the last Congress where Republicans controlled both the House and the Senate. The majority leader made a decision on floor time that it was not a priority to be considered in the 115th Congress.

Let me also say, in regard to Israel, it will benefit from the foreign ops appropriations bill to be passed, which is part of my unanimous consent request of an additional $200 million, but that is being held up because of this shutdown that has been caused by the President and has now been assisted by the Republicans in the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.J. RES. 1

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, the issue here is that, under the U.S. Constitution, the Senate really does need to do its job as a separate and coequal branch of government.

Last week, Senator CARDIN and I were right where we are today—here on the floor of the Senate, asking consent that the Senate immediately take up and vote on the two House bills that are on the Senate calendar as we speak and pass them and send them to the President to reopen the government. Last week, the majority leader blocked a vote on that. He blocked consent to take up those bills to reopen the government. Since last week, much has changed, and much has stayed the same. Here is what has changed.

The impact and harm of the shutdown is growing by the day. It is metastasizing around the country. Here are some headlines: ''The cascade of shutdown problems grows each week.'' Another headline: ''This is ridiculous: Small-business owners can't get loans as shutdown enters Day 20.'' That was day 20. We are now on day 25. ''FBI operations damaged as shutdown continues.'' ''FBI Agents Group Says Shutdown Affects Law Enforcement.'' They point out it is putting those on the job at greater risk because those are who are furloughed who support them can't give them the backup they need.

The FDA continues to not do its routine food inspections, and American veterans—and veterans make up 30 percent of the Federal workforce—are being disproportionately hurt by the shutdown.

We just heard it reported that the White House economists are doubling their estimate of the harm being done to our economy each week. It is already in the billions of dollars, and they are saying it looks as though it will be twice that much as this thing grows exponentially.

Services have been shut down for the American people. There were 800,000 Federal employees, as of last Friday, who received pay stubs like the one I am holding in my hand. This is one that was for an air traffic controller. Starting last Friday, 800,000 Federal employees did not get paychecks. Hundreds of thousands of them are on the job, working, and hundreds of thousands of them have been locked out of work. What they tell us is they just want to get back to work and do their jobs for the American people. If you look at this pay stub, at the net pay, it reads ''zero''—a big, fat goose egg. I can tell you these Federal employees are getting bills. They are getting their mortgage and rent bills. They don't say zero. They stay the same. So here you have 800,000 Federal employees who are unable to make do—missing mortgage payments, missing rent payments, missing their monthly installments on community college payments. On top of that, you have all of these small businesses that do work for the Federal Government that are beginning to go belly-up, and their employees are being told not to go in to work.

Since Senator CARDIN and I were here on the floor just last week, things have gotten much worse around the country, but here is what has stayed the same—that we have it in our power today to take up two House bills to open the government.

I was listening to the majority leader say: Well, you know, the President says he is not going to sign them.

Yet we are a separate branch of government. We are the article I branch of government. I am holding in my hand, right here, the bill that Senator CARDIN asked us to vote on today. I think the public needs to know what is in it because what is in it has already been supported on a bipartisan basis by this U.S. Senate.

It has provisions to open about five Departments of the U.S. Government that have nothing to do with Homeland Security. We passed that by a vote of 92 to 6. The President says that he doesn't want to sign it. He can veto it. With 92 to 6, it is a veto override—big time. Also contained in here are bills that passed the Senate Appropriations Committee by a vote of 30 to nothing and 30 to 1. That is what is in here—bipartisan bills.

So the question for this body, as a separate branch of government, is this: Why in the world are we not going to allow a vote to reopen the government on provisions that we have already agreed to on an overwhelming bipartisan basis—in fact, with a veto-proof margin?

The President can say that he is not going to sign it. That is his business. That is the executive branch. For goodness' sake, let's do our job here in the U.S. Senate, because every day that goes by with this growing harm, the Senate is more and more complicit, and we are an accomplice to the shutdown.

I know President Trump likes to talk about the fact that he has done things that no other President has done before in the history of the United States. This time, he is right. He has the longest shutdown of any President in the United States. He said he would be proud to shut down the government if he didn't get his way. I know that no Senator here—Republican or Democratic—is proud to shut down the government, certainly, for the longest period in history.

So let's do the right thing. Let's do our job. Let's not just say the President is the only one who can handle this. We can handle it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 6, H.J. Res. 1, making further continuing appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security. I further ask that the joint resolution be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, 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. CRUZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST ACT OF 2019—Motion to Proceed—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

RUSSIA SANCTIONS

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I rise today to express my support for S.J. Res. 2, a resolution of disapproval on lifting sanctions against the energy and aluminum companies En+, RUSAL, and EuroSibEnergo.

To start from the beginning, the United States of America has had very good reasons for sanctioning Oleg Deripaska. There are a number of significant national security risks at play. That is why repeatedly—not just in the current administration but in prior administrations—this individual has been denied a visa and why he has been personally sanctioned by the Treasury Department. As a matter of fact, the Treasury press release announcing the sanctions noted that Deripaska ''has been investigated for money laundering, has been accused of threatening the lives of business rivals, illegally wiretapping a government official, and taking part in extortion and racketeering.''

