

the record on a truly astonishing policy proposal—a truly astonishing policy proposal.

After months of enthusiastic declarations of support, after tripping over one another to prove their devotion to the far-left core of the new Democratic Party, the vast majority of our colleagues across the aisle were unable to vote against even an obviously ludicrous proposal to tank the U.S. economy and to leave American workers out in the cold.

You might think that after their radical proposal met with such an inglorious end, my colleagues might choose to pause and take stock. Well, think again. Just yesterday, our Democratic colleagues introduced a Senate version of Speaker PELOSI's sweeping legislation to rewrite the rules of American politics to benefit one side—new Washington rules for how citizens can exercise political speech, new Washington systems to funnel taxpayer dollars into the pockets of political campaigns, and an unprecedented Washington intrusion into State and local election law all across our country.

As I have argued before, it conveniently turns out that the vast majority of their proposed changes seem tailored to help more Democrats get elected and stay elected; hence my name for this legislation: the Democratic politician protection act.

Apparently, our friends are under the impression that if Democrats aren't winning as many elections as they would like, then the entire process by which we elect our representatives must certainly be broken. If Democrats don't like an outcome, then the rules themselves need to be tossed aside. This seems to be emerging as a kind of pattern on the other side of the aisle.

When our Constitution, our institutions, or the American people disappoint our Democratic colleagues, instead of taking the hint and perhaps making their own positions more mainstream, they instead look to change the rules.

After they failed to defeat the nomination of Justice Kavanaugh last year, liberal leaders decided the underlying structure of the American judiciary needed to be radically overhauled to suit their whims.

They set out to rehabilitate the absurd notion of "court-packing"—a term that since the 1930s has been synonymous in American history with the idea of an unprincipled power grab.

The idea that Democrats sometimes lose Presidential elections and that Republican Presidents sometimes subsequently appoint Supreme Court Justices is apparently no longer tolerated. Instead of filling the existing vacancies, why shouldn't the next Democratic President just make up a bunch of new ones—create a bunch of new ones—so the far left can stack the Court? Forget about nine Justices. Forget about judges who don't wear red robes or blue robes but black robes. Forget about interpreting and applying

our laws and Constitution the way they are written instead of how partisans might wish they were written. The far left wants to forget about all of that because Democrats would rather rewrite the rules.

So out of the ash heap of history came this talk of "court-packing"—a notion that would threaten the rule of law and our American judicial system as we have long understood it. It is a truly radical proposal that has been dead and buried by bipartisan consensus for almost a century. But now President Obama's Attorney General, Eric Holder, says: "We should be talking even about expanding the number of people who serve on the Supreme Court, if there is a Democratic president." One of our Senate colleagues, who is currently running for President, called this an "interesting idea that I would have to think more about." The New York Times reported that at a recent campaign event, another Democratic candidate said that he is open to the idea after being asked about it by a member of a new far-left group that is literally named—this is their name; listen to this—"Pack the Courts."

I hope the lion's share of our Democratic colleagues will speak out forcefully against exhuming this thoroughly discredited idea. I hope my colleagues will have the courage to look these far-left agitators in the eye and tell them that some traditions and some institutions are more important than partisan point-scoring. But given that we have already seen Democrats rush headlong to embrace schemes like the Democratic politician protection act, Medicare for None, and the so-called Green New Deal, I have to say, at this point, that kind of courageous statement would come as a pleasant surprise.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 297

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the title of the bill for the second time.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 297) to extend the Federal recognition to the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019—MOTION TO PROCEED— Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 268, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 15, H.R. 268, a bill making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

The question is on the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 268) making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell (for Shelby) Amendment No. 5, of a perfecting nature.

Schumer Amendment No. 6, of a perfecting nature.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw Amendment Nos. 5 and 6.

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

The amendments were withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

AMENDMENT NO. 201

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I call up my amendment No. 201.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alabama [Mr. SHELBY] proposes an amendment numbered 201.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading be dispensed with.

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

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the Senate amendment No. 201 to H.R. 268, making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal

year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Roy Blunt, Richard C. Shelby, Johnny Isakson, Pat Roberts, Steve Daines, Mike Rounds, David Perdue, Rick Scott, Lamar Alexander, John Barrasso, John Hoeven, John Thune, John Boozman, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cotton, Rob Portman.

AMENDMENT NO. 213 TO AMENDMENT NO. 201

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have an amendment at the desk and ask the clerk to report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 213 to amendment No. 201.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

“This act shall be effective 1 day after enactment.”

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 214 TO AMENDMENT NO. 213

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 214 to amendment No. 213.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike “1 day” and insert “2 days”

AMENDMENT NO. 215

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have an amendment to the text of the underlying bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 215 to language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 201.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

“This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment.”

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 216 TO AMENDMENT NO. 215

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 216 to amendment No. 215.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike “3 days” and insert “4 days”

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MUELLER REPORT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I thought it was exceptionally good news on Sunday that Special Counsel Robert Mueller did not implicate our President in a criminal conspiracy with Russia to attack our elections. The alternative, of course, would have been nothing short of catastrophic for our Republic.

I also want to express my appreciation to Mr. Mueller and his team for their service to our country for determining the facts of what happened during what was an unprecedented attack on our democracy. This investigation endured relentless attacks during its 22-month existence. In fact, the investigation by Mr. Mueller was attacked 1,100 times by President Trump alone during this time according to the New York Times.

These attacks may have tried to politicize and undermine Mr. Mueller's investigation, but they didn't deter his course. Anybody that knows Robert Mueller would know that he would not be intimidated by anybody, Republican or Democrat. In fact, far from being deterred, Mr. Mueller obtained 37 indictments, including against numerous close aides of the President. That marks this special counsel's investigation as one of the most productive and consequential in our history. The American people and their representatives in Congress now deserve to see the special counsel's work.

The oversight authority of this body is deeply rooted in the Constitution. We would be derelict in our duties if we did not do everything within our power to obtain a full report and its underlying evidence. We already know from the 37 indictments, and from the testimony received by the Judiciary Committee, that this investigation has uncovered serious misconduct. We know the Trump campaign was informed that Russia had stolen Democratic emails months before anybody else. We know that a senior member of the cam-

paign enthusiastically accepted an offer from the Russian Government to provide “incriminating” information on Hillary Clinton, and, afterward, he and President Trump blatantly misrepresented that meeting. We know from Roger Stone's indictment that the President was told about a coming release of stolen emails, and the campaign asked Stone to keep them apprised of developments with future releases. And we know that during all of this, the President was hiding his pursuit of a lucrative business deal in Moscow.

Now, these activities may not amount to a crime, but they certainly amount to serious misconduct that reached the highest levels of the campaign and this administration, and they certainly raise questions about the President's baffling relationship with Russia and Vladimir Putin. This relationship has been baffling to both Republicans and Democrats.

That doesn't even touch on obstruction of justice. Attorney General Barr's letter revealed that there is still non-public evidence of the President's attempts to interfere with this investigation. The special counsel did not conclude whether the President's obsessive interference in this investigation qualifies as obstruction. Yet he stated that his report does not exonerate the President—does not exonerate the President. That is an extraordinary statement.

Apparently, Attorney General Barr believes there is insufficient evidence to charge obstruction, but Mr. BARR also believes that it is not obstruction for a President to interfere with an investigation by exercising his Article II powers. Regardless, he believes that the only mechanism for holding a sitting President accountable is through Congress.

Let's accept all of that. I don't necessarily accept all of it, but let's assume he is accurate in that. Then I would hope he would agree that it is the judgment of Congress and of the American people that is of the utmost importance in this moment. There is simply no justification for hiding even a portion of the Mueller report. The President has claimed it totally exonerates him.

