

the greatest investment in the military in decades, including the largest troop pay raise in nearly 10 years.

We have reauthorized important intelligence-gathering tools, like section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—a vital tool in tracking foreign terrorists abroad who try to hurt us at home.

For our veterans, we passed the VA MISSION Act, which will make significant reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs by strengthening healthcare and community care options that are available to those who have served our Nation in uniform.

Last, but not least, is our series of accomplishments. We have taken other important steps, like passing the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act just last week. It is legislation that modernizes our airports, improves service for travelers, enhances safety, and boosts industry innovation.

Then, almost without anybody paying any attention at all, we passed a huge bipartisan bill to address the opioid crisis. Senator ALEXANDER, the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, ushered this bill through the House and the Senate, along with Senator MURPHY and others. It has contributions from 70 Members of the Senate and 5 standing committees. That takes a lot of hard bipartisan effort, but it is important because it combats the nationwide epidemic that has led to the death of 49,000 Americans in just 2017 alone.

We have done important work in terms of improving public safety by enacting a bill I sponsored and that was supported by our colleagues here called Fix NICS; that is, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. We also passed a bill sponsored by Senator HATCH called the STOP School Violence Act.

The Fix NICS bill helped fix our broken background check system and ensures that criminals aren't able to purchase or possess firearms after they are convicted.

In the wake of the Texas shootings at Santa Fe and Sutherland Springs, we know there were a lot of people crying out for Congress to do something, and this was the one thing we could all agree to, on a bipartisan basis, across the ideological spectrum. These two bills—mine and Senator HATCH'S—are a part of the way we have answered that call.

We have tried to protect our young people—especially women—in another important way as well. We enacted what is known as SESTA, the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act. This legislation by the junior Senator from Ohio helps to stop online trafficking and adds to a bill I sponsored called the Abolish Human Trafficking Act. It strengthens programs and supports survivors of human trafficking and provides resources to law enforcement officials on the frontlines of the fight against modern-day slavery.

I understand why most Americans have not heard of all or many of these accomplishments, but I think it is important to note what we have been able to do while we have fought mightily over some things, like judicial nominations.

We have also worked in a bipartisan way to get the people's work done. I believe we have done so mainly by treating each other respectfully and by demonstrating civility, not by yelling at each other, by making threats, or inciting people to violence. That is not the American way.

I am hopeful that after the scenes we saw here last week during the confirmation proceedings for the Supreme Court, that the American people will reject that sort of conduct and demand that their elected officials act in a way they can be proud of.

Yes, we put money back into America's pockets. We have rolled back regulations to make their lives a little bit easier. We have strengthened our military, given our veterans access to better healthcare, and protected our communities from harm.

As the minority leader, the Senator from New York, said right before the confirmation vote on Judge Kavanaugh, the people need to vote. They will, I hope, exercise that franchise—that right of every American citizen to determine the direction of our country and who will represent them in the Halls of Congress.

It is my sincere hope that they will remember some of these accomplishments we have made together during this administration and know we can continue to do more for them in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning the front page of the Washington Post tells the story about our intelligence agencies intercepting some communications among the Saudi Government officials. It appeared they were exchanging information about how to lure a man named Khashoggi back into Saudi Arabia. Khashoggi is a person who has been openly critical of the Saudi Arabian leadership. He has published articles around the world, including in the Washington Post.

We have a video that shows Mr. Khashoggi entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. We have no video that shows him exiting that same building. He has disappeared.

This intelligence data, as well as other information, leads us to believe he has been assassinated—assassinated because he was critical of the leadership of the Saudi Arabian kingdom. That is what happens in a country of authoritarian rule that does not protect the right of dissent.

We see it over and over in history—strong authoritarian rulers can't stand dissenters. Many of them are killed, imprisoned, tortured, or run out of the

country. It still happens in China. It still happens in Russia. It happens, obviously, when it comes to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and other countries.