These are not the qualifications of someone who should get relief from the United States. I appreciate the fact that his company, RUSAL, has an enormous effect upon the aluminum markets. I appreciate the efforts the Treasury Department has tried to make in restricting his control. But any businessperson knows that if you take an ownership position from 70 percent to 45 percent, and even with the voting power of 35 percent, you still control a company, particularly when this company was founded and the management team was all created by Mr. Deripaska.

As we see continuing challenges coming out of the Russian Government, as we see continued efforts of Mr. Deripaska, being one of Vladimir Putin's closest allies and closest cronies, we would send absolutely the wrong signal if we in this body were to remove these sanctions.

I know my friend the Senator from Texas wants to speak in a moment. I simply want to refer to the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, Chairman BURR, who has frequently pointed out that Deripaska and his associates have come up a number of times in our Senate Intelligence Committee's Russia investigation. All those facts can't be laid out here right now, but I strongly urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution that will come up later today, that we don't send a signal that we are open for business with individuals who have the reputation of Oleg Deripaska, and that we maintain the sanctions on both him and his company, RUSAL.

I yield the floor to my friend the Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I would say to my friend from Virginia, we both serve on the Senate Intelligence Committee, and of course we have both been intimately involved in the investigation on Russia's activities up to and including the 2016 election.

I would like to point out the hypocrisy of our colleagues across the aisle who refused to take up any legislation whatsoever, such as S. 1, which is on the floor and which would take extraordinarily positive measures to protect our most important allies in the Middle East, including Israel and Jordan. They filibustered that bill and said: We are not going to take up any legislation until the government is back open—100 percent of it.

For the past 2 weeks, the minority leader has paralyzed the work of the Senate, saying they would block the Senate from considering any legislation unrelated to government funding. A number of our colleagues have said—for example, the junior Senator from Virginia said: ''The Senate should vote on nothing else until we vote to reopen the government. Period.'' Senator MERKLEY said: ''The Senate's schedule cannot be business as usual if we shut down a quarter of the government and just leave it shut down.'' Senator BOOKER said that Senate Democrats should block consideration of all unrelated bills.

All this comes as a result of the fact that the impetus is on the Democrats to come forward and negotiate a resolution of the shutdown in good faith. But to this point, the Speaker, Ms. PELOSI, and the minority leader, Senator SCHUMER, have simply refused to negotiate with the President.

I was with the President down in Texas, down along the border, on Thursday. He is willing to negotiate. We know we had broad bipartisan support for the Secure Fence Act, for example, in 2006, authorizing up to 800 miles of fencing on the southern border. The Democratic leader voted for that, and so did Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. Later, in 2014, all Democrats voted for $40 billion in border security, including barriers, fencing, and tactical infrastructure along the border. Now they are saying, as the Speaker has said, that somehow this is ''immoral.'' Well, this is hypocrisy at its worst.

NOMINATION OF WILLIAM BARR

Madam President, on another matter, today the Senate Judiciary Committee is holding a hearing on the nomination of William Barr to be Attorney General of the United States. Mr. Barr is uniquely qualified for this position in large part because he held the job before. As a matter of fact, 27 years ago, he was nominated by George Herbert Walker Bush to be Attorney General of the United States. He was confirmed by a unanimous voice vote in the Senate. It received little fanfare at the time because it wasn't particularly controversial—nothing like the contentious, partisan confirmation battles we have seen the last 2 years. There wasn't an attempt—at least so far, and I am keeping my fingers crossed—to assassinate Mr. Barr's character or try to decipher the notes in his high school yearbook like we saw in the Kavanaugh confirmation hearing. Instead, so far, and to the committee's credit, we have focused on his qualifications.

He is clearly smart, articulate, and able. He has a clear understanding of what the role of the Attorney General is and, more importantly, what it is not. An Attorney General should not be a politician. As a matter of fact, the Attorney General has the very difficult job of trying to balance his responsibilities as the chief law enforcement officer in the country enforcing the rule of law along with the fact that he is a political appointee of the President's. To me, that is one of the most difficult positions in the Cabinet to hold. But Mr. Barr has done it before, and I think he can do it again. He, of course, has great institutional knowledge about the Department of Justice.

In addition to Attorney General, he held the job of Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel and Deputy Attorney General before he was promoted to the top job.

Back in 1992, when Mr. Barr was confirmed, then-chairman of the Senate Judiciary, Joe Biden—President Obama's Vice President—said he would be a fine Attorney General.

This morning, I heard Mr. Barr discuss the qualities that undoubtedly led Senators on both sides of the aisle to support his confirmation. He spoke of the importance of acting with professionalism and integrity. As a matter of fact, he said that at 68 years old, he basically had decided to semi-retire, only to answer the call by the President to return to public service. He said: I am completely independent. I will make the hard decisions. I will make the right decisions. I will help restore the reputation of the Department of Justice and the FBI to an apolitical, a nonpolitical department, which is exactly what we need.

He wants to make sure that the character and reputation of the Department of Justice is enhanced and restored and then maintained, and then it could withstand even the most trying political times, including those in which we presently live.

