

money in the pockets of working families. It is pouring a new 21st century foundation for American businesses to compete, win, and create more jobs right here at home.

Today, Nevada is doing better, our Nation is flourishing, and DEAN HELLER was there every step of the way. He was especially instrumental in making sure that tax reform increased the child tax credit. DEAN knew that working parents need that money more than the IRS does.

Nevada veterans, Nevada workers, Nevada families—DEAN never lost sight of the reason he came here to Washington. He has been a happy warrior here in the trenches, with a ready grin and an iron determination to do right by his friends and his neighbors.

I also have it on good authority that seeing DEAN in action back home in his natural habitat is truly a sight to behold. His joy at every conversation and every handshake around Carson City are palpable. Nevadans are DEAN's people. They always have been, and he has always been theirs too.

According to some of the staff who travel around the State with him, it is practically impossible to make any brief stops anywhere. At a fast-food restaurant, or a sporting goods store, or even a gas station, DEAN would inevitably run into friends and set about swapping stories or Carson City inside jokes. On the rare occasions when DEAN didn't know the proprietor or fellow customers—no trouble, no trouble—he would have a room full of new friends in about 3 minutes flat.

I am told it never got old for the people around DEAN to witness the energy he drew from his friends, neighbors, and constituents. He was delighted to be one of them and honored to be their employee—"a man of the people"—not a cliché, in this case, a reality.

You don't need to take my word for it. I hear there is objective evidence out there, photographs from the Nevada Day Parade in Carson City. Suffice it to say it takes a certain kind of person to steal the show, riding horseback, dressed head to toe in full western regalia, something like John Wayne. It is no wonder his grandkids—Brielle, Zachary, and Ava—know him as "Duke."

Now, his boss, Lynne, might very well have put him up to it. I hear she rides right there alongside him. But DEAN is no newcomer to the parade. In fact, it is the very same parade he marched in as a Scout years ago.

If you read that story in a book, you would think it was almost too earnest and too all-American to be true, but that is DEAN HELLER. He is the paper boy who started out delivering the headlines and wound up making the headlines, the Senator who still saddles up for the same parade from his childhood memories, one of Nevada's favorite sons and a dedicated servant of the entire Silver State.

DEAN's colleagues are really sorry to see him go. For a leader with this

much heart and this much talent, any departure would feel premature. This one certainly does, but I doubt DEAN will have trouble finding good uses for a little more spare time. I know he and Lynne must be looking forward to saddling up their horses and setting out for the Sierras a little more often than they have been able to lately, and I hear he could use a little bit of rehearsal time before he leads the Heller family band through its repertoire of Christmas carols this year—lead trombone. Lead trombone is no laughing matter. Maybe he will even find time to get back in the driver's seat for a race or two.

So whatever it is that DEAN does next—whatever it is—he should take with him great pride in all he has accomplished here in a policy legacy that will continue lifting up our Nation's veterans, workers, and middle-class families literally for years and years to come, and the sincere best wishes of the friends he has made here in this Chamber for health, happiness, and every future success for himself, for Lynne, and for their entire lovely family.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF THOMAS FARR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, later this afternoon, the Senate is scheduled to vote on the confirmation of Mr. Thomas Farr for the Eastern District of North Carolina. I have made my opposition to this nominee clear on a daily basis, but allow me to remind my colleagues, to recap, before this vote just what we are dealing with here. We are being asked to confirm the go-to guy in North Carolina if you need a lawyer to defend voter suppression. Some might think that is hyperbolic, but I sincerely ask my colleagues not to go for hyperbole but to look at the evidence.

Mr. Farr was the lead lawyer in defending North Carolina's discriminatory congressional maps drawn by the State's Republicans, which were struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional. This is a very conservative Supreme Court, which has been mostly unsympathetic to arguments of disenfranchisement—as evidenced by the Shelby County case—but in this instance, they could not help but overturn the map for racial discrimination, despite the evidence provided by Mr. Farr.

