

He has a number of people in the statehouse who served with him, in a chamber where I was speaker of the house. They are mourning his death today. I couldn't be there in person because we have to be here for the votes that we are taking up this afternoon, but I wanted the Jones family to know, and all the people in Eastern North Carolina, how much I cared for and loved Walter Jones.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, one of the reasons why I continue to be here in Washington rather than visiting with family and friends of Congressman Jones is that we have a very important vote that we expect the Senate to take up here sometime this afternoon.

It is a vote that is borne out of compromise. To quote Winston Churchill—I think it was—it is the worst possible option except for all the other options considered up to this point.

It is not perfect, but it is important that we get the votes and that we encourage the President to sign this bill into law.

Now, I walked through the hallway this morning, and I had the press come up to me. Some in the press probably want to report honestly, but others want to create a narrative.

So the latest narrative is this: Senator, how do you feel about a bill that just got published last night—1,200 pages—and you are going to be asked to vote on it today?

I told them, specifically, because I have been following this measure since the last Congress. I said: Are you referring to the almost-1,200-page bill, of which all but 41 pages were matters that were taken up in the Appropriations Committee, voted out of committee unanimously in all but one case and with 26 votes in the other case? Are you referring to that bill?

If the Senators are doing their job and the Congressmen are doing their job, they read that months ago when they were passed out of the Appropriations Committee. Most of this is not new information. About 41 pages of it relates to the compromise that ultimately—because we couldn't get a compromise back in December—resulted in the government shutdown.

It absolutely funds some of the President's priorities for border security. There are people that get caught up on either end of the spectrum. It reminds me of how my kids used to fight in the back of the minivan when we used to take them on vacations. It is a childish argument: It is a wall.

No, it is not.

It is a wall.

No, it is not.

Look, it is steps taken forward in a positive way for border security. It is a structure that makes sense. It is technology. It is personnel. It is what we need to ultimately secure the border.

Some people can call it a wall because you could argue that in total it

is. Other people could say it is not a wall. I don't care as long as you ultimately recognize that voting for this measure and sending the signal to the President that we have his back, that we understand his priorities, and that we will continue to work on other measures on a bipartisan basis makes sense.

So I intend to support it today. It is not a vote that I am going to enjoy, but sometimes we have to do things here to make progress, to compromise, and to move on. We owe it to the American people to keep the government open. We owe it to border security to listen to their recommendations to fund people, technology, and infrastructure. This is a step in the right direction.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, it was a year ago today that I was presiding and something occurred to me. One is that in the 12 years that I have been in public service, I have virtually spent none of those Valentine's Days at home. Last year, I was thinking about how I messed up. I didn't even order flowers or do the things that I would normally do, although, I usually get flowers on Valentine's Day.

But then I started contemplating the Senate rules, and I know that there are a number of, well, things you just can't do on the floor.

I determined, for example, that you can't do an ad hoc prop and say something because it would be a violation of the rules. So although I thought about putting this heart up and presenting this and saying, "I love my wife Susan Tillis of 32 years," I am not going to do that because I think it would be a violation of the rules.

But in the event that someday we do change the rules and we are able to come to the floor and express our love for our spouses and people who sacrifice as much as we do, I hope someday to be able to give that speech on the Senate floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about an experience I had this weekend that was extremely memorable to me.

I used to live in Texas. I used to be involved in businesses in the Valley, as they call it there—from Brownsville to Weslaco, to Edinburg, to McCowan. This past weekend, a good colleague of mine, Senator STEVE DAINES from Montana, and I traveled to the southern border to visit the Customs and Border Patrol people, to visit with ICE people, and to see firsthand what goes on in a typical night. We were there overnight on Sunday night. We had a remarkable evening, and we saw firsthand what these people are up against.

Before I make my comments, I want to say that from Deputy Chief Ortiz all the way down in the organization in that sector—the McCowan sector that we were in—the best of America is in uniform right now, every day and night, protecting our rights and privileges here in the United States. I was proud to meet these people and to be a part of this trip.

What we saw this weekend is disturbing on many levels. We spoke directly to Border Patrol agents. We went to the retention center. We saw firsthand that we have not just illegal immigration there, but we have a national security crisis. We saw it firsthand.

This is a situation that the border agents face every day, and it is a grim situation. It is shameful that we here in Congress have not given Border Patrol agents adequate resources to do their jobs.

First, the real tragedy at the border is the dramatic increase in illegal drug trafficking. Even though the conversation in this room deals mainly with illegal immigration across that border, in this sector, the drug traffic increases are remarkable.