He spoke of serving with independence, providing no promises or assurances to anyone or anything, other than to faithfully execute and administer the laws of the United States of America.

It is clear to me that he maintains the same views he held 27 years ago. I share his view that the Department of Justice should function outside of the highly politicalized times we live in. The fair and impartial administration of justice is the highest obligation and duty of this position.

I believe Mr. Barr is an outstanding nominee and, once confirmed, will be an outstanding Attorney General. I look forward to voting yes on his nomination.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Madam President, on the matter of the government shutdown—the 25 percent of the government that is presently not funded—last week, I traveled with the President, along with my colleague Senator CRUZ, to the Rio Grande Valley, to McAllen, TX.

After the President held his roundtable, where he saw heroin, methamphetamine, and weapons, and heard about the human trafficking, including sex slavery involving children and girls and women, after that presentation—after the President left, Senator CRUZ and I sat down with a number of our constituents—county judges, mayors, law enforcement officers, as well as the folks from Border Patrol and Customs and Border Protection. They understand the border better than anybody because they live there. They are deeply concerned about the posturing in Washington and how the political arguments seem to overcome logic and listening to the experts when it comes to border security. I was glad for them to confirm once again what they previously told me: that we need to strengthen those border communities

and keep our country safe, while keeping legitimate trade and commerce flowing across the border.

During our discussion, Scott Luck, Deputy Chief of the Border Patrol, talked about the positive impact of physical barriers and what positive impact they have at targeted locations along the southern border. He said:

The physical barrier has worked every place I have been. I have been in places where they did not have it; they put it in and it worked.

He mentioned Douglas, AZ, as one of those. He said:

There were more people coming into the country there than any other place in the country. I was there. It stopped. It stopped in California. It stopped in Yuma. It stopped in El Paso. It will stop wherever we put it.

Despite what our colleagues across the aisle are saying, physical barriers at the border can be effective when coupled with technology and personnel. It doesn't do you much good to have a physical barrier that somebody can go over or around or through and you don't have a Border Patrol agent there to detain them.

Actually, the physical border is the last place you are going to stop people trying to illegally enter into the United States, together with the narcotics and the human trafficking, but it is important to have those tools available to the Border Patrol, and that is what Deputy Chief Luck was stressing. He made the comments and observation that physical barriers alone are not the solution for the entire border—a holistic border security approach also requires technology and personnel.

When we were discussing the need for building physical barriers in strategic locations, my friend, Cameron County Judge Eddie Trevino, said something to Border Patrol Council President Brandon Judd that I think encapsulates the whole debate. He was talking to the Border Patrol and CBP and said:

If you tell us where you need it, I think we are all on board. If the politicians tell us where we need it, I think that is where we have our concern.

In other words, what Judge Trevino was saying was, let's listen to the experts, the people who know how to use the right combination of technology, tactical infrastructure, and personnel at each given place along the border because it makes no sense to try to treat this like a one-size-fits-all. Anybody who has ever been to the border between the United States and Mexico knows that the geography and topography vary tremendously from place to place.

Let's not try to dictate from Washington, DC, where every dollar goes and in so doing try to micromanage the Border Patrol and Customs and Border Protection and the Department of Homeland Security. Let's leave that to the experts—the men and women who work to protect and secure our border every day.

What we continue to hear and what I continue to advocate is for a layered approach—barriers where they are appropriate, technology, and personnel. That is exactly what we have been talking about. That is what we voted for in 2006 with the Secure Fence Act. The Democrats supported that, along with Republicans. That is what law enforcement officers tell us they need to operate optimally. Unfortunately, it is what Democrats are now refusing to negotiate and provide.

When looking at the border, it is not just physical security we need to be concerned about; we need to be concerned about our economic security as well.

During our discussions last week with local stakeholders, we also focused on the importance of facilitating legitimate trade and travel at our ports of entry. I was shocked by this figure, but the Customs and Border Protection Officer there, Mr. Higgerson, mentioned that the trade from Texas ports alone is valued at $300 billion per year. For the State of Texas and border communities in particular, these ports fuel our economy, and we need to provide additional funding to ensure efficient movement across the border.

One thing we all agree on is that most of the high-end drugs—the heroin, the methamphetamine, and the fentanyl—come through the ports of entry. So let's modernize those. Let's provide the technology that is needed in order to stop the flow of that poison into the United States. Legitimate trade and commerce is the lifeblood not only of our border region in my State, it is also the lifeblood of our Nation's economy. There are 5 million Americans whose jobs depend on binational trade with Mexico alone.

Along with a number of my colleagues from Texas, we are sending a bipartisan letter to President Trump that thanks him for his continued work to secure our southern border. His advocacy for that layered approach, as well as for port of entry improvements, is vital to my State. In that letter, we also address recent rumors to the effect that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' funds might be used for border security purposes, and I have urged the President not to take that route. While I will continue to advocate for additional border security, I believe those funds were intended to support disaster relief and should be used for that purpose. We need both border security and to lend a helping hand to those who are still recovering from natural disasters. We don't have to rob from Peter to pay Paul. We need to do both.