We are different. I hope we are. The reason we are different is because of 45 words—45 words—that were written over 200 years ago. They are worth repeating. These are 45 words that have guided our country and still should guide us today.

I am going to take a minute to read them. It is the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the First Amendment to our Bill of Rights, credited to James Madison. Here is what it says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

These are 45 words that distinguish us from virtually every other country in the world, where we expressly guarantee to ourselves and our posterity freedoms that are fundamental to being an American.

I have heard my friend the senior Senator from Texas come to the floor repeatedly now to talk about what happened last week during the Kavanaugh nomination and in the weeks before, during the committee hearing, and there were people who came to this Capitol because of their intense personal and political feelings about that nomination and what it meant to them personally and what they believed it meant to the country. They brought their emotions to this place, and they did it because they are guaranteed the right to do it in this Constitution.

Each of us is guaranteed the right to peaceably assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. The Senator from Texas has referred to this as "mob rule." I will tell you, if you believe these 45 words and what the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights instructs us in terms of this democracy, then it gives these people—all people in this country—the right to speak, the right to express their opinion, and the right to petition their government for a redress of grievances.

Now, of course, that should never—never—condone violence nor the incitement to violence. That is where we must draw the line.

If you are going to stand and defend this article of the Constitution, which we have all taken an oath to defend, then you are going to defend the right of individuals to speak in this country and say things that are unpopular and maybe even unacceptable to you personally.

I have found myself in that position, gritting my teeth and thinking I wish to heck that person wasn't saying what they were saying, but they have a constitutional right to do so. They don't have a constitutional right to be violent or to incite to violence.

I might add, I think they cross the line when they go after politicians'

family members and others. That clearly crosses the line. I have seen it happen in my political life, and I am sure all my colleagues can tell a similar story.

To call this mob rule is to take the actions of a few and to really use those as a standard to judge everyone. That is fundamentally unfair. There were people on both sides of the Kavanaugh nomination who had intense, strong personal feelings and used their constitutional rights under the Bill of Rights to express that. They did it peaceably. They did it in a constructive way. As far as I am concerned, they have a constitutional right to do it.

For those who crossed the line, they need to accept whatever consequences come their way. For some, it means being arrested and maybe more, but for those who complied with this article in the Bill of Rights, I think we all ought to stand up and say, regardless of party, this is the Constitution both parties swore to uphold.

To say that what happened last week—even in this Chamber and even in this Gallery here—is really the whole story is ignoring the obvious.

When the Senator from Texas asks about mob rule, my response is to say three words: “Lock her up.”

This week in Iowa, the President held a rally. During the course of that rally, he was critical of the senior Senator from California. As he was critical of her, the people attending the rally started chanting “Lock her up. Lock her up,” referring to my colleague from California.

I am sure the Senator from Texas heard about this. I hope that when he heard about it, he realized that an incitement to hold someone criminally liable for using their office in a legal way really steps over the line.

Let's be honest about this. In the last 2 years, we have seen a coarsening of the rhetoric in politics in America. Things are being said now that have never been said before. Oh, they were said in private or maybe on some website, but now they are being said openly on a regular basis.

If someone speaks up at a rally, to have a Presidential candidate say: Let the crowd take care of that, and I will pay the legal fees of whoever does it—that happened. It suggests to me a coarsening of our rhetoric in this political world that we live in that is not conducive to a civilized and constructive democracy. As the Senator from Texas suggested, we need to really reward civility, and we need to show it ourselves in the things we say and do as Members of the U.S. Senate.

No, I don't think it is evidence of mob rule in America. It wasn't a mob that voted here on the floor of the Senate. One hundred Senators voted, as the Constitution requires us to do, and we did it in an orderly, democratic way, regardless of whether you agree with the outcome. The mob didn't rule; the Constitution ruled, and the Constitution needs to continue to rule.