This year alone, fiscal year 2018—this is from October 1 to today—we had a 22-percent increase of heroin seized at the southern border, a 38-percent increase of methamphetamine and a 73-percent increase in fentanyl.

The amount of fentanyl seized by ICE so far this year is enough to kill every American citizen by overdose. Let me say that again. The tonnage of fentanyl seized is up 73 percent this year across the entire southern border, and that is not 100 percent of what is crossing that border. That is a 73-percent increase over the last year. The tonnage that has been seized this year is enough to kill every American citizen by overdose.

What is so remarkable is the estimate that only 7 to 10 percent of the drugs that they are attempting to bring across the border are actually interdicted—less than 10 percent. That is consistent with what our SOUTHCOM combatant commander tells us repeatedly year after year. By the end of fiscal year 2019, CPB—Customs and Border Patrol—will have seized 1.7 million pounds of narcotics at the border.

The Border Patrol agents we spoke to estimate that they are only able to stop, again, about 10 percent, and that is because they don't have the resources.

The movement of drugs from Mexico to the United States at the southern border is the greatest drug threat to our country. These drugs pouring across the border are destroying communities across the Nation. Congress has to act to give these Border Patrol agents and our ICE agents the infrastructure they need to address this dramatic spike in illegal drug trafficking.

I know that the illegal immigration topic is a hot topic. I don't disagree

with that, but we are not talking about this at the level that we should.

We have had historic opioid legislation. I was a supporter of that. Now we need to move on and make sure we secure the southern border.

The second point I want to make is that agents on the ground told us how Mexican drug cartels just across the border use migrants—illegal immigrants coming up out of Central America—to camouflage what they are doing and to distract our border agents from the real war that is going on, and that is the intrusion of illegal drugs into the country.

The cartels charge a toll for every individual who comes through their area of control. It is amazing right now. The charge is \$8,000 per person. There are some estimates that this toll business on illegal immigrants coming across the southern border is somewhere around \$2.1 billion in revenue for the cartels. These are the illegal cartels just south of the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. This doesn't account for the billions of dollars these cartels earn from the drug trade every year, which is a primary business.

There are some estimates that the \$2 billion they get in tolls for illegal immigrants coming into the United States is overshadowed by tenfold, relative to the drug trade. Some estimates are \$25 to \$30 billion of first cost value in revenue from the drugs that are coming across that border.

Many of the illegal immigrants being exploited by these cartels are unaccompanied children and family units. We met some of these people. It breaks your heart. The number of these to claim asylum has surged at our southern border since 2014. This massive surge is due to loopholes in our asylum and immigration laws.

These laws allow unaccompanied minors and family units to easily assert broad asylum claims. Again, the number of family units, individuals with children, and unaccompanied children has skyrocketed over the last 5 years.

Due to certain provisions in the law and court rulings currently enforced, these children and individuals are released into the United States while they are theoretically waiting for their formal removal proceedings to begin months or years down the road.

These loopholes, combined with programs like DACA, have led to a staggering increase in the number of unaccompanied children and family units at the border.

In fiscal year 2019 to date, there is a 280-percent increase in the number of family units apprehended at the border compared to the same point in fiscal year 2018. From just 1 year ago, there is a 280-percent increase.

The monthly apprehension numbers we are currently seeing even surpass those during the Obama administration. I think this chart shows it best. We see what happened over here, in blue, under the last administration. This is a dramatic increase in the num-

ber of illegal apprehensions at the southern border, primarily driven by catch-and-release and the implementation of some of these loopholes we are talking about right now. That was a dramatic increase—more than a 2½ times increase—250 percent in just 8 years.

The word got out that the new President, who was elected in November—right here—said: Well, we are going to enforce the law. They began to do that, and we saw a dramatic decrease in illegal immigrants coming across the border—a dramatic decrease.

Then there was a court case that said: Well, you can't really do that. That court case is being appealed, and what we have seen since then is that the cartels are back in business. This is one measure of the drug trade that we don't talk about. These are the poor souls who are coming across our border illegally right now.

By the way, we are at a point now that is higher than at the peak during the Obama administration. People say: Well, you know, we don't have a crisis here. It is not a problem. Well, the numbers are down.

I don't know what numbers they are looking at, but these are the numbers. These are facts. I believe right now we have a full-blown crisis at the southern border.

I am not trying to define how we use money to put up a border wall or anything. That is not what I am trying to do in this speech. What I am trying to do is point out that we have a full-blown crisis of illegal immigrants and illegal drugs crossing the southern border. I saw it firsthand on patrol with our border agents over the weekend. I am contrasting that with years ago, when I used to go across that same border, when this was not a crisis.