Mr. Farr was also the lead lawyer in defense of North Carolina's insidious voter ID law, which the Supreme Court ruled "targeted African Americans with almost surgical precision"—targeted African Americans with almost surgical precision.

North Carolina's Republicans designed the law after asking for and receiving data sorted by race on voting practices. Mr. Farr not only defended the law, he described the voting restrictions, which forbade the use of government employee IDs, student IDs, and IDs used for public assistance, as "a minor inconvenience."

That is only Mr. Farr's recent history involving voting suppression. If we go back and look at the campaign of Senator Jesse Helms in 1990, Mr. Farr represented the Helms campaign and defended it against accusations that it sent over 120,000 postcards, almost exclusively to Black voters, that falsely warned them they could be charged with a crime if they tried to vote—falsely—falsely warned them. The mailers were sent after statistics emerged that African-American registration was outpacing White voter registration.

The sordid history of Mr. Farr's efforts to suppress voting goes back even further. Mr. Farr was a member of Senator Jesse Helms' 1984 campaign. In that campaign, he wasn't merely a hired gun; he was a close legal associate of Senator Helms, a man David Broder of the Washington Post called "the last prominent unabashed White racist politician in this country."

In that 1984 campaign, according to memoranda by the Voting Rights section of the Department of Justice, Mr. Farr was involved in the so-called "ballot security" program run by the Helms campaign and the North Carolina Republican Party. The so-called ballot security program included sending postcards to minority voters in an effort to suppress voting.

In 2006, Mr. Farr's association with these noxious voter suppression attempts by Helms' campaign was enough to deny him confirmation to this very seat. In the intervening years, he has not repented or even moved on to different issues. He is still defending attempts to disenfranchise African-American voters.

I am not from North Carolina, but if I were, I would be embarrassed to have this man nominated and placed on the Federal bench. It takes but an ounce of principle to say: No, I am not defending discrimination and voter suppression. Yet, time and time and time again, not just 1984, not just 1990 but 2013 and 2015, Mr. Thomas Farr has stepped up to the plate to represent and defend voter suppression in a court of law, and we are being asked to reward him—reward him for these activities—with a lifetime appointment as a Federal judge in a district that is 27 percent African American, where he will have the power to make decisions on voting rights and civil rights for a generation.

I prevail upon the conscience of my Republican colleagues, who I know want to be fair to this man, look at the body of evidence impartially. There is simply a preponderance of evidence that Mr. Farr was involved, often intimately, in decades of voter suppression in North Carolina. The standard for this vote is not whether or how Mr. Farr should be punished or excoriated for what he did but a much higher one: whether a man with this history deserves to be elevated to a lifetime appointment on the Federal bench.

Whether you are Republican or Democratic, a liberal or conservative, that has to be—has to be—disqualifying for a seat on the Federal bench.

SPECIAL COUNSEL INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now, on another matter, the special counsel investigation.

To date, the special counsel's investigation has produced no less than 35 indictments or plea deals—35—and that does not include two additional guilty pleas of people initially investigated by Mueller but were handed off to other branches of the Justice Department.

Just this morning, Michael Cohen has pled guilty to lying to Congress about projects in Russia.

It is a reminder that there has been a remarkable volume of criminal activity uncovered by the special counsel's investigation. No one, especially not the President, can credibly claim that the investigation is a fishing expedition. Calling Mueller's investigation a witch hunt is just a lie—plain and simple, a lie.

The President's actions clearly show he has a lot to hide, that he is afraid of the truth, and doesn't want Mueller or anyone else to uncover it, but it hasn't stopped the President from repeating these lies. In fact, in recent days, President Trump has escalated his attack on Special Counsel Mueller. Almost daily, the President's Twitter feed is littered with baseless accusations about the investigation. President Trump retweeted an image of several of his political opponents, including Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein, behind bars. Can you believe that? The Deputy Attorney General behind bars? And this is the man—the President—our Republican colleagues refuse to call out against?