With respect to the collusion investigation, grand jury secrecy can be waived by the courts when there is a particular need that outweighs the interest in secrecy. With respect to the obstruction investigation, executive privilege cannot be used to hide evidence of a potential crime. In fact, if you want to hide evidence of a potential crime under executive privilege, all they have to do is look at a Supreme Court case where that was tried called *United States v. Richard Nixon*. Any claim would likely not survive a challenge under *United States v. Nixon*. It is hard to imagine that such hypothetical claims were not waived when administration witnesses talked to the special counsel's office.

Transparency is really the touchstone of our democracy. Any attempt to hide swaths of the Mueller report from public scrutiny is only going to fuel suspicions that President Trump's Justice Department, which represents not President Trump but all the United States, is instead playing the role of President Trump's defense team. If no person, however powerful, is truly above the law, then no person should be permitted to conceal the results of such a critical national security investigation from public view.

I hope that in the days and weeks ahead, the Senate has something to say about that. Everyone, Republican and Democrat alike, has a stake in knowing what is in that report and seeing the whole report. After months and months of work and all the investigations, all the indictments, and all the grand jury hearings, to say we have to rely on just a four-page summary is not enough. I don't accept that. I would hope that no Senator, Republican or Democrat, would accept it.

I note that the House of Representatives voted unanimously—every Republican and every Democrat—to have the report released. I note that when we tried to have a similar resolution here, it was blocked by the Republican leader. I think the Republican leader should turn to all of us and say: Let the American people know the facts.

H.R. 268

Madam President, I do not see anybody else seeking recognition. I would note, on another matter, the disaster supplemental appropriations legislation has been filed, and there will be discussions on that. The House of Representatives has a bill which does a great deal for the disaster relief for all Americans who were hurt by the recent disasters in our country. I proposed some modification of it, which would include all Americans and believe the House would have accepted it.

I am concerned now that we have before us a bill that excludes a large number of Americans, those in Puerto Rico, people who served nobly in our military and helped this country and other Americans. They should not be excluded for whatever reason. So we will have a debate on that next week.

I hope very soon, for the American people, that we can have an honest and clear resolution that will bring relief to those who suffered from disasters such as fires, hurricanes, and floods throughout our country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, when Republicans took office after the 2016

Presidential election, we had one goal in mind: make life better for American families. We knew a big part of that was getting our economy going again.

After years of sluggish economic growth, family budgets were stretched thin. Getting ahead had frequently been replaced by getting by. Wages were stagnant and jobs and opportunities were often few and far between.

So the Republicans and the President got right to work. We repealed burdensome regulations that were hamstringing economic growth, and we passed a comprehensive reform of our outdated Tax Code.

You might ask, Why the Tax Code? Well, the Tax Code has a huge effect on American families' prosperity. It helps determine how much you bring home in your paycheck and how much you have left over to spend or save. It helps determine what kind of jobs, wages, and opportunities are available to you. A small business owner struggling to afford a heavy tax bill is unlikely to have the money to hire a new worker or to expand her business. A larger business is going to find it harder to create jobs or improve benefits for employees if it is struggling to stay competitive against foreign businesses paying much less in taxes.

Prior to the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, our Tax Code was not helping American workers. It was taking too much from Americans' paychecks, and it was making it difficult for businesses to grow and to create jobs. We passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to put more money in Americans' pockets, spur economic growth, and expand opportunities for American workers.

We cut tax rates for American families, doubled the child tax credit, and nearly doubled the standard deduction.

We lowered tax rates across the board for owners of small- and medium-sized businesses, farms, and ranches. We lowered our Nation's massive corporate tax rate, which, up until January 1 of last year, was the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. We expanded business owners' ability to recover the cost of investments they make in their businesses, which frees up cash they can reinvest in their operations and in their workers, and we brought the U.S. international tax system into the 21st century so American businesses are not operating at a competitive disadvantage next to their foreign counterparts.

Now we are seeing the results. Our economy is thriving. Economic growth in the fourth quarter of 2017 to the fourth quarter of 2018 was 3.1 percent, the strongest growth we have seen literally in 13 years. The unemployment rate dropped to 3.8 percent in February, the 12th straight month the unemployment rate has been at or below 4 percent. That is the longest streak in nearly 50 years. The number of job openings has once again exceeded the number of job seekers. In fact, the Department of Labor reports that Janu-

ary was the 11th straight month with more job openings than people looking for work.

The economy has added more than 5.3 million jobs since President Trump was elected. Job growth has averaged 209,000 jobs a month over the past 12 months, exceeding the 2017 average by 30,000 jobs a month. Wage growth is accelerating. Wages are growing at a rate of 3.4 percent—the seventh straight month in which wages have grown at a rate of 3 percent or greater. Median household income is at an alltime high. Business investment is up, which means more jobs and opportunities for American workers. U.S. manufacturing is booming. Small business hiring recently hit a record high, and the list goes on.

This is a big turnaround.

After years of economic stagnation during the Obama administration, some were predicting that sluggish economic growth would be the new normal. When President Trump took office, the Congressional Budget Office predicted the economy would grow at a rate of 2 percent in 2018 and 1.7 percent in 2019. After Republicans cut burdensome regulations and passed a historic tax reform bill, the Congressional Budget Office substantially revised that projection, predicting 2.9 percent growth in 2018 and 2.7 percent in 2019—and the economy has delivered on that prediction.

Importantly, the benefits of our thriving economy are being spread far and wide. The lowest wage earners saw the fastest wage growth in 2018. The Wall Street Journal recently reported:

All sorts of people who have previously had trouble landing a job are now finding work. Racial minorities, those with less education, and people working in the lowest-paying jobs are getting bigger pay raises and in many cases experiencing the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded for their groups. They are joining manufacturing workers, women in their prime working years, Americans with disabilities, and those with criminal records, among others, in finding improved job prospects after years of disappointment.

Tax cuts and other Republican economic policies are making life better for American families. So what do Democrats want to do? Continue with the policies that are bringing relief to American families? That would make sense.

Unfortunately not. Democrats want to raise taxes—by a lot—to pay for the socialist fantasies they are now embracing. Plans such as the Green New Deal and Medicare for All would result in massive tax hikes on just about everyone. Our economy would suffer and American families would see a permanent reduction in their standard of living.

It is deeply alarming that the Democratic Party is rapidly turning into the Socialist Party. It is vitally important that we ensure that hard-working Americans never have to live under Democrats' socialist fantasies.

Republicans are committed to protecting Americans from any attempt to

undo the economic progress we have made, and we will continue working to strengthen our economy even further.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on Monday the Trump administration doubled down on their assault on American healthcare by supporting an effort to completely eliminate the healthcare law through the courts. People scratched their heads, saying: Are they really doing this after trying for 2 years unsuccessfully and after losing the election?

Yes, they are. The action is no small matter. The Trump administration's radical support for the wholesale elimination of the healthcare law would send our healthcare system into certain chaos. If the Trump administration has its way, it would send premiums soaring for millions of Americans. It would revoke coverage for tens of millions more who gained coverage through medical expansions. It would strike protections for an estimated 133 million adults in America who have preexisting medical conditions, even people who get coverage from their employer.

Let me say that again. There are 133 million Americans who have preexisting medical conditions. If the Trump administration has its way, the insurance company could just tell those 133 million and their families: We cut you off. We don't want to pay for your insurance anymore because it is too expensive. Your daughter has cancer. Your wife has severe diabetes.

It is a disgrace. Let's not forget that the system would impose billions of dollars in new prescription drug costs on seniors in Medicare. The consequences are dire. That is why we are introducing an amendment to ensure that not a dime of the American people's money goes to the Trump administration's fight to destroy the entire healthcare system. Not one cent of the Department of Justice should be used to hurt Americans like this.

