

Of course, it wouldn't be a Trump budget if it didn't include the fantasy of another \$8.6 billion in funding for the border wall. The fiction that Mexico would pay for the wall has long been debunked, although that is what the President ran on, but it is still amazing that the Trump administration proposes year after year that the American taxpayer pay billions of dollars for a border wall that President Trump said would be completely free.

It is difficult to overstate the callousness of President Trump's budget. The cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and numerous middle-class programs are devastating but maybe not surprising. This budget will be on the backs of the Republicans. They support President Trump.

The Republican Party's systematic efforts to rip away Americans' healthcare, its continued embrace of the tax cuts for the rich, its refusal to accept science, facts, and the urgent need to address climate change have made cruel and unthinkable budget proposals like this one par for the course with our fellow Republicans. It is sad; it is a shame; and it basically is total hypocrisy because not one single Republican would campaign on these proposals.

#### JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, this week the Senate will vote on three controversial nominees, including two circuit court judges: Paul Matey for the Third Circuit and Neomi Rao for the DC Circuit, the second most powerful court in the country.

Mr. Matey's nomination, in keeping with Leader MCCONNELL just ripping apart whatever bipartisanship we have left, has advanced without a blue slip from either home State Senator, Mr. BOOKER or Mr. MENENDEZ. In case it wasn't clear how little Republicans care about this once-vaunted tradition, Mr. Matey has skipped even the courtesy of meeting with Senator MENENDEZ.

Mr. Matey has never made an oral argument before a Federal Court of Appeals—never. He barely has any litigation experience either. He has spent most of his career as a political aide to Governor Christie. Yet he is nominated for a lifetime appointment to a circuit court of appeals, not even a district court, where his qualifications would still be questionable, but to a circuit court.

Ms. Neomi Rao, despite her experience, might even be worse. As the Trump administration's regulatory czar, she has been in charge of rolling back consumer protections, environmental protections, and healthcare protections. So as a nominee for the DC Circuit, which hears cases on Federal regulation, Ms. Rao is hopelessly compromised. Yet she refused to commit to recusing herself from regulatory matters on which she has worked when pressed by Senator FEINSTEIN during the Judiciary hearing.

That is to say nothing of Ms. Rao's alarming views. In past writings, Ms.

Rao has expressed skepticism about climate change, called sexual and racial oppression "myths," and argued that independent Federal Agencies are unconstitutional. Perhaps worst of all, she has implied that sexual assault victims are to blame for the despicable crimes committed against them.

Honestly, where do my Republican colleagues find these people? The majority party always nominates judges that have a particular bent, but the Trump administration's nominees, by and large, are not mainstream conservatives; they are rightwing ideologues, many of whom lack the experience, candor, and moderation that we would expect in a public servant, let alone a lifetime judge. For a few of these judges, the sole qualification is not their judicial experience, not their knowledge or erudition, but they are active members of the Federalist Society.

I know this is what my friend the majority leader cares about: a hard-right bench. He doesn't care about their qualifications; he doesn't care about moderation; he doesn't care about representing middle-class people when he nominates these judges. He is running a conveyor belt of political partisans, many with extremely thin legal resumes, onto the courts. He gets a talking point for his base, but the quality of these nominees degrades the Federal bench and cheapens the cause of justice in America.

I will vote no on both Mr. Matey and Ms. Rao, and I strongly urge my colleagues to do the same.

#### CHINA TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. President, finally, on China—the ongoing negotiations with China have been something I have been following closely. Over the past few weeks, there has been a drumbeat of reporting that the Trump administration is poised to accept a weak trade agreement with China.

Last week, the New York Times reported that China's draft new foreign investment law, meant to pacify the United States, would not include a complete end to the forced technology transfers. The most recent published draft made no mention of preventing national government regulators from demanding technology transfers. This morning, the Times reported that China has agreed to few, if any, major restrictions on how it manages its currency.

For years, China manipulated its currency to suit its purposes, typically devaluing the renminbi to prop up its manufacturers. I was the first, with Senator GRAHAM of South Carolina, back in the early 2000s, to point out China's currency manipulation, and it has continued unabated. In recent days the renminbi has been allowed to rise, but, curiously, it fell 10 percent against the dollar after President Trump's announcement on tariffs.

