floats the possibility of "secret societies." The Speaker of the House suggests a "cleansing" of the FBI.

For partisan reasons, the President and his allies in Congress are systematically trying to weaken America's faith in the rule of law, and to a large extent, sadly, the leaders of the Republican Party have been silent.

A few notable exceptions, including my dear friend Senator JOHN MCCAIN, are speaking out about the real threat here—not the FBI, not our career law enforcement officials, not Special Counsel Mueller but President Putin and his war on democratic societies and democracy in general.

We desperately need more of our Republican friends to stand up and speak out, particularly the Republican leadership, because their silence is rapidly becoming complicit in the denigration of our Republic—something that is happening, unfortunately, before our very eyes.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, we are now 128 days into the fiscal year. For 128 days, we have failed to fulfill our basic responsibility of funding the government. Congress has not reached a bipartisan budget deal, even though, in past years, we always would have by this time. So the government is on autopilot.

Across America, just as I find in Vermont, around families' kitchen tables, people are asking how to address the opioid crisis. Veterans are asking us why it takes months to get a doctor's appointment at the VA. People are worrying about having to stop working if they can't get quality and affordable childcare. So many have stopped me in the street to talk about how they are struggling to pay off college loans.

Well, it has been 128 days. Instead of saying: We will get to it, the check is in the mail, let's actually get to it, we have had four continuing resolutions. It is about time we get serious about a bipartisan deal and get the budget going. Let's, for once, get past the

sound bites and start dealing with substance.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, on another matter, last Friday, DEVIN NUNES, the House Intelligence Committee chairman, received approval to release a classified memo that purports to show that a FISA application to conduct surveillance of a Trump campaign aide was politically motivated. Over the weekend, the President, speaking in the third person, told us this memo "totally vindicates 'Trump'" in the Russia investigation. Following a pattern that has become all too familiar, the President also viciously attacked the FBI in a series of tweets, something we have never seen by any President, either Republican or Democratic—certainly not in my memory.

There are more than a few problems with this, the most disturbing of which go well beyond this highly flawed and misleading memo. In case anyone believes this memo represents a serious attempt to address serious problems within the FBI or within our FISA surveillance authorities, I want to raise a few points they might consider because if they think it actually addresses serious problems, they either haven't read it or they don't understand the serious problems.

For years, I have been leading calls in the Senate to protect our civil liberties and reform our surveillance authorities under FISA. I am appreciative of the number of Republicans and Democrats who have joined me in that cause. This memo, however, has absolutely nothing to do with improving FISA. Nor does this partisan memo have anything to do with serious oversight of FISA authorities more broadly.

Instead, whether intentional or not, this memo represents a direct attack on rank-and-file professionals in both our law enforcement and our national security agencies. The memo deliberately distorts a multilayered process that is required to obtain and renew a judicial warrant for a suspected foreign agent. This meticulous process to obtain or renew a judicial warrant is conducted by career, nonpartisan professionals. In this case, the process led to a warrant, approved by a Federal judge and was renewed three times, for Trump campaign adviser Carter Page.

Carter Page is an individual who bragged about his ties to Russia. He even claimed at one point publicly to be an adviser to the Kremlin. He was also targeted for recruitment by known Russian spies beginning in 2013. Both of these facts are conveniently left out of the Nunes memo.

But the Nunes memo was not about capturing relevant facts or conducting actual oversight. If it were, the House Intelligence Committee Chairman would have read the underlying intelligence that purported to form the

basis of the memo. He did not. If it were about actual oversight, he would have granted the FBI Director's request to brief his Committee prior to releasing the memo. He did not. If it were about transparency, he would have allowed the Democratic response memo to be released at the same time. He did not.

Instead, his Committee voted along party lines last week to block the Democratic response. We will learn later this evening if they are going to change course and allow its release.

I have been here since the beginning of both the House and the Senate Intelligence Committees. I have never seen anything as partisan as this.

Proponents of this memo claim it proves that the FISA warrant of Carter Page was politically motivated. They claim that the so-called Steele dossier was the reason why a FISA warrant was granted and that the dossier could not be relied on because it was indirectly funded by Democratic interests. What it ignores is that this document was only one part of the lengthy FISA application establishing probable cause. The judge had to look at all of it.

Never mind that the judge was explicitly informed of the likelihood of a political motivation behind the dossier. The Republican memo conveniently leaves that out. By leaving it out, it undermines its central claim that the FBI hid the ball on the dossier's political origins. And never mind that the dossier was originally funded by a conservative newspaper, or that its author had previously been assessed by the FBI to be a reliable source.

One can disregard all of those facts and still see the memo for what it is: a complete and utter dud. The memo itself just disproves its own premise. Because of its reference to the controversial Steele dossier, President Trump and his allies paint this FISA application as the Russia investigation's original sin. They ignore the fact that the memo also reveals that an entirely separate source unrelated to the Steele dossier provided information to the FBI that triggered the opening of the FBI's counterintelligence investigation into the individuals associated with the Trump campaign. Oddly enough, that is something we did not see in President Trump's tweets over the weekend.

What we knew about the memo leads to one and only one conclusion: The FBI did its job. Rank-and-file professionals within the FBI and DOJ acted appropriately when obtaining a FISA warrant of Carter Page. Frankly, the President's attacks on these career professionals for obtaining the FISA warrant are entirely without merit.

I have been here with Republican Presidents and Democratic Presidents, eight Presidents in all, and I have never seen anybody make such unwarranted attacks on career professionals. These professionals, I suppose, if we really look, are Republicans, Demo-

crats, and some are apolitical. All of them are professional. What the Republican memo from the House reveals is nothing about abuses in the FISA process, but it does reveal a lot about both the President and the House Republicans who released it. It represents yet another desperate, hyperpartisan attempt to smear key Justice Department officials and undermine the Russia investigation.

Again, in my 40-some-odd years in the Senate, I have never seen this under either Republican or Democratic leadership or either a Republican or Democratic President.

Let's remember what is at stake. This is not about a Republican memo, which is nothing more than a sloppy, bad-faith attempt to distract from the special counsel's Russia investigation, nor is it about the Steele dossier. That represents an almost irrelevant side story. The only thing that matters here is that a foreign adversary attacked our democracy in 2016, suffered no consequences, and is poised to do it again. The President is not willing to address this threat. He is not even willing to implement sanctions on Russia that were overwhelmingly approved by the vast majority of both Republicans and Democrats in the Congress. The only thing this President has done in response to this threat is disparage the very people who defend our country from such foreign attacks—our dedicated law enforcement and intelligence professionals. I am afraid that for the President, it is Trump first and America second.

The fact is, we are under constant attacks on our political system by Russia. Which countries did the President single out in the State of the Union Address as countries that pose grave threats to the United States? Venezuela and Cuba. No. It is the second largest nuclear power in the world that is a threat, a power that has shown, by anybody's analysis or efforts—many of them successful—to undermine the electoral system not only of our country but of others.

It is more important than ever that the Special Counsel be able to complete his investigation without interference from either the President or any misguided allies in Congress. We need to know first how Russia interfered in our election, and whether anyone in the President's circle aided that effort or tried to cover it up.

I have been in the Senate for more than 43 years. I have never been as concerned as I am today for the institutions in our country and for our ability to stay united in the face of a true, unprecedented threat. I don't say this lightly.

Madam President, I have walked back and forth the dirt road in front of my home in Vermont. I have paced the floor and thought about it. I have gone back through notes I have taken through Presidents going back to Gerald Ford when I first came here, notes I took as a young, 34-year-old U.S. Senator. I have never been as concerned as