Donald Trump campaigned on "End ObamaCare." Then, the Republican Party—and even we thought Trump himself—saw they had no replacement. This repeal and replace had no replacement. They couldn't come up with one.

What is the Republican Party now standing for? Here it is. "The Republican Party will become the party of healthcare," says Donald Trump. Absolutely not. Here is what his tweet should say if he is being honest and

telling the truth to the American people: The Republican Party will become the party that ended your healthcare.

You cannot have a situation in the Trump administration where President Trump says one thing and their Attorney General goes to court to do the opposite. You cannot or should not have a situation where Republican Senators get up and say we need to expand healthcare for people, and then they say not a peep when their own President tries to strip it away from them.

President Trump says the Republican Party wants to be the party of healthcare. Well, I say, God help the middle class if Republicans are the party of healthcare. What, dare I ask, is their plan? Let me ask Leader McConnell and every Republican Senator, and I hope their constituents will ask them, too, because this is the No. 1 issue across the country.

We should ask our Republican friends and the President: What is your plan to deal with prescription drug costs?

Costs are at an alltime high. Instead, they are supporting this lawsuit that would impose billions of dollars in prescription drug costs on seniors.

We should ask President Trump and Leader McConnell: What is your plan to get more people covered on high-quality health insurance that they can actually afford at a time when premiums are still rising because of sabotage by the Trump administration? How will they bring relief?

Instead, our Republican colleagues, by their silence, are assenting to a lawsuit that would kick tens of millions of people off insurance.

I ask President Trump, Senator McConnell, and our Republican colleagues: What is your plan to protect people with preexisting conditions?

Over and over again, the Republicans say they support keeping safeguards for preexisting conditions. Instead, they are supporting this lawsuit or, by their silence, assenting to their party's President's lawsuit that completely wipes away the protections for preexisting conditions.

The American people deserve answers because President Trump insisted yesterday that he has a "plan that is far better than ObamaCare." We all know that that is not true. He just talks off the top of his head. He said it at the lunch.

President Trump, what is your plan that is better than ObamaCare? You may not have all of the details, but give us the main points.

When you are President, you have a responsibility, as people's lives are at stake. They need healthcare. It is not for you to simply say "we have a better plan," file a lawsuit that gets rid of the existing plan, and then give people no inclination—no clue—as to what that plan is.

Why is this happening?

One, we know that President Trump has no fidelity issues. He talks off the top of his head. He doesn't know what the issues are all about. Regarding

issues, he is the least informed President we have ever had in American history. He just says what he thinks sounds nice at the moment, and then his administration does the hard-right thing all of the time—the extreme thing—that has a narrow special interest but is not in the interest of the American people.

MICK MULVANEY

Madam President, President Trump's actual administration seems to be far to the right of even the mainstream of the Republican Party. Why does that happen? Well, here is one reason.

Mick Mulvaney is now Chief of Staff and was the head of the OMB, but he still has a lot of say over that Agency. It was reported last night that it was Mick Mulvaney, against the advice of others, who convinced President Trump to take this radical position on healthcare. So we all know who is holding the strings, who is putting in President Trump's head these hard-right ideas that his administration continually effectuates and of which he almost never backs off. We now seem to be living in the Mick Mulvaney administration.

He is the same person who said we need to end Medicare as we know it. That should send a chill down every American's spine. Let me repeat that. The Mick Mulvaney administration, of which President Trump is a willing follower, if you will, says: We should end Medicare as we know it.

Do Americans believe that? No. Do Republicans believe that? Most of them do not. Yet this man, Mulvaney—not elected—puts ideas in President Trump's head, and that is what President Trump does. Make no mistake about it—the ultimate responsibility is President Trump's, but when you wonder why the words the President says differ from so many administration policies—and it is the policies that are hurting Americans—the reason is Mulvaney.

Here is what the Mulvaney administration looks like: extreme budget cuts to the programs that the middle-class families depend on—cuts to the Departments of Education and Transportation; severe cuts to the Office of Science; severe cuts to the EPA; cuts to programs that are most in need, SNAP; faster cuts to Medicare; and repeated government shutdowns. It was reported yesterday that the administration is considering no more Fannie and Freddie—no more help for the middle class to buy a home. This is another great Mulvaney idea.

Mick Mulvaney was one of the five most hard-right people in the House of Representatives. He was one of the authors of the previous shutdown. His views are far, far away from the average American's. Donald Trump, who gets full blame for Mulvaney's ideas because he is enacting them, seems to be following him lock, stock, and barrel. If the President had actually campaigned on these Mulvaney ideas in 2016, he would have been roundly defeated.

If he goes to Michigan tonight and talks about these Mulvaney ideas, he will get booed even by his own supporters, for he enacts the Mulvaney ideas. His Justice Department is now suing to get rid of healthcare, which is something Mulvaney has always advocated for.

President Trump, your administration is now the Mulvaney administration.

That should terrify every single American, and it should terrify any thoughtful Republican Senator.

Make no mistake about it—Donald Trump's hard-right administration, which so hurts the middle class and so helps the narrow, wealthy, special, and corporate interests—the brain child of many of these ideas—comes from Mr. Mulvaney. He puts it into the cipher of Donald Trump. Donald Trump enacts it, and the American people suffer.

PUERTO RICO

Madam President, on Puerto Rico, it has been 18 months since Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Irma devastated the people of Puerto Rico and the surrounding islands.

These were extraordinary disasters that required an extraordinary response, but President Trump has hardheartedly said that the island of Puerto Rico has received too much aid. He complained that the U.S. Government had already given \$91 billion in relief.

Mr. President, stop making up your own facts, for \$90 billion is the amount of damage these storms caused. The people of Puerto Rico are suffering. They have received a sliver of the funding they need.

It is hard to fathom the depths of cruelty that it takes for the President to treat the people of Puerto Rico this way. They are American citizens.

The Democrats have taken action. The House passed a comprehensive disaster bill 2 months ago. It would have provided aid to Puerto Rico and to the other States that are hurt. We want to help all of those States, as that is what Americans do, but Donald Trump has told our Senate Republicans: No aid for Puerto Rico. Instead of standing up and saying that it is wrong, that it is not fair, they seem to be going along. This is shameful. We have an opportunity to change that by fixing the disaster bill that is currently on the floor.

I would tell our Republican friends that we want to help people in the States where there is flooding in the Midwest, where there are wildfires in the West, where there are droughts, but the bill they are trying to pass here is never going to pass the House. They know that. To get disaster aid for the country, which is well needed in so many places, our Republican friends are going to have to tell Donald Trump his cold, cruel-hearted, and divisive policy must fall, his policy of not letting any of the already allocated aid be distributed to Puerto Rico.

MUELLER REPORT

Madam President, on one final matter—Mueller—yesterday and for the

second time this week, Leader McCONNELL blocked our request that was made by the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, DIANNE FEINSTEIN, to make public the full report authored by Special Counsel Mueller.

I thank Senator FEINSTEIN for making the request and for standing up for transparency. As Senator FEINSTEIN said, a four-page summary from a political appointee is hardly a sufficient substitute for Special Counsel Mueller's 2-year investigation. There were reports this morning that the Mueller report is over 300 pages. All we have gotten is a four-page summary by someone who was appointed by the administration and who, before he took office, felt the President could never—almost never—be called for obstruction of justice, which is one of the main parts of the Mueller investigation.

For Mr. Barr to quickly issue a four-page report in his attempt to try to exonerate President Trump and now to delay the release of an over 300-page report that has been written by Mueller so that the American people and we Senators and Congressmen cannot see what was written has too much of the odor of political expediency to help the man who appointed him, President Trump.