The last four Presidents have built 654 miles of barriers. We saw some of it in this sector. They have built 654 miles of barriers. Now we have 2,000 miles of total southern border. The four Presidents—from George H. W. Bush all the way to President Obama—have built border barriers because they all agreed that this is a crisis. It was intended to stop or slow down drug trafficking and the illegal incursion of illegal immigrants.

President Obama built 135 miles. President Trump has 124 miles under construction right now. What we have been talking about here in the last few weeks is just 55 miles; we heard today it is an additional 55 miles.

The question is, Do these barriers work? Well, we have three areas where, over the last 30 years, border barriers have been built—San Diego, Tucson, El Paso—and we have actual numbers to show that the illegal crossing of drugs and illegal immigrants in those sectors where those barriers were put up dropped 95 percent. But what they have done is, they have pushed this traffic to areas that don't have those barriers. One of those was the McCowan district, which we visited this weekend.

There are 250 miles of border across 19 counties. It is a crisis down there. Right now, what we have there is 55 miles of barrier with 35 gaps in it. They have 55 miles that were built in 2006 in this sector. It is totally ineffective. The quickest thing we could do in that sector is close the 35 gaps. There were supposed to be gates, but there are no gates there. There is some litigation regarding that, but we need to fix that and make that barrier effective.

The U.S. Capitol Police—who do such an outstanding job protecting Members of Congress, our staffs, the Capitol building, and several blocks around every day—employs about 2,000 officers. The Metropolitan Police Department here in Washington has over 4,000 employees to help protect an area of 68 square miles.

Let's put that in perspective. There are 55 miles of barrier with 35 miles of gaps in it, and only 3,000 agents in that entire sector. I think you can see where the problem might be.

We have to give these men and women the tools they need to be successful and to protect our country. The longer we wait to take action, the more money cartels will make off drug trafficking, the more people will die, the more families will be destroyed, and the longer our communities will be in danger.

Some estimates show that my home State of Georgia has over 70,000 gang members in it—70,000. It is a destination for these people.

There were Hondurans who were apprehended that night while we were on patrol. We asked them where they were going. One said New York; one said Miami; and one said Woodstock, GA.

As we continue to debate this issue, I want to say clearly and unequivocally that Congress has to do better. We all must do better. For the men and women who put their lives on the line every day to protect our Nation's border, we must do better for our country.

We can start by passing disaster funding for the people in Georgia and other States who are hurting from historic hurricanes and fires. It is outrageous that the funding package being considered here today does nothing to help these farmers and victims of these wildfires out west and of the hurricanes in the southeast.

When President Trump came to Georgia to tour the damage after the hurricane, he said:

Farmers really got hurt, especially in Georgia, but we're going to get it taken care of.

Vice President PENCE said:

We will rebuild these crops and these communities. We will restore southwest Georgia. We will restore the Sunbelt region bigger and better than ever before.

We have a moment right now in time where Congress needs to act. Today we have to get this funding done and move forward. We have to get this disaster relief, I think, moved forward in a supplemental, if that is what we are going to do, but this has to happen immediately. Disaster relief should be considered right now—no more excuses.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I want my colleagues to listen to some ideas that I have about tariffs, generally, and where we are on tariffs and where we might be on tariffs in a couple of weeks, depending on what the Secretary of Commerce says, because in a few days, that Secretary is expected to provide the President a report.

This report will detail his Department's findings in the investigation of whether imports of automobiles and auto parts pose a national threat to the United States. Common sense tells me it doesn't. Let me repeat that because I think it is important for us to understand whether the cars that everyday Americans rely on to get to work, to drive their children to schools, to visit their families—whether or not the importation of those automobiles threatens national security.

Now, having said that, you might think that I disagree with the President—and I don't—that we must have fair and enforceable trade agreements that benefit Americans. Sometimes we have to make hard decisions in order to get and have fair and enforceable agreements. I do not agree that we should alienate our allies or jeopardize the health of our economy to achieve the good outcomes of fair and enforceable agreements.

The Tax Foundation has found that a 25-percent tariff on auto imports would amount to roughly a \$73.1 billion tax increase. According to the Center for Automotive Research, a 25-percent tariff on auto imports would also result in the loss of 700,000 jobs and raise the price of an average car by nearly \$7,000.

Dealers would see a decline in annual sales by as many as 2 million vehicles. Consumers would face up to a 10-percent increase in the cost of repairs and replacement parts. In short, raising tariffs on cars and parts would be a huge tax on consumers who buy or service their cars, whether those cars are imported or domestically produced. Make no mistake, Americans will be paying those taxes.