Just yesterday, President Trump said this about a potential pardon for Paul Manafort, now accused of lying to prosecutors and violating his plea agreement. He said:

I wouldn't take it off the table. . . . Why would I take it off the table?

That is a pardon.

Let's not forget, President Trump has already fired the Attorney General and replaced him with a lackey without Senate approval. The nominee's only qualification seems to be that he has a history of criticizing the special counsel.

So this idea that we don't need to pass legislation to protect the special

counsel because there is no way President Trump will interfere with the investigation is flatout absurd.

I once again call on my friend the majority leader to schedule a vote on the bipartisan bill to protect the special counsel. If he continues to refuse, we will push for the bill in the yearend spending agreement.

I yield the floor.

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 and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report:

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Thomas Alvin Farr, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, the clock is ticking and the days are passing us by, but we know we have a deadline to meet on December 7, and if we don't meet that deadline, then there will be a lot of lives disrupted and a lot of people will say: There they go again. Congress is unable to work together to try to solve problems, just creating more distrust and undermining confidence in our ability to actually do our job to govern.

What I want to talk about specifically is this fight over border funding because that is what the deadline is on December 7. Our Democratic friends have said: We are not going to fund President Trump's wall. On the other hand, we see caravans of people coming from Central America, coming through Mexico, closing down the ports of entry at the San Ysidro bridge between Tijuana and San Diego. What I fear is, we have made a parody out of what the problem is. We have thought about the challenge of border security and immigration in too small a way and not given the complete picture of what the challenges really are.

I just have to believe that if we were willing to acknowledge the facts, that we would be more inclined to work together to solve the problem, and I feel like we are looking at these problems like we are looking through a soda straw.

I have heard people talk about the humanitarian crisis at the border there at Tijuana caused by this huge caravan of Central Americans who want to storm the barriers and enter the United States illegally, and people question why would we stop them, why would they use nonlethal means like tear gas and pepper spray like President Obama did during his administration and which now Customs and Border Protection is doing again in order to protect the sovereignty of our country and to protect our borders from those who would enter it illegally.

So let's not look at this through a soda straw. Let's open up the aperture and look at the larger problem because it is a very serious problem, and it affects many lives, both here, in Mexico, and in Central America.

Our Democratic colleagues have offered a lot of criticism of the Trump administration when it comes to border security, but anytime you ask them, well, what is your solution, what are you offering as an alternative, it is crickets—complete silence. In other words, they are not offering any constructive solutions, just criticism. Our constituents deserve more than just for us to criticize one another. They deserve our working together to try to come up with solutions.

This is a crisis that has arisen as a result of our inability to acknowledge that this is a failure to enforce our immigration laws, a failure to fix our broken immigration system, and a failure to secure our borders.

Coming from Texas, representing 28 million constituents in a State which has a 1,200-mile common border with Mexico, this affects my constituents in my State directly. We are at ground zero, and I have tried my best to get educated about the problem and potential solutions. My trips to the border, talking to people in border communities who live and work in those communities, talking to our heroic Border Patrol agents, and visiting our ports of entry where millions and even billions of dollars of commerce flow legally between the United States and Mexico—that is important not only to our border communities but to jobs in the United States.

The border communities that rely on the flow of legal commerce through our ports know that without border security, legitimate trade can easily be brought to a standstill. In fact, that is exactly what has happened at San Ysidro, the port of entry between Tijuana and San Diego. They had to shut down the port of entry. So people whose jobs depend on those ports of entry and the trade and commerce that goes on between our countries, they are the ones who are being hurt by the uncontrolled disruption of legal immigration. Any disruption of legitimate trade has an immediate impact on the businesses and the employees and affects the livelihoods of our border residents.

An unsecured border creates avenues for the entry of drug cartels and