The American people have a right to know the full scope of the facts behind Russia's interference in our election. The American people have a right to come to their own conclusions about actions taken by this administration. The American people deserve to have full confidence in the integrity of our system and in the impartiality of the rule of law, and only the full release of the report can affirm that.

What I am saying here shouldn't be controversial. In the House, it passed 420 to nothing—the resolution to make the full report public—voted for by such partisan defenders of the President's, like Representative JORDAN and Representative MEADOWS.

Transparency, we all know, is all the more important because the Attorney General has made no secret of his antipathy toward this investigation and appears intent on holding the report secret for as long as possible. I guess his hope is to let the dust settle, and then no one will pay attention. Well, he is wrong about that. He is prolonging this. Remember, this Attorney General made clear that he was hostile to the special counsel and was opposed to Mueller's inquiry into obstruction of justice. Then he opines about it 2 days later without showing anybody any backing? That is so wrong.

According to press reports, in his phone call yesterday with Mr. NADLER, Mr. Barr would not even commit to releasing the whole report at any time. He wouldn't commit to a date. He was not even willing to disclose how many pages were in the special counsel's report, as if that were some kind of state secret.

As I said, since that conversation, there have been reports that it is over

300 pages. If it is, it is just disgraceful for Mr. Barr, who was able to read through it and summarize it in 48 hours, to now say he can't release it because he is busy culling it.

The Attorney General must end the stalling and the secrecy. It is not going to be a happy opening chapter for the Attorney General when history looks back on what he has done. We should make the report public now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). The Senator from Iowa.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 928 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

NOMINATION OF WILLIAM R. EVANINA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, another thing that I shouldn't have to come to the floor to talk about—and it will only take me about 3 or 4 minutes—is that I am still hearing questions about my intent to object to the nomination of William Evanina. These are the same questions I heard last year when I initially placed my hold on Evanina.

By the way, my hold is printed in the RECORD, and the rules of this Senate require all Members who put a hold on a nomination or a bill, within 2 days after doing that, to put something in the RECORD, and most Senators aren't following that rule of the Senate. So if you have some disagreement about something and you put a secret hold on and somebody wants to sit down and talk with you to see what is wrong, how are they going to know who it is? That is why, in 2011, on a vote of 96 to 4, Senator WYDEN and I got these rules, so there should be no secret holds in the U.S. Senate.

So I am back here again. This statement will be the fourth time since June 4, 2018, that I have publicly expressed my reason for this hold here on the Senate floor. It seems to me no one has been listening to what I have been saying, but what is unusual about that?

As I have said repeatedly, the Judiciary Committee has experienced difficulty in obtaining relevant documents and briefings from the Justice Department and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein personally—I want to emphasize—personally assured me that the Judiciary Committee would receive equal access to information provided to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence with regard to negotiations about the pending subpoenas from that committee related to the 2016 election controversies.

I haven't received equal access, as promised.

On August 7, 2018, I wrote to the Justice Department and pointed out that the House Intelligence Committee received documents related to Bruce Ohr on May 8, 2018, that the Judiciary Committee did not receive.

I ask unanimous consent to have that letter inserted in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, August 7, 2018.

Hon. ROD J. ROSENSTEIN,
Deputy Attorney General,
U.S. Department of Justice.

DEAR DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL ROSENSTEIN: As we have discussed on several occasions, you agreed to provide the Judiciary Committee equal access to documents produced to the U.S. House of Representatives, including those pursuant to requests and subpoenas from the Select Committee on Intelligence related to 2016 election controversies.

Unfortunately, even though you gave me your word that the Committee would receive equal access, the Department has failed to deliver. On July 12, 2018, the New York Times reported that the Trump Administration ordered “more lawmakers be given access to classified information about an informant the F.B.I. used in 2016 to investigate possible ties between the Trump campaign and Russia . . .” The article also reported that, “[t]he F.B.I. files about the informant will now be available to all members of the Senate and House Intelligence Committees, instead of to just a group of congressional leaders known as the Gang of Eight.”

As you are aware, in the authorizing resolution that created the Senate Intelligence Committee, the Senate explicitly reserved for other standing Committees, such as the Senate Judiciary Committee, the independent authority to “study and review any intelligence activity” and “to obtain full and prompt access to the product of the intelligence activities of any department or agency,” when such a matter “directly affects a matter otherwise within the jurisdiction of such committee.”

This Committee has jurisdiction over all federal courts, including the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC). Based on public reporting, the new information provided to the Intelligence Committees appears to be relevant to an application to the FISC, which is an issue that has already been subject to extensive oversight by this Committee. Some of that oversight has been public, when possible. However, as you know, the Committee has also conducted its oversight responsibilities through classified letters, briefings, and document reviews. We have respected the limitations necessary to protect national security information. The Department has been responsive to the Committee’s previous oversight requests and has provided access to the FISA application and some of the relevant background materials on more than one occasion, which is appreciated.

Yet, my Committee staff have attempted to informally work with the Department’s Office of Legislative Affairs to obtain the equal access you promised to all of the relevant materials, but to no avail. For example, on March 23, 2018, the House Intelligence Committee requested the records of nine individuals related to Steele, his dossier, or campaign-related applications to the FISC. The nine individuals are:

1. James Comey,
2. Andrew McCabe,
3. Peter Strzok,
4. Lisa Page,
5. Sally Moyer,
6. Bill Priestap,
7. Greg Brower,
8. James Baker,
9. Bruce Ohr.

The Department produced records to HPSCI related to Bruce Ohr on May 8, 2018, but initially withheld them from this Committee and denied that any records relevant to these topics had been provided to HPSCI. Only after Committee staff confronted Department staff with the misrepresentation were the Ohr documents finally produced to this Committee on May 21, 2018.

Accordingly, no later than August 14, please produce all records previously produced to HPSCI pursuant to its request and answer the following questions:

1. Are the 63 pages of Ohr-related records produced to this Committee on May 21, 2018, the sum total of all responsive Ohr documents in the possession of the DOJ or the FBI? If not, when will production of records responsive to this request be complete?

2. When will DOJ and FBI begin producing documents to this Committee pursuant to this request from the other eight individuals?

3. When will the Department provide in camera review on equal terms for the material referenced in the New York Times article?

Please send all unclassified material directly to the Committee. In keeping with the requirements of Executive Order 13526, if any of the responsive documents do contain classified information, please segregate all unclassified material within the classified documents, provide all unclassified information directly to the Committee, and provide a classified addendum to the Office of Senate Security. Although the Committee complies with all laws and regulations governing the handling of classified information, it is not bound, absent its prior agreement, by any handling restrictions.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this request. If you have questions, please contact Jason Foster of my Committee staff.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Department flatout denied that those records had been provided to the House Intelligence Committee.

That wasn’t the truth.

After my staff confronted the Department, we eventually received some documents.

There is no reason for stonewalling; there is no reason for lack of cooperation—plain and simple.

In that August 2018 letter, I asked for additional documents based on my equal access agreement with Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein. To date, the Department still hasn’t provided a response.

I later learned that the Justice Department has taken the position that Director Coats has prohibited them from sharing the requested records with the committee.

Then, in addition to the outstanding records request, in May 2018, the Director of National Intelligence and the Justice Department provided a briefing in connection with the pending House Intelligence subpoena, to which no Senate Judiciary Committee member was invited.

The Judiciary Committee’s attempt to schedule an equivalent briefing has been ignored.

The lack of cooperation, then, obviously, as any one of the 100 Senators

would do—the bureaucracy, the faceless bureaucrats, are forcing our hand. Congressional oversight is a constitutional requirement. It seems that in every administration—Republican or Democratic—I am forced to remind them of that constitutional responsibility of oversight, and that responsibility cuts both ways.