I am grateful for the support that has been shown from the President to the people of Texas both in the days following Hurricane Harvey's landfall and in the nearly year and a half since, and I hope he will continue to work with all of my Texas colleagues and me as we rebuild our communities impacted by Hurricane Harvey and as we work together to secure our border.

Mr. CARPER. Will the Senator yield for a moment?

Mr. CORNYN. I yield.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I thank the Senator for his comments. As Senator CORNYN lives down at the border and as his State is on the border, he is well familiar with that part of the world.

As it turns out, as the former chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, I have had a chance to visit the borders in the Senator's State and in other States along the Mexican border. Not that long ago, there were a whole lot of Mexicans coming into the United States, as he knows, and not so many Mexicans going back to Mexico. In the year 2000, when illegal immigration peaked, huge numbers of Mexicans came in—not so much today. As the Senator knows, they are coming from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

I am a huge advocate of border security. I think fencing makes sense in a lot of places. We have hundreds of miles of fencing, and in a lot of places, fences alongside roads make sense. We have very sophisticated surveillance equipment that can look from different platforms. We have drones, fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, stationary towers, and mobile towers that can look down 20, 25 miles into Mexico and pick up people who are coming up from the south. Motion detectors make sense, and tunnel detectors make sense. There is a lot of stuff that makes sense.

I am all for investing there. I think Democrats and Republicans can find common ground, and I think we have. The appropriations bills that we have passed will actually fund that kind of stuff. They are not just Democratic ideas, and they are not just Republican ideas. They are good ideas, and a lot of them come from our Border Patrol personnel, as the Senator knows.

We can do all of this and more on the southern border with Mexico, but if people in Honduras, in Guatemala, and in El Salvador continue to live lives of misery because we are complicit in our addiction to drugs, they are going to still want to come up here. So we need to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time and also provide, through Alliance for Prosperity, which is, really, a modern-day planned Colombia, a little bit of hope and opportunity so they will feel less compelled to come to this country to have a better life.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, if I could respond to my friend, the Senator from Delaware, he speaks correctly—accurately—about some of the symptoms and, I think, some of the cures that we need to put in place to deal with this extraordinarily complex problem. We would love to continue to work with him on coming up with something. We may not want to call it ''Plan Mexico'' but ''Plan Americas'' because what we really have to deal with is a regional challenge.

He is exactly right in that most of the illegal immigration now is coming from Central America. Gaps in our immigration and human trafficking laws encourage unaccompanied children and family units to come up to the border because they can, essentially, get placed in the United States while they wait for their asylum claims to be determined by a court, and there is a backlog of 700,000 or 800,000 asylum claims. In other words, the criminal organizations that move people for money into the United States have cracked the code and have figured out how to be successful in placing people in the United States.

Unfortunately, it also helps to enrich those organizations that move the poison from south of the border into the United States. They contributed to the deaths of some 70,000 Americans last year alone. I am thinking particularly about the fentanyl, along with the heroin, going from China to Mexico and up across the border. Of that consumed in the United States, 90 percent of it comes from Mexico. I agree that it is the demand here in the United States that enriches the cartels, but they are, more or less, commodity agnostic. In other words, they will do anything that makes them money, these criminal organizations.

We need to have people sit down and work together, and I pledge to work with my colleague to try to do that. Yet we can't get a solution as long as the Speaker of the House calls physical infrastructure or barriers immoral. This is kind of a nonstarter to a conversation that we need to have to try to negotiate our way out of this shutdown.

I welcome working with my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I extend my thoughts in regard to the comments made by the senior Senator from Texas in the need for border security. I appreciate his comments, and I, certainly, agree with them.

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY 2018 FCS TITLE VICTORY

Madam President, I rise to take a minute to recognize the incredible achievements of the North Dakota State University Bison football team today.

On January 5, it earned its record seventh national championship title. For 7 out of the last 8 years, it has been the national champion.

In a hard-fought victory, NDSU defeated the Eastern Washington University Eagles by a score of 38 to 24 in Frisco, TX. With that win, the Bison have now won an unprecedented, as I say, seventh NCAA Division I football championship series championship, setting a record for the most FCS titles of all time. The Bison now have a total of 15 NCAA championship titles. In addition, the team completed the 2018 football season with a perfect record of 15 wins and zero losses, displaying just an extraordinary resilience and skill.

This achievement puts the 2018 Bison in, truly, elite company as it has become only the fifth team to cap off an undefeated season with a national championship title. The 2018 team joins the 2013 NDSU team in accomplishing this impressive feat.

Further, NDSU is one of only five FCS teams to have ever won back-to-back titles. NDSU is the deserved holder of the longest title winning streak in FCS history, with its obtaining five titles in a row from 2011 to 2015. It has been victorious in every FCS title game in which it has played.

After the title game, NDSU quarterback Easton Stick became NDSU's record holder for the most passing yards, having a total of 8,693 passing yards in his college career. He also became the NCAA record holder for the most all-time FCS wins by a quarterback, having a total of 49 career wins.

I also recognize the impressive achievement of NDSU's head coach, Chris Klieman. During his 5 years as head coach, he led the Bison to an outstanding record of 69 wins and only six losses, winning four national championships in the process. Coach Klieman's achievement of four titles in 5 years equals the NCAA's FCS record for obtaining the most titles as a head coach. Coach Klieman and his entire staff instilled character and perseverance in the members of the NDSU Bison football team.