According to the Times, that move alone negated, at least temporarily, the impact of President Trump's latest

round of tariffs. The Chinese have done everything they can to gain advantage over us, to steal our jobs, steal our wealth. They have not played fairly, and now the President, with his tariffs, has them where we would want them.

They need to come to an agreement. But they are hanging tough, and the President's inclinations seem to be, from press reports, to back off so he can get any deal, so the stock market will go up temporarily. Make no mistake about it—in the long run, this will hurt America dramatically. The best paying jobs will be created in China, not here. The ability of the best American companies to compete worldwide will be dramatically curtailed.

It is abundantly clear that China is playing us. They want to give up as little as possible while getting out from under the sting of tariffs.

So I say to President Trump, whom I have praised on his China policies thus far—a lot tougher, a lot better than President Obama or President Bush. I say to President Trump: Do not get played. If you don't achieve what you set out to achieve, namely, the permanent reform of China's most abusive trade practices, then walk away, just as you walked away from North Korea when Chairman Kim would not make real commitments.

President Trump, you must walk away from China if President Xi refuses meaningful and enduring economic reforms. To do otherwise would be to squander maybe the last best chance of putting American workers and businesses on a level playing field with our No. 1 economic competitor.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SOCIALISM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in thinking about some of the debates swirling about here in Washington, DC, as to whether capitalism or socialism should be a preferred economic model, I recall a story that involves Boris Yeltsin, who went on to become the Russian President, who happened to be in Houston, TX, in 1989, visiting the Johnson Space Center—a very important part of NASA in Houston—when he decided to visit a grocery store in Clear Lake, TX. Though it sounds like it could be, this isn't the beginning of a Wes Anderson film.

It was nearly 20 years ago, in 1989, when the Soviet Union had not yet imploded and when the Berlin Wall was still standing. It would be 2 years before Yeltsin would be forced to take steps to begin to transform the Soviet

economy. As I said, he was in the Houston area, finishing a tour of the Johnson Space Center, when he made an unscheduled stop at a Randalls grocery store before he headed to Miami.

The Houston Chronicle reported at the time that Yeltsin gawked at the abundant produce, the selection of fresh fish, the checkout aisle, and especially the frozen pudding pops. He roamed the aisles, according to the story, stared at the frozen food section, and took advantage of the free samples of cheese. He actually talked to some of the customers there and asked questions about what they were buying and how much it cost them. He was stunned—absolutely stunned—as this was a far cry from the grocery stores in the Soviet Union. Yeltsin said: “Even the Politburo doesn’t have this kind of choice, not even Mr. Gorbachev.”

That day, Boris Yeltsin learned something that the overwhelming majority of people in our country already know—that socialism cannot provide the bounty, the prosperity, or the choices that capitalism can.

Leon Aron, who wrote Yeltsin’s biography, quoted one of his associates.

He said:

For a long time, on the plane to Miami, he sat motionless, his head in his hands. “What have they done to our poor people?” he said, after a long silence.

He told his fellow countrymen who were traveling with him that if their people were to see the conditions in American supermarkets, “there would be a revolution.”

Make no mistake about it. If the most radical Democrats in our country today get their way on the outlandish socialist policies they are pushing, the American people will be calling for a revolution.

The Green New Deal, Medicare for All, and economic security for those who are able-bodied yet who are unwilling to work are policies that are not going to raise up the most economically disadvantaged people in our country. They are going to pull everyone else down. Socialism promises not prosperity for all but what Winston Churchill called the equal sharing of miseries.

Though these self-proclaimed democratic socialists make big promises on how their policies will deliver fairness and equality for all Americans, that could not be further from the truth. The first thing these policies would do is to bankrupt our country. These unworkable economic policies will kill jobs and outlaw our most reliable, affordable energy sources. “Medicare for All” will turn into “Medicare for none” when the entire system crashes and when those who are unwilling to work will lose any incentive to even try. It would subsidize a nation of slackers.