The executive branch can’t hide documents from one congressional committee, especially one that clearly has oversight jurisdiction over the matter, and at the same time provide those very same documents to another committee.

In this case, my colleagues on the Senate Intelligence Committee have received these documents. I don’t blame them at all for getting that information. I say to them: full speed ahead with whatever you need to do.

However, that doesn’t mean this Senator has to stand down. It is quite the opposite. I am going to fight until I get what has been promised to me but, more importantly, promised to 21 members of the Judiciary Committee.

I think it is worthy of note that the authorizing resolution that created the Senate Intelligence Committee made clear that other committees still have authority to review intelligence documents.

For example, S. Res. 400 explicitly reserves for other standing committees, such as the Judiciary Committee, independent authority to “study and review any intelligence activity to the extent that such activity directly affects a matter otherwise within the jurisdiction of such committee” and “to obtain full and prompt access to the product of the intelligence activities of any department or any agency” within that jurisdiction.

The information I seek is connected to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. That court is within the jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee.

Now, to be fair, the Justice Department has provided access to FISA applications and some of the relevant background materials on more than one occasion. One must give credit where credit is due. However, if they have provided the Judiciary Committee access to that information, what is holding them back from showing us the rest? The secrecy just doesn’t make any sense, and it is secrecy that often prevents accountability.

I will not release my hold until the Justice Department upholds its equal access agreement with me and the Judiciary Committee.

In no way am I questioning Mr. Evanina’s credentials. Director Coats and others have spoken highly of him. The fact is, if they really do believe in his credentials, then they should produce the requested documents they have promised me more than once.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

H.R. 268

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I am glad to have been here to hear the distinguished chairman of the Judiciary Committee talk about the oversight and the responsiveness that the executive branch agencies owe to the U.S. Senate and its committees.

In doing so, I am having a similar problem with the State Department as it relates to getting information about actions that have taken place with reference to political reprisals and firings at the State Department and subject to being investigated right now by the inspector general of the State Department and special counsel. So I can share in his concerns about the inability to get information from the executive branch as a legitimate exercise of oversight.

I rise today, as I have so many times in my career, to be the voice for the people of Puerto Rico in the U.S. Senate.

On September 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria—a powerful category 5 storm—ripped through the center of the island of Puerto Rico, wiping out its electrical grid and leaving millions of American citizens disconnected and in the dark. This was preceded by Hurricane Irma, which also struck the island—a double body blow. What ensued were months of absolute darkness, hunger, despair, and death.

While the President played golf in Mar-a-Lago, thousands of our fellow Americans were dying due to the lack of electricity to power oxygen tanks, dialysis centers, or refrigerated medications—problems that, as I said at the time, could not be solved with paper towels.

I will never forget this moment, one of the most insulting moments to the people of Puerto Rico—a people who are a part of the United States, 3.5 million U.S. citizens who have served and worn the uniform of this Nation, whose names on the Vietnam Memorial here in Washington are disproportionate to the number of their population. The President said:

[They] want everything to be done for them. . . . I hate to tell you, Puerto Rico, but you are throwing our budget out of whack.

No other American citizen in any other of the areas of disaster heard anything—anything—near to that.

Today we know that nearly 3,000 Americans perished in what is now known as one of the worst natural disasters to strike our Nation in all of American history.

Now, let me be clear. We know that a President cannot prevent a natural disaster, but when the lives of Americans are on the line, we expect our Commander in Chief to do everything in their power to come to their aid. These are the moments that are supposed to reveal the very best of America. In the face of disasters of this magnitude, we do not turn our backs on our fellow citizens. We face the challenge head-on. We save as many lives as we can.

We strive to stem suffering, and we lend a helping hand. That is the American way.

Just imagine how many lives could have been saved had President Trump directed the Federal Emergency Management Agency to give Puerto Rico “the A Plus treatment” he called for, for our fellow citizens in Alabama. For the majority Latino, Spanish-speaking island of Puerto Rico, there was no A-plus treatment. They got the F-minus treatment.

The painful reality is, nothing can ever bring the thousands of Americans who died in Hurricane Maria back, but that doesn’t mean the President shouldn’t try to make things right. He has many opportunities to atone for his cruel and unfair treatment of the Puerto Rican people. Instead, President Trump seems intent on kicking Puerto Ricans when they are down.

Just last week, he hosted a group of my Republican colleagues at the White House and proceeded to complain about how much Puerto Rico has received. What is so disappointing is that none of my colleagues even dared to check the President on this issue. They didn’t receive what he said. They received a fraction of what he said.

This President continues to behave as if the people who call Puerto Rico home are not real Americans. It is almost as if he views himself as the real victim here, not the 3,000 American mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters who perished in Hurricane Maria’s wake.

We in the Senate have an obligation to do what is right with this disaster supplemental.

So let me say first that I am glad everyone here agrees Puerto Rico needs a fully funded Nutrition Assistance Program for the next fiscal year. Still, it is appalling to hear the White House call the House of Representatives bill’s inclusion of an additional \$600 million for nutrition assistance as “excessive and unnecessary.”

There is nothing excessive or unnecessary about helping 1.35 million struggling, low-income Americans in Puerto Rico—many of them with small children—avoid going hungry. We are talking about \$649 a month for a family of four, just \$160 or so a week for the people who need it the most.

Let’s turn for a moment to what is missing from the Senate legislation.

First, Hurricane Maria created 6 million cubic yards of debris for the island. A year and a half later, the island still has approximately 168,000 cubic yards of debris stored in temporary sites waiting to be removed.

To put that in perspective, a large dump truck can carry 10 cubic yards. That means it would take 16,800 dump trucks to remove all the garbage created by the hurricane on a small island that barely measures 100 miles long by 35 miles wide.

Make no mistake, Puerto Rico has made significant progress, but the crippled economy has made everything

that much harder. This legislation should help them get the job done, not set them back.

Second, there remains hundreds of open FEMA projects for emergency protective measures. We are talking about short-term locations for government Agencies to provide vital services as they await the completion of permanent reconstruction.

We should also allow for the continued use of generators to power critical facilities on the island. This would help keep the public safe and provide stability to Puerto Rico’s power grid while it is repaired. We can do this by increasing the Federal cost waivers for categories A and B to 100 percent, just as the House of Representatives’ bill does.

Congress has done this many times before—this is not new—after Hurricanes Katrina, Wilma, Dennis, and Rita, and Puerto Rico deserves no less.

In the bipartisan Budget Act we passed last year, we specifically authorized FEMA to waive Stafford Act requirements so they could replace and repair facilities in a way that reflects today’s industry standards, not their previous subpar condition. Yet I keep hearing of FEMA’s nickel-and-diming over what it may fix and what Puerto Rico may not fix.

So let’s end the ambiguity. Let’s fix this language. Let’s send a clear message that it was always Congress’s intent to rebuild Puerto Rico stronger and more resilient than ever.

No one wants to face the same kind of damage next hurricane season. As it is said, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

So let’s properly fund the Army Corps of Engineers so they can help rebuild the Cano Martin Pena, which continues to flood over with raw sewage, imperiling 26,000 American lives with unsanitary conditions and breeding grounds for mosquito-transmitted diseases like Zika.

These are the kind of measures that would be stripped from the House bill by the pending substitute. It is just not right. It is just not right. These 3.5 million U.S. citizens have worn the uniform of the United States, have defended this Nation, going back to when Congress gave the all-Puerto Rican regiment, the “Borinqueneers,” the highest commendation it can, the Congressional Gold Medal, but that doesn’t mean anything if you turn your back on 3.5 million U.S. citizens. It doesn’t mean anything if you treat them as second-class citizens. It is just fundamentally biased and wrong.