While I know it is bittersweet, I am sure that Bison Nation will join me in wishing Coach Klieman the best of luck in his continued career as the new head coach of the Kansas State University Wildcats next season. We welcome Matt Entz as the new head coach, who was formerly the defensive coordinator. He has, certainly, been part of this great dynasty.

Finally, I recognize all of Bison Nation for its vibrant and unwavering support of the team during another successful season.

As they have grown accustomed to doing, the welcoming residents of Frisco, TX, saw a mass of Bison fans flock to their town for the FCS championship game. They were warm and wonderful in terms of their hospitality. Approximately 20,000 fans traveled from North Dakota and other areas to support our great team. They turned the stadium into a sea of green and yellow as they passionately cheered on our beloved Bison.

The Bison victory was not only a victory for the NDSU football team but for our State as the team brought yet another trophy back home to North Dakota. I congratulate the team, the coaches, and our great, great fans on another national championship.

Go, Bison.

Again, I am so proud of our great team, and I appreciate the opportunity to take this time to recognize its achievements.

I am pleased to yield the floor to my fellow Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, I thank my friend and colleague, Senator HOEVEN.

Before I get into my prepared comments, let me first associate myself with his words and his eloquent appreciation and congratulations to the folks at NDSU and to the football team. Let me just say that I don't care what President Trump says—in Bison Nation, we never get tired of winning.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Madam President, for the first time, I rise as a Member of this prestigious body, as a U.S. Senator, to talk about a critical issue that faces our Nation, which is every citizen's right to life.

It is no coincidence that I rise today, the week of March for Life. This coming Friday is the 46th annual March for Life, during which citizens from across the country and hundreds from North Dakota, especially students from places like Shanley High School and the University of Mary and other institutions around our State, will unite to fight against the largest, deadliest, and most silent war this world has ever known. This, my colleagues, is the war against the unborn.

During my time in the House of Representatives in the last 6 years and throughout my campaign for the Senate last year, I promised the people of North Dakota that I would fight for life at all stages. I unite, today, with those who will march this Friday, who will walk with heavy and hopeful hearts and who will pray for the 60 million discarded children who have been denied their very first breaths.

Colleagues, I stand here to call to mind a child's right to life and protection within the womb of his or her mother. Since Roe v. Wade, which the Supreme Court decided in 1973, over 60 million children have been denied their right to life. There have been 60 million children who have been refused love, comfort, a hug, care, opportunity, and breath. They were torn from experiencing the beauty of the world that we are so fortunate to see. They were torn from family and unknown friends.

To deny 60 million innocent children the right to these things is the highest injustice to our people and the highest offense to our God. I speak on behalf of the citizens of North Dakota and of all citizens who will gather this week to say that it is absolutely unacceptable that within this country, life is treated as a commodity rather than a gift from an omnipotent Creator.

Some of my pro-choice colleagues and friends may say that in taking this stance, I am standing against women's rights—nothing could be further from the truth—and that this is an issue of a woman's right. It is an issue for the millions of women who have been denied the right to life. I fully support women's rights. I just began supporting them 9 months earlier than some of my colleagues on the other side of this important issue.

To my colleagues who are pro-life who are supportive of this fight, I remind them that abortion is a great injustice, but it is particularly common in situations and communities that

have suffered other injustices. If we are going to be pro-life, I think we must be pro all of life and address the factors that cause women to decide to end the life of their unborn children.

The United States has seen a great evil throughout its history. We have seen and experienced slavery, discrimination, and human trafficking. All of these things are illegal, and these things are issues on which we as a country take a moral stance. However, abortion is legal. Sixty million lives have been ended legally in our country.

Here, in Washington, DC, nearly 40 percent of pregnancies end in abortion. In New York City, an African-American child is more likely to be aborted than born. As one Nation under God, we, as a country, should know better. We must know better, and I believe we do know better. No government should limit the lives of its youngest and most innocent citizens.

As a Senator, I give you my promise to fight for life, and I ask my colleagues to join me. This is my promise to the people of North Dakota who have chosen me as their Senator and my promise to my fellow citizens, especially those who have never had the chance to speak with their voices.

Within my first few weeks here, I have signed onto several pro-life priorities. I have signed a letter asking President Trump to veto any legislation that undermines the right to life. Additionally, I cosponsored the Protect Funding for Women's Healthcare Act, a bill that would end Federal funding for Planned Parenthood and shift that money to women's health services.

In North Dakota, we don't have any Planned Parenthood clinics, but we have 16 community health centers and over 20 federally qualified health centers. Shifting this money toward these health centers would help the women in my State to receive better and more accessible healthcare. Let me say that again. Shifting funding away from the abortion clinics and toward these community health centers would provide more funds to the health centers that care for women across the State of North Dakota.

Additionally, I have cosponsored the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act and the Title X Prohibition Act, two bills to protect the taxpayer from funding the abortion industry.

I have cosponsored the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, which would guarantee that a child who survives an abortion will receive the same medical care as a premature child of the same age, and the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act, which protects the rights of parents to be notified if their child is going to have an abortion.