This threat of the seductive embrace of socialism isn’t an exaggeration. Some of our friends across the aisle are actually critical of the equal opportunity, “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps,” hard-working economic

system that has made our country the envy of the world. They say: You didn’t create your success; the government did—what a bunch of hooley.

Over the weekend, one Democratic Member of the House who was speaking at South by Southwest in Austin, my hometown, referred to capitalism as “irredeemable” and tried to blame capitalism for every problem that exists in our society. I admit that we are not perfect, but capitalism isn’t the cause of every problem that exists in our society. Of all places to complain about the perils of capitalism, there is more than a little irony in her having chosen Texas—the most successful, free-enterprise economy in our Nation.

Instead of talking about this socialist, Big Government approach that we all know will fail, let’s look at how the Texas model has led my State to become an economic powerhouse and the envy of the Nation.

We keep taxes low, government spending restrained, and regulations at a rational minimum to give people and the small businesses that provide jobs the freedom to pursue their dreams and to prosper. I must say that it is obvious that it is working. The unemployment rate in Texas is 4 percent, which is among the lowest in the Nation. In Midland—in the Permian Basin, the heart of the energy boom in my State—unemployment is 2.1 percent. You are hard-pressed to find anybody to take the jobs that do exist because, essentially, everybody who is willing to work is fully employed. The biggest problem that job creators have is getting the workers they need. Yet there is a silver lining for the workers. This pushes wages higher as businesses compete for their labor.

Last week, the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis released international trade data that showed Texas, for the 17th year in a row, as the top State for exports. We make stuff, and we sell stuff. We grow things. We raise cattle and agricultural products, and we sell them. We are the top State for exports. In fact, our exports account for nearly 20 percent of the exports of the entire Nation. In 2018, that totaled more than \$315 billion of exports—more than double that of California’s, which is the second highest exporter. These earnings not only fuel the economy of our State, but they boost the entire Nation.

Our export dominance is only part of the reason Texas is thriving. Together, with lower taxes and less burdensome regulation, businesses and dream seekers are drawn to our State, which creates opportunities for everyone who is willing to work. Instead of growing government and increasing the tax burden, we allow businesses—small, medium, and large—to invest in their workforces, in our communities, and in our way of life.

In Texas, we believe that less government is more. We don’t try to centralize power in the statehouse. We give businesses, entrepreneurs, and

hard-working Texans of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and races the freedom by which they can create their own opportunities. We know that the more you tax, the more there are government controls and that the more you regulate, the greater the burden is on new ideas, investment, and opportunity.

The socialist policies being espoused by some members of the Democratic Party are not going to make our businesses and our economy stronger or more competitive. Indeed, history has shown that these are failed policies that will stifle innovation, discourage hard work, and make us look more like that 1980s Soviet grocery store.

Instead of our grocery stores being filled with a selection of beautiful produce, fresh meat, your favorite snack foods, they will be stocked with whatever the government says it wants you to have. Instead of making an appointment with your doctor when you are sick, you will wait for Lord knows how long to get an appointment with a government-run clinic and have few, if any, options. Instead of forcing ourselves out of bed in the morning to go to work, people who are able but who don’t want to work will stay in bed, knowing they can receive food and medical care that will be subsidized by your labor and your hard-earned tax dollars.

That is what these old—but now, somehow, dressed up as something new—failed ideas that have been proposed by our Democratic colleagues would do. Forget government “of the people, by the people, and for the people.” They want a country by the government, for the government—the people be damned.

In his autobiography, Yeltsin wrote: “When I saw those shelves crammed with hundreds, thousands of cans, cartons and goods of every possible sort, for the first time I felt quite frankly sick with despair for the Soviet people . . . that such a potentially super-rich country as ours has been brought to a state of such poverty.”

I pray that our country never sees that day when it is brought to ruin because of these 21st century socialists.

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.

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

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

S. 659

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss Senate bill, S. 659, the Biologic Patent Transparency Act. This bill would help encourage competition in the prescription drug marketplace and begin to put an end to the harmful patent strategies that block new drugs from coming to market. I am pleased to be sponsoring this legislation with my friend and colleague