Come September, we will have to congregate once again to talk about the island’s crumbling medical infrastructure and the need to provide Puerto Rico with additional Medicaid funding. We can solve that problem today by adding critical Medicaid funding for the territories.

Puerto Rico is clearly a subject of angst and resentment for the President. I don’t know why, but it is clearly so. So I suggest we do him a favor,

spare him the worry, and get the job done ourselves today. Let's do what is right.

I urge my colleagues to vote against cloture on the substitute, let the underlying bill stand, and let us move forward so we act in the name of our Nation. It is the United States of America. We leave no American behind, and we should leave none of the 3.5 million Americans in Puerto Rico behind.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

HURRICANE HARVEY AMENDMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in 2017, I said on the Senate floor that we needed to come together to help rebuild in the wake of Hurricane Harvey in the Houston area and that our work was not complete and more work needed to be done. That, unfortunately, still is true today.

It is true also for the damage caused by other natural disasters during the same timeframe that was appropriated by Congress but has not yet found its way to the intended beneficiaries. Although we voted to send billions of dollars to help Texans still reeling from Hurricane Harvey, some of those funds are still needlessly caught up in bureaucratic redtape.

This is not just a phenomenon that affects my State. It affects all of our States. This is not acceptable to me, and it isn't acceptable to the people I represent—all 28 million of them—and it shouldn't be acceptable to Members of the Senate.

This storm ravaged the Texas coast and was the largest rain event in American history, with parts of Southeast Texas seeing 60 inches of rain over about a 5- or 6-day period. It destroyed people's homes, their businesses, and our communities.

In the wake of the storm, we all pulled together in Congress, in an unusually bipartisan manner, to provide billions of dollars in disaster aid. Like I said, it wasn't just for Texas. It was for Florida, Puerto Rico, for wildfires out in California, and other places that suffered from natural disasters.

The dollars we appropriated, and were signed into law by the President, have helped Texans get back to some sense of normalcy, and I am grateful to my colleagues for working together with us to make that happen. What has not been helpful, however, are the unnecessary delays on the part of the Office of Management and Budget in getting the roughly \$4 billion in mitigation funds into the hands of State and local communities that desperately need them.

I have searched in vain in the Constitution for where the Office of Management and Budget has the power to veto appropriations bills passed by Congress and signed into law by the President. I can't find it. Yet they are still the impediment to the execution of Congress's intent to get the money to the people who need it.

The intent of Congress was crystal clear in the February 2018 disaster sup-

plemental, when we appropriated about \$12 billion of community development block grants for disaster recovery.

As I said, the undue delay is unacceptable, and I am filing an amendment to the disaster relief that is on the floor of the Senate this week to ensure that these funds and other like funds are properly disbursed.

Last month, Governor Abbott, Senator CRUZ, and I wrote a letter to the OMB to stop stalling, but so far all we have heard is crickets.

The amendment we will file will start a timer on when the Federal Government must release funds appropriated by Congress. It will give the government bureaucracy up to 90 days to get the money untangled from all the redtape and to get it to the communities that desperately need it. This 90-day rule wouldn't just apply to this particular block of funding; it would apply to any funds that are now being withheld by the Office of Management and Budget that Congress appropriates to these States.

As I said, last time I checked, Congress had the power of the purse, not the Office of Management and Budget. I don't know about the rest of my colleagues, but I am not OK with letting OMB dictate when and how duly appropriated funds are released to the intended beneficiaries.

The disregard of those who are still struggling to rebuild and prepare for future storms by the bureaucrats is appalling. They know the kinds of hardships my constituents are facing, and they know that Hurricane Harvey will not be the last hurricane to hit Texas. It is time to do what is right by our State and local communities who have seen their livelihoods rot in a fleet of floodwater.

It has now been more than a year since President Trump signed a bill that would have sent roughly \$4 billion to Texas. Imagine what could have been accomplished with that money in the meantime. They could have repaired wastewater treatment facilities that haven't been fully restored. It could have led to important economic revitalization projects in decimated areas. They could have even relocated or elevated damaged facilities to prepare for the next storm. But, no—those projects are still on hold because the OMB has refused to release the funding.

The 2019 hurricane season is fast approaching, and it is critical we get work done on long-term projects to protect my State and the Texas coast against future storms.

It is difficult to plan for the future with the resources we need being caught up in bureaucratic limbo. We have been waiting to get to the place where before Harvey and after Harvey isn't such a stark difference.

With the inclusion of my amendment, the clock will start ticking on the Office of Management and Budget to do its job and ultimately release these hurricane recovery funds. Texas communities have waited long enough.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, I want to draw attention to another group of people who need our help, and those are the officers and agents of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Yesterday, Commissioner McAleenan announced that Customs and Border Protection is facing an "unprecedented humanitarian and border security crisis all along our Southwest border," and he provided some alarming statistics.

Yesterday morning, CBP had more than 13,000 migrants under their care. Under normal circumstances, a high number is 4,000. They consider 6,000 to be a crisis, and now they have more than double that. Yesterday, the Commissioner said that we are at a "breaking point" along the border.

Frankly, because the American people aren't acquainted with some of the details, they may think that CBP can easily handle 13,000 people in their custody on a given day, but, unfortunately, that is not the case.

CBP's detention facilities are relatively small, built for the short-term detention of single adults. The current immigrant surge from Central America is primarily of children and family units and has put these small facilities at overcapacity levels. Processing times have slowed due to the large number of people being processed and the lack of Border Patrol personnel to process them.

As the Chief of the Border Patrol has testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee, this is intentional on behalf of the transnational criminal organizations that are responsible for transporting people from Central America to our borders. This is a money-making proposition. If you can charge \$5,000 or more a head for every person you deliver to our border, that is a big, big deal. These people are not just involved in transporting immigrants. They are engaged in trafficking of human beings for sex or involuntary servitude, and they are also engaged in trafficking drugs.

I will remind all of us that last year, 70,000-plus Americans died from drug overdoses—70,000 Americans died from drug overdoses last year—according to the Centers for Disease Control. A substantial portion of that was part of the opioid crisis, not just prescription drugs but also synthetic fentanyl as well as heroin. Ninety percent of the heroin that comes into the United States comes across the U.S.-Mexico border. As President Obama himself said in 2014, this is truly a humanitarian and security crisis, but it is on steroids today.

On Monday, CBP had the highest totals of apprehensions in more than a decade, and on Tuesday, they broke that record. Daily averages for border apprehensions are higher than we have seen at any time since 2006.

Last month, CBP apprehended 76,000 people in 1 month on our southern border—the highest monthly total in over

a decade. Yesterday, Commissioner McAleenan, announced that, in March, they are on track to beat that record with 100,000 apprehensions along our southwest border. That is 76,000 apprehensions in February and an estimated 100,000 in March.

As a result of the surge, because the Border Patrol has to do something, 40 percent of the Border Patrol's manpower is now spent processing immigrants and providing care and transportation. In other words, they are not engaged in their primary mission, which is border security, because they are busy handing out juice boxes and diapers to children, as well as processing the immigrants who are providing other transportation.

The Border Patrol simply doesn't have the resources, nor should it be expected to have the resources, to handle this crisis and perform their primary duty, which is to protect our border. We know that detention centers are at or over capacity, and local charities and nongovernmental Agencies are strained, as well, and all of our border communities are being overrun by humanity.

Recently, Senator CRUZ and I were down at the Sarita checkpoint to name that checkpoint after a heroic Border Patrol agent who was killed by two illegal aliens. We were approached by the chief of police from McAllen—somebody who is well respected in law enforcement circles in our State—who said that because the Border Patrol is simply unable to process all of these people, and they are being released into those communities or put on a bus and sent to places like San Antonio, they are increasingly worried about public safety. That is notwithstanding the fact that many of our border communities are extraordinarily safe, at least on our side of the border. If you go on the Mexican side of the border, they are some of the most dangerous cities in our hemisphere.