Finally, I have cosponsored the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which would ban abortion after 20 weeks.

My fellow Senators, I stand here because of the citizens of North Dakota and of the United States who desire to see these bills and many other important pro-life bills pass and signed into law. They want an end to this injustice.

I recognize my responsibility to fight for the youngest, most vulnerable members of our society and our future generations. Today, I stand with my constituents and with the entire population of the United States, especially the men and women who have been robbed of their right to life. I urge my fellow Senators to take a stand on this pressing issue as well. With our united efforts, the killing of our unborn citizens will continue to diminish.

Our work is fruitful. In every legislative session we see more and more laws passed at the State level to protect unborn life. From 2008 to 2014, the abortion rate in the United States dropped by 25 percent. Each year, we are making great strides and giving a voice to the voiceless.

This fight is not a political fight but a fight for humanity itself. It is a war against all of us and against all of our children, no matter our ideologies. We have to learn to prioritize the issues in our own parties and work across the aisle. We have to look at each other with open minds and open hearts to solve this crisis that has plagued our country. We must do better at reaching out and uniting with one another in defense of one of the most fundamental rights—the right to life.

The truth is this: We must uphold this right because ''we hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed''—at the time of creation—''by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.'' Without the first—that is the right to life—we can have neither liberty nor the pursuit of happiness. We have been denying the first for far too long. So let's join together now to give the future of our country, our next generations, the right to life.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I would like to commend my fellow Senator from North Dakota on his heartfelt comments today and express my support and agreement with him and with those comments.

He mentioned a number of pieces of legislation that he is cosponsoring. I am pleased to see that. I, again, have signed onto legislation to support life in this Congress, as I have in previous Congresses.

We will have the March for Life at the end of this week. I look forward to that. Last year, my wife and her sister actually walked in the March for Life. I have always made a practice of greeting our participants in the March for Life from North Dakota, and I certainly look forward to seeing them again here this year.

With that, I thank you for this time to make these comments, and, again, to extend a warm welcome to my colleague from North Dakota. I have worked with him for many years, and I very much look forward to working with him now here in the Senate.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, in the floor speech that I gave last week on the ''Common Sense for Common Defense,'' I highlighted the fact that our competitors have increased their own military spending and focused on modernization and how we are going to have to do the same.

When I talk about competitors, I am talking about China and Russia. I think this President did a good job of outlining our national defense system and putting it into different categories, because when you talk about China and Russia—not many people are aware of this—China and Russia have increased all during the years that we have decreased. They have actually caught up, and, in some cases, have actually passed us.

Our men and women in uniform are outstanding representations of what is right in America. Their drive and determination is the reason the United States of America has the honor of being the leader of the free world. That honor, however, is the product of hard work, not birthright. We earned it.

But over the last 10 years, our military supremacy has slowly degraded. General Dunford, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has acknowledged that our qualitative and quantitative advantage has eroded. Toward the end of the Obama administration, with many of our systems, like our brigade combat teams, only 35 percent of them could be deployed because of what happened to the defense budget and our maintenance capabilities.

The same thing happened to our Army aviation brigades. The same thing happened to our F18s. It is the Marines that fly the F18s, and we only had 30 percent of those that could be deployed toward the end of the Obama administration.

This is something that people are not aware of. This is very significant. We need to pay attention to this, if there is ever any question. Constant dollar defense spending dropped $200 billion from 2010 to 2015. That was in the last 5 years of the Obama administration.

In 2010, the budget was $794 billion, and then 5 years later, it dropped down to $586 billion. That is unprecedented. Even after the Korean war, it didn't drop that much, but, nonetheless, it did. It has never happened before, and we have to make up for it.

That is exactly what we are doing. Our fiscal year 2018 budget brought it back up to $700 billion. Our 2019 budget brought it back up to $716 billion, and we anticipate—and it has been mentioned several times—that in our 2020 budget it is going to be around $750 billion.

We have a slide here that puts it in a little different perspective. As you can see from the slide, at the end of the Cold War, we had about the same number of fighter aircraft as our adversaries at that time—that was Russia and China. It is very clear on this. The orange is the third generation fighters, and the blue is the fourth generation fighters. It shows that now we are getting into the fifth generation. Actually, at that time, we were way ahead of them. This is a thing of the past now.

While we had the same amount, we were still superior because our aircraft were the newest and the most capable in the world. Our fighter aircraft—in fact, most of our military equipment—was better, more modern, and more effective than the Russians or the Chinese had. Now that has changed. During this most recent period of time, we went through about 10 years of not increasing the quality, and the numbers stayed the same. So we got to the point where many of the things the Chinese and Russians had were better than what we had.

As demonstrated on the chart, our fighter force was reduced nearly 50 percent in total numbers over the last 25 years, and we failed to modernize. Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson, said our Air Force is too small to do what the Nation asks. Not only is it too small, but the average age of our aircraft is now 28 years old. How many of us in here drive a car that is 28 years old?

In 1990, we brought over 500 aircraft a year—1990, 500 aircraft a year—but recently, that number has been reduced to 50 a year.