There are limits to speech. The courts have talked about this for 200 years. But let us never forget that the first 45 words of the Bill of Rights guarantees to us the right of free speech, peaceful assembly, and the right to petition our government for redress of grievances.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Madam President, on Monday, two things were made clear. This last Monday, we came to realize that we need to take immediate action—immediate action—to deal with human-caused global warming. Secondly, American innovation has already given us many of the tools to do so.

I know there are those who think that climate change is an issue that will only affect us in the far-distant future or that the challenge is so big that we can't really do much about it, but the truth is that we are already dealing with the effects of climate change, and we have it within our power to address them with technology that already exists.

Earlier this year, rainstorms and melting snow caused flooding across my State of Illinois. More than 20 counties throughout the State were placed under flood warning. As the water level of rivers continued to rise, several communities in Illinois had to evacuate their homes for their own safety. Illinois farmers know all too well that changing weather is impacting the way they farm and the crops they produce.

As I speak, recovery efforts are already underway after Hurricane Michael left the Panhandle region of Florida in ruins. Our hearts go out to the families who are waking up this morning and don't know whether their loved ones are safe or whether they have a home to return to.

Earlier this summer, in the western part of our country, we saw vast acreage destroyed by wildfires, and it has been one year since Hurricane Harvey hit Texas and Hurricane Maria devastated the entire island of Puerto Rico.

It is obvious to anyone that natural disasters are becoming more powerful, more costly, and more deadly, and it is time we take climate change's role in causing them seriously, or it will get worse.

On Monday, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report stating that we have just over a decade—less than 10 years—to drastically reduce our carbon emissions if we want to maintain life on Earth as we know it today. It is an ominous warning but a serious one. The U.N. report states that we must reduce global emissions by 45 percent by the year 2030 and reach net zero emissions by 2050 if we want to avoid a world where deadly storms, unbreathable air, widespread famine, and multiyear droughts become the norm.

According to the national security community that we count on to keep

Americans safe, failing to address climate change will inundate our military bases and installations, and it will incite international conflicts and put our military—the men and women serving our country—at risk in terms of readiness, operations, and strategy.

The fact is, no one can claim to be serious about our national security if we don't face the reality of climate change. That isn't a declaration by the Sierra Club or some liberal Democratic Senator; it is a declaration of our defense community.

We will continue to face weakened states and unprecedented refugee migration in the decades to come if we ignore this reality.

There is good news, though. We have the tools and the technology to prevent this dystopian future, and the United States can lead in this effort. America is already showing the world how to reduce emissions and grow our economy by increasing energy efficiency measures and renewable energy usage and switching to electric vehicles.

Think about the gains we have made, the progress that has been made when it comes to the fuel efficiency of the cars and trucks we drive today. There was a time in the Senate not that long ago when Detroit automobile and truck manufacturers were in complete denial. They said that there is just no way to hit these targets in terms of miles per gallon. We are doing it, and we see it every day. It is the same American innovation that can power us to make the far-reaching transitions in energy and infrastructure we need to limit our emissions to meet the recommendations of this United Nations panel.

On Monday, the Nobel Prize in economics was given to two Americans—William Nordhaus and Paul Romer—for their work on innovation, climate, and economic growth. Their work shows that addressing climate change can be an incredible opportunity for job growth and new investments in American competitiveness. New jobs can be created designing more efficient solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries, as well as manufacturing the components for export all over the world.

If you visit downstate Illinois—an area which is one of our most bountiful agricultural areas—you can't help but be struck by the number of wind turbines that have been built all around my State. The farmers love it because they are receiving monthly checks for the wind turbines located on their property, and the wind turbines are generating electricity for nearby communities without polluting. Twenty years ago, no one would have thought of that as a serious alternative. Today, it is. It is an alternative renewable source of energy that is not going to make the world worse for future generations.

There was a Paris Agreement in terms of setting global goals that all the countries in the world would sign up for to reduce carbon emissions and