This is having a profound impact on our local communities, on the men and women of the Customs and Border Patrol. Frankly, it should be an embarrassment to us here in this country that we haven't dealt with this in a more timely and more effective way.

Because the cartels have figured this out, people crossing the border today are largely families and unaccompanied minors because of the special way they have to be processed and because of a consent decree called the Flores decision, which says you can't detain them for more than 20 days. That is not enough time to get them in front of an immigration judge in order to adjudicate their asylum claim, so they are released into the interior of the United States. Guess what. Overwhelmingly, they don't show up for their court hearings because they realize they have beat the system. The cartels know that because of the money they make. They are exploiting these vulnerabilities in our laws and in our infrastructure. The only people who

can fix that are Congress and the President, working together in a bipartisan way.

I know we have had a big debate over border barriers—walls, fences, you name it—but, frankly, you could build all the barriers you want along our southwest border, and it will not stop this flow of unaccompanied minors and family units because, frankly, they are showing up at the border, and they are turning themselves in. So we need to act.

Two weeks ago, Ms. Nielsen, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, said: "The situation on our southern border has gone from a crisis, to a national emergency, to a near system-wide meltdown."

Our Democratic colleagues have called this a fake emergency. They have opposed treating this crisis for what it is. It is even more than an emergency; it is a total system failure, and the only people who can fix it are Congress, working with the President. I am not sure how much longer our Democratic colleagues could be in denial when we see this flood of humanity coming across in higher and higher numbers every day.

The issue is staring us in the face. The numbers confirm what we have said all along: This is a border security and humanitarian crisis.

Secretary Nielsen made an important point that our communities, our members of law enforcement, and the immigrants themselves are paying the price for our inaction.

We have heard it from people at the border who know how to fix the problem, and we need to listen. They have told us time and again that it will take a combination of technology, physical infrastructure, and boots on the ground. It will also take legislative action to fill the gaps in our laws that we know exist and are being exploited by the cartels.

I want to commend the men and women of Customs and Border Patrol for working around the clock in a thankless job but in an important job. Frankly, I am embarrassed that they haven't seen more support by the people who represent them in Congress.

We have sent them out on a losing battle unless we can work together here in Congress to give them the resources and the legislative fixes they need.

I want to assure these dedicated men and women that we are trying, but we need their help to talk to their elected Representatives here in Congress. We need Ms. PELOSI to consider this the same humanitarian crisis that President Obama identified back in 2014, when he called it a humanitarian and security crisis. By any measure, it has gotten much, much worse. We need to give this crisis the serious attention that it deserves.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. 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 REQUEST—H. CON. RES. 24

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise today to discuss transparency in our democracy and security for our elections.

It has been nearly a week since Special Counsel Mueller's report was completed and submitted to the Attorney General of the United States. We still have not seen the report. I have urged the Department of Justice to release the report, and the administration should not delay in producing the report to Congress. We know the American people want to know what is in the report. According to some public opinion polls, nearly 90 percent of them have said they want to know what is in the report. We also know that 420 Members of the House of Representatives voted that the report should be made public.

We cannot get ourselves out of the mode of remembering that a foreign power invaded our election. Some people call it meddling. That is what I do when I call my daughter on a Saturday night and ask her what she is doing. I call it an invasion of our democracy.

We have learned from the intelligence heads under both Barack Obama and Donald Trump, including former Senator Coats, who told us that this has happened, and, in fact, the Russians are getting even bolder. That is what he told us. That is why I think it is very important, putting everything else aside, that we find out the facts in this report.

There have been indictments that have come out of this investigation—dozens of indictments. They made it clear that the unprecedented interference in the 2016 election was designed by the Kremlin with the goal of making Americans lose faith in our election system, whether you are a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent.

We know from the intelligence heads and from some of the indictments that have been made public that they did this in many ways. We have learned that the Russians tried to hack into the actual election equipment of 21 States and that in Illinois, they got as far as the voter files. What does that mean? If we could get more facts about that since that was actually—the hacking of the campaigns and elections was referenced in Attorney General Barr's four-page letter. Well, if we knew more facts, it might help Senator LANKFORD and me to pass our bill, the Secure Elections Act. We have the support of Senator BURR and Senator WARNER, as well as Senator HARRIS and Senator GRAHAM. Maybe it would help us convince the leader that we should have a vote on the simple concept of having backup paper ballots and audits. Maybe

it would help us convince the public to put pressure on the White House not to block that bill.

It doesn't matter what political party you are in—we all want to have secure elections. None of us want to have a situation where there is one county or one State in which elections get screwed up because someone hacked into them.

The other thing that we learned and got confirmed in the four-page letter was that we know there was hacking into a political campaign, right? Well, we want to know the facts about that.

Again, as people have noticed, there are a lot of people running for office—not just for President but for the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives—and certainly the American people and the people who work in the Congress have the right to know exactly what happened. That was one of the major reasons we had this investigation in the first place.

There was something else that was mentioned in the four-page letter that we all want to have more details about; that is, another way Russia tried to influence our election was through the spread of false propaganda on the internet, right? We have now seen the ads. We have seen them in sworn hearings. One of the ones that I will never forget is one that was Russian sponsored, which was a picture of an African-American woman, and it basically said—I am paraphrasing—“Why wait in line? You can text your vote for Hillary Clinton,” with a texting number on it. That is a crime. That is illegal. That was one of the ads the Russians put into our system.

We know that they put false issue ads out there to divide Americans—sometimes from the left, trying to make it like they were looking from the left, and sometimes from the right. They were simply trying to sow discord in our great democracy.

Our democracy is fragile. Our democracy is something that we cherish. Our democracy must be protected. That is why, if we could get this full report, that would help us greatly to perhaps step back and look at the Honest Ads Act. That is a bill which I had with Senator McCain and Senator WARNER, and we have a number of Republicans who are actually cosponsoring it in the House of Representatives.

I think getting more details here would help to make the case that before the 2020 election—we know that in 2016 alone, \$1.4 billion was spent on internet advertising, on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, and we didn't know who was paying for it. We later found out that some of it was in rubles. How obvious can you get? And then also we didn't even know what the ads were because they just vanished from the internet.

So when we first proposed this bill, people said: Oh, you are trying to regulate. Well, guess what. Things changed after Cambridge Analytica, and we suddenly got growing support for this idea

that the same rules that apply to newspaper and TV and radio should apply to internet platforms. Now, a number of the major platforms are doing it themselves, although they vary in what they do and it is a patchwork. Also, major CEOs of these companies are saying they now support this bill.

The time has come—in fact, we are running out of time—to put the rules in place on issue ads and candidate ads. I believe it is not just selfishly what I want to get done; it is something that a lot of people in this Chamber want to get done, and that is, making sure our next election is protected from foreign influence on the propaganda side, on the election security side, and on the hacking side. Getting the full report will help us make the case. It will help us figure out exactly what happened.

As I mentioned, there are many people—420 in the House of Representatives—who said they want to see it. Congress should be able to see the full, unredacted report without delay. We are a coequal branch of government and have received unredacted grand jury and classified information in the past. But more than Congress, the public should be able to see this. That is why the House voted 420 to 0—we don't get that kind of vote on a volleyball resolution—in support of publicly releasing the report. Members standing in the way of this report becoming public will have to explain why to the American people.