When I go out and talk to people who are in my State of Oklahoma and anywhere around the country, there is the assumption that somehow we have the very best of everything. That used to be the case. That became the case after World War II, but then during the last 10 years is when things dropped down. We are going to have to do better because, at this rate, it would take us over 40 years to modernize a fleet that is already too old and too small. Meanwhile, our adversaries have transformed their aircraft fleets with modernization programs and have increased their overall size and capabilities. In fact, the Chinese and Russian air forces have recapitalized and are now, or soon will be, fielding aircraft with capability matching our own but at a much faster rate. If they get to the point where we are in terms of modernization, they are already way ahead of us in terms of numbers. According to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Goldfein, if we take no action, both the Russian and Chinese forces will be bigger and more technologically advanced than us. We know this is true.

Artillery is measured in terms of rapid fire and range, and that is where we are falling behind them.

The problem is not just the Air Force. The Army, likewise, has gotten smaller and less capable in the same decade. Specifically, in terms of long-range fires—defined as tubed artillery and tactical missiles—you can see the same trend. This is our artillery system. There are three different types of artillery, but you can see now that as time has gone by, we have actually fallen behind. If you look at us over here, in 2018, our total is 2,886, as opposed to 22,000 for the Russians and 10,000 for the Chinese. The numbers are there, and we know that is happening, and we know it is taking place as we speak.

In the last 25 years, we have kind of rested on that advantage that things were better than they had. While our adversaries have also reduced the amount of long-range fires over the same period of time, they have significantly modernized their force. We are now in a situation where both of these countries—that is, Russia and China—not only have more artillery than us, but theirs is better than ours.

GEN Mark Milley, the Army Chief of Staff said: ''In terms of artillery, the Army is outgunned and outranged by our adversaries.'' Unfortunately, people don't know this, and people are going to have to know this to know what happened to us in the last decade.

One can look at the devastating results from Russia's action against the Ukrainian army. We all remember that in 2014 they made it possible through the modernization of their artillery systems. The results were there. They were. They inflicted damage.

Recognizing the problem is normally the first step in developing an acceptable solution. The fiscal year 2018 and fiscal year 2019 budgets got us back in the right direction, but in fiscal year 2018 we have gone up to $700 billion for a defense budget and in fiscal year 2019 to $716 billion. So we are on the road to recovery. We recognize, the people in this body know, what has happened to our abilities and our superiority in these areas that is no longer there.

This is kind of interesting. We had a hearing on this the other day. Of all the presentations I have heard, the assessment and recommendations of the National Defense Strategy Commission—that is what this book is right here—was put together a few years ago. They have actually made these assessments and come to the conclusion that if we want to do something—what they have come up with in this is a formula as to what it is going to take right now and for the foreseeable future. They say all of our defense budgets coming up are going to have to be an increase of somewhere between 3 percent and 5 percent above inflation. Of course, that is exactly what these 3 years will do, so we are making headway in that respect.

This growth projection is also one our Secretary of Defense as well as our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff say is going to be necessary for us to get back up even with and competitive with both Russia and China.

I can remember not long ago being in the South China Sea and watching China actually building islands. It is not legal, but they do it anyway. If you look at what is on these seven islands out there, it is as if they are preparing for World War III. Our allies in the South China Sea are very much concerned about this as to whose side they are going to be on if this happens.

We don't want to shortchange our national security. We fully implement the national defense strategy, as found in this book, in a timely manner by avoiding continuing resolutions and eliminating the threat of sequestration.

A continuing resolution is something where, if we don't get along in this body, we don't pass our appropriations bills as we are supposed to pass, then we end up passing a continuing resolution that continues what we have done in the previous year. We can't continue to do that.

The already widening gap with Russia and China will only grow faster if we don't change our behavior. That is exactly what we plan to do. We need to fix this if we are going to do it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 2

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be recognized to speak for up to 7 minutes each: Senator ISAKSON, Senator MENENDEZ, and Senator CRAPO; and finally, following the use or yielding back of that time, Senator SCHUMER be recognized to make a motion to proceed to S.J. Res. 2, and that following his remarks, Senator MCCONNELL be recognized to make a motion to table the motion to proceed following his remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DISAPPROVING THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL TO TAKE AN ACTION RELATING TO THE APPLICATION OF CERTAIN SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION—Motion to Proceed

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, I rise to speak against the resolution to disapprove of the administration's agreement to delist Rusal, the Russian aluminum giant from the SDN list.

I will vote no today because this was a hard-fought negotiation, resulting in one of the strongest agreements ever associated with a sanctions delisting, which supports longstanding U.S. sanctions policy and foreign policy toward Russia.

This agreement does nothing to change the sealed fate of Deripaska, the direct target of the sanctions. He remains sanctioned. His current assets remain blocked. The primary and secondary sanctions imposed against him dash any hope of future deals or income, either by operation of his divestiture obligations or future dividends based on his remaining shareholder interests in Rusal. His ability to transfer his shares, use his shares as collateral, or even receive cash from dividends are all effectively frozen.

The sanctions that put Deripaska on the SDN list and froze his investments in Rusal and En+ and ESE, and make him personally radioactive to future transactions with just about anyone, forced these companies to disentangle themselves from Deripaska's control and influence or to face financial devastation.