Tariffs are a tax paid at the time of import. Historically, they have been a protectionist tool intended to prop up domestically produced goods by making foreign goods more expensive. Tariffs are not a long-term solution, and nobody wins with the producing of tariffs.

While they may provide short-term protection for domestic industries, they do so at the expense of ordinary consumers and industries increasingly dependent on a complex global supply chain. On the whole, I think this all adds up to damaging the economy. For an administration, including this Senator and most Republicans on this side

of the aisle, who have been crowing about the benefits of the tax bill of late 2017 and the jobs it has created and the good it has done for workers, why would you want to put on a \$73 billion tax increase through tariffs that would undo a lot of good that we say and the President says the tax bill has done. Let me repeat it again. On a whole, this is going to be damaging to the economy.

A 2018 study by the International Monetary Fund reviewed tariff changes across 151 countries between the decades of the 1960s to 2014. The International Monetary Fund found that tariff increases led to less output and less productivity, and, then, you know what happens. There is more unemployment, and when you have more unemployment, you get greater inequality.

The recent U.S. tariff increases have invited tariff retaliation from our trading partners. I know because Iowans are bearing the brunt of this retaliation. Imposing tariffs on auto parts will inevitably invite more retaliation, and we simply can't afford more of that.

The United States must continue to lead the world on trade and economic issues, as we have for at least the period of time since World War II. We have benefitted from one of the most open markets in the world, and we must continue to lead the world by providing a good example. We have led to a better world since World War II, and the results have been these. Several decades ago, 50 percent of the world's population was in poverty. Today, it is less than 10 percent. Recently, in two or three references I have seen, the fact is that right now or next year, as for major middle class status in the various countries around the world and in different ways around the world, half of the world is middle class. President Trump is right to hold our trading partners accountable. So I don't find fault with him there.

We can't take benefits we have received from international trade for granted. International trade has been a tremendous benefit to farmers and businesses in my State of Iowa and across the country. We are better off because we can sell our products around the world.

Our farmers say they don't want aid from the Federal Treasury. They want markets. They want to trade. You develop those markets and you keep those markets. Tariffs and retaliation send a signal to other countries that you might not be a reliable supplier, and they go elsewhere to create relationships that they can depend on. America ought to be able to be depended upon any place in the world from the standpoint of trade.

When you talk about America and Iowa exporting products, these are some of the best products in the world. In this vein, then, I hope the President will heed my call to forego the auto tariffs and instead focus on opening up new markets.

The U.S. auto industry is a major driver of our economy, supporting nearly 10 million American jobs and accounting for 3 percent of the gross domestic product. Without question, any tariffs that are imposed will have a negative effect on the U.S. auto industry and our economy.

Our focus, instead, should be on strengthening our relationships with our allies, while targeting China's harmful trade practices and policies. Tariffs on autos and auto parts will not help us achieve these critical priorities.

TAX POLICY

Mr. GRASSLEY. On another subject, I would like to, as I did yesterday, remind my colleagues about some of the benefits of tax policy. This is speaking about tax policy that I thought would be adopted as part of the upcoming appropriation bill to make sure we don't shut down government.

For several months now, we have been working to extend a set of tax provisions that expired at the end of 2017. Around here we commonly refer to these as "tax extenders." We have also been working to enact bipartisan disaster tax relief to help families and businesses that continue to recover from the disasters that occurred across the country in 2018, and I thought that, too, would be in the bill we are going to vote on later today.

The best and most timely option to advance these provisions is with the government funding deal being worked on this week, but that isn't going to happen. There have been press reports stating that if the extenders aren't part of the funding bill, they are dead, and I reject that conclusion.

Regardless of what happens on the bill to keep the government open, I will continue to fight to get the extenders enacted and to work toward a longer term resolution. Since the House has failed to send us a government funding bill that includes the tax extenders and disaster tax relief provisions, look for me to introduce a bill addressing these tax matters here in the Senate, and I would ask my colleagues on the Finance Committee to join me in that effort.

When these provisions were extended early last year, the tax extenders had been expired for more than a year already. Now we are back in the very same place, with these tax incentives now expired for more than a year, again.

It seems to me that the right thing to do now is to extend these provisions for 2018 and 2019. Some people are saying you ought to do it longer. Why 2 years?

First, we need to provide clarity for taxpayers trying to file their 2018 returns, which are due in just over eight weeks. Even though the year has obviously ended, a repeated extension of many of these provisions has led individuals and businesses to assume that we will do so again.