In fact, the Treasury agreement appropriately reflects how U.S. sanctions policy uses smart sanctions to change the behavior of those sanctioned to build pressure behind the ultimate goals of U.S. policy toward Putin's Russia.

The agreement itself is more akin to a deferred prosecution agreement, in that a failure in its terms can result in an immediate relisting to the SDN list, while it ensures that En+, Rusal, and ESE undertake significant restructuring and corporate governance changes to reverse the circumstances that led to their designation in the first place. These actions include reducing Deripaska's direct and indirect shareholding stakes; overhauling the composition of the relevant boards of directors that control the companies' operations and strategic direction; restricting the steps that can be taken relating to their governance; and agreeing to broad and unprecedented transparency that requires ongoing auditing, certification, and reporting requirements.

Part of keeping a smart sanctions program smart is to ensure that the world understands the U.S. sanctions architecture is fair and respects America's extraterritorial sanctions reach, and providing an off-ramp from the SDN list for those listed who can prove deserving is not only good sanctions policy but the law because if Treasury fails in its ability to render fair judgments, erstwhile petitioners for removal will simply resort to either the U.S. courts or worse, simply evasion.

In the circumstances of this case, keeping Rusal on the sanctions list could lead to a Putin nationalization of the Russian aluminum industry, which would not only work to enrich Deripaska but all but guarantee the unfettered Kremlin influence in a global concern that would also invite a set of unintended consequences involving wider economic and security costs for our Nation and for our economic allies.

So today I am voting against Senator SCHUMER's resolution to disapprove of the administration's agreement to delist Rusal, the Russian aluminum giant, from the SDN list because Treasury spent the last 8 months getting it right and winning a hard-fought divestiture agreement. It is among the most robust and verifiable delisting determinations ever devised by Treasury, worthy of Senate approval and not a gift to the Kremlin.

Thank you.

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

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I come to the floor today in support of S.J. Res. 2, expressing disapproval of the Trump administration's desire to remove sanctions from companies owned by Oleg Deripaska. In accordance with specific provisions in a law I helped write, Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act, the Senate has until Thursday to block this delisting; hence the urgency of this vote. If we wait, then under the law, we lose this important opportunity.

Mr. Deripaska is a notorious Kremlin crony who may have played a role in the Russian Government's attacks during the 2016 Presidential election cycle. At this point, we simply do not know enough about his potential involvement in the cyber attacks and malign influence campaigns carried out by the Kremlin on the American people, and we will not find out until we see the full report of Robert Mueller's completed investigation. Until then, I am not comfortable with any measure that diminishes sanctions pressure on a powerful Russian oligarch with deep ties to Vladimir Putin, including this recent deal agreed to by the Treasury Department.

I am a strong believer in the power of sanctions to incentivize behavioral change in support of our foreign policy priorities. I also deeply respect the skill, expertise, and dedication of the career officials at the Treasury Department who administer many of our sanctions against Russia.

Nonetheless, the deal before us is seriously flawed. First, we must be clear that it is not the American people but, rather, Oleg Deripaska who would benefit handsomely from this arrangement. After his partial divestment in En+, which is the holding company for aluminum giant RUSAL, the Treasury Department would allow Deripaska to use a portion of his shares to pay a very sizable debt to a Russian bank called VTB. So with the deal, Deripaska's overall balance sheet significantly improves. This massive benefit to Deripaska alone is enough to question the merits of this deal.

Moreover, VTB, the Russian bank, is already on a U.S. sectoral sanctions list, related to the 2014 Russian invasion of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. By allowing VTB, the Russian bank, to participate in this agreement, the Treasury Department is undermining our overall sanctions regime. In effect, the administration is signaling to every entity and individual that has had U.S. sanctions imposed in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine that they can continue to undermine a sovereign nation without consequence.

Finally, this deal allows Deripaska to maintain a 44.9-percent ownership of En+. While this falls below the Treasury Department's automatic 50 percent threshold for ownership, it is still too high. Yes, perhaps Deripaska has given up control in a legal sense, a technical sense, but make no mistake—he will be the largest shareholder in En+. He will have the ability to appoint one-third of its board members, and he will continue to leverage his network of cronies to influence the conduct of this company. He also has family members who independently will have shares. At the end of the day, he will direct this company's future. I find that unacceptable. We should all find it unacceptable.

No one can deny that we debate this resolution in an increasingly dire context. On top of the indictments and pleas piling up in relation to the Trump campaign's interactions with Russian officials or efforts to cover up those interactions, court filings recently revealed that former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort shared polling data with Konstantin Kilimnik during the 2016 Presidential election cycle.

For years, we have known that Mr. Kilimnik has served as a key go-between for Manafort and Oleg Deripaska. He, too, has suspected ties to Russian intelligence.

These latest revelations remind us again that we have more questions than answers about the relationships between the President's associates and the Kremlin.

If that news was not disturbing enough, this past weekend, the New York Times reported that the FBI opened a counterintelligence investigation into the President, in part after he fired the FBI Director because of ''this Russia thing.'' Let that sink in. Senior