We know we can do two things at once in this Chamber or maybe 20 things at once. We know the importance right now of making sure we don't repeal the Affordable Care Act, which is why 2 nights ago I was here at this very desk until late at night reading 100 letters from people who opposed repealing the Affordable Care Act because of the protection it gives them to not get kicked off their health insurance. We know how important it is to finally do something about prescription drugs. We know how important it is to work on advancing an optimistic economic agenda for the people of this country. At the same time, we also have to protect the public's right to know. We have to protect the security in many ways—security of our country abroad, our military—and make sure we are protecting the very democracy that is at the core of this country. The way to do that is to make sure no foreign power messes with our election.

There are hundreds of pages in this report. There are hundreds of people who were interviewed. All of us are a little in the dark, especially those people who are not on the committees that receive classified information. There are many people who would like to know exactly what went down. If I were the secretary of state in one of our States, whether it be the State of Arkansas or the State of Arizona, I would want to know what happened because I, if I am the secretary of state, am responsible for my State's election security.

We urge the Attorney General to do everything he can to make this report public. Now that the special counsel has completed his investigation, we must see the report.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 24, expressing the sense of Congress that the report of Special Counsel Mueller should be made available to the public and to Congress, which is at the desk; further, that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object, I think we all want transparency. I think we all want reports to be revealed. We think the American people deserve to know what happened with the Russians hacking into Democratic emails and with the Russian involvement in trying to affect the outcome of our elections. I think we all want that.

What do we know so far? We know that we spent \$30 million to investigate this, and they have decided and concluded—after doing hundreds of interviews and thousands of subpoenas, they have concluded that President Trump did not collude with the Russians, did not conspire with the Russians, did not commit a crime with the Russians, and the President has said repeatedly he never talked to the Russians. We do know that. That is what we know so far.

But now that we know that, in addition to the Mueller report, we also need to know: Was there malfeasance? Was there misuse of government power? Did President Obama's administration get involved in an election to actually try to manipulate and infiltrate the Trump campaign to entrap them or try to spread information that was incorrect? We need to know that.

So I am asking the Senator by unanimous consent to accept my amendment, which would say that not only will we see the Mueller report, but we will also see the communications between John Brennan, known to have already lied to the Senate about spying on Senate computers, and James Clapper, also known to have lied to the Senate in testimony over the bulk collection of phone records, and their communications with James Comey, who is known to have illegally leaked information about this investigation to the press—that their communications become known to all of us.

We need to know why they decided that the fake Russian dossier was real. The country had concluded it wasn't. No media outlet would produce the Russian dossier because it was so unverifiable. Yet the FBI head and the CIA head kept sending the dossier out to people, having it come back to them again, saying: Oh, my goodness, look at what this Senator gave us. It was what

they already had that nobody was believing and nobody was discounting and now the Mueller report has said was fake, was made up. The dossier was not true, but that is what began this entire investigation.

Why should we know about this? Because we don't want this to happen every 2 to 4 years. I don't care whether it is a Democrat President or Republican President. We should not waste the time of the entire country sending spies into campaigns, making false accusations, and tying the country in knots for 2 years. Tying us in knots such that people are at each other's throats and will not talk to each other because we spread this false narrative that President Trump had something to do with the Russians. It was not true. We spent \$30 million and now we know it is not true.

So I ask unanimous consent that my amendment be added to the current resolution.

We will agree to see the Mueller report as long as the other side will agree to show us the communications that took place in deciding to promote this fake allegation against the President. We want to know whether there was misuse of their office. If that is allowed, then I will agree to the consent request.

I would ask unanimous consent that my amendment be added to the Senator's resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Reserving the right to object, I would simply point out that this entire investigation was started by the Justice Department under the Republican administration, and then, of course, guided by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who was appointed by the President.

I will note that this is a simple resolution to just get the report. We may not agree with the foundation of this investigation, but we are simply trying to get the fruits of the investigation, which I believe will be helpful to this Chamber to figure out what we should do to protect our national security.

We are simply trying to adopt and consider the House resolution, which again was voted on 420 to 0, including all Republicans present. The House voted 420 to 0 to see the report. That is why I was simply hoping that we could do this on a bipartisan basis and try to see the report ourselves.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. The Senator made one point that the investigation was begun under Republicans of this dossier.

The Mueller report and the Mueller aspect of this was begun under Republicans, but the actual investigation—

the promoting, the passing around of the fake Russian dossier—occurred under President Obama's administration.

What we need to discover and what we do not yet know is, Was President Obama involved? Was this done for partisan purposes? Was this done to try to elect Hillary Clinton? Was this done with mal intent?

We need to know the truth, and to get to the truth, we need not only the Mueller report, but we need every ounce of information about the people at the very top of our intelligence community who were promoting the inclusion of this fake dossier that most American media outlets had discounted as unverifiable and that turned out to be unverifiable.

We based this investigation on a lie. We should investigate who the liars were.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, if my Republican colleagues don't want to read the report and they want to rely on a summary, that is their right, and they can make requests in the future. I am sure they can get all of that in the future, but all I am simply asking for right now is that whether you agreed with this investigation or not, the public have the right to see the hundreds of pages that may well help us understand what Russia did.

I believe our constitutional duty requires us to have the report and the American people do not deserve to be left in the dark about what the report says.

I hope that it will be made public very soon, and I hope the Attorney General of the United States understands there are a number of us who would like to see a full unredacted report, and there are a whole lot of people who would like to see it as well.

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.

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

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

MOMMA'S ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, if you had to pick a country—anywhere in the world—where you faced a serious illness, you are likely to pick the United States. Here we have some of the greatest hospitals, doctors, and some of the greatest research institutions in the world. In some other countries, they certainly have good medical care, but if you could only pick one, I certainly would pick this country, the United States of America. That is why it is kind of surprising to learn that when it comes to some basic indicators of how well we are doing in the United

States compared to other countries, there are some surprising answers.

We are facing a public health crisis in this country today that is often overlooked and ignored, and it is one I am sure will touch each and every one of us. It is the issue of maternal and infant health.

Too often in our country, new mothers and their babies—especially women and babies of color—are dying from completely preventable health complications. Take this statistic to heart: The United States is only 1 of 13 countries in the world where the death rate of new mothers is worse today than it was 25 years ago. How can it be possible that in the United States of America, mothers are dying at a rate worse than it was 25 years ago? Nationwide, more than 700 women die every year as a result of pregnancy. More than 70,000 others experience severe, near-fatal complications. In my State of Illinois, 73 women die every year due to pregnancy-related complications, and 70 percent of those deaths are preventable.

Not only are we losing these new moms, we are losing their babies. Every year, more than 23,000 infants die in the United States largely due to factors that could be prevented. Some of them are birth defects which could be detected in utero, preterm birth, low birth rate, and maternal complications. Here is a startling statistic. The United States of America—our home; this great Nation of plenty—ranks 32 out of 35 wealthy Nations when it comes to infant mortality. Is it possible? If so, what are we going to do about it?

The tragedy of maternal and infant mortality is even more pronounced when you look at mothers of babies of color. Black infants in America are twice as likely to die as White infants. That racial disparity is greater today than it was in the year 1850. Nationwide, women of color are three to four times more likely than White women to die as a result of their pregnancy. In Illinois, African-American women are six times more likely than White women to die of pregnancy-related complications.

Something has to be done. That is why, this week, I joined with Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY, Senator DUCKWORTH, and others introducing what we call the MOMMA's Act. First and foremost, our bill would expand the length of time a new mom can keep her Medicaid healthcare coverage. More than half of the babies born my State of Illinois are to mothers who are covered by Medicaid—health insurance for those who are not wealthy and don't have access to private health insurance. The Medicaid Program covers more than half of the babies and mothers as they go through the birthing process.

Do you know what happens to Medicaid under the current law? Two months after the baby is born, the

mothers are cut off. Our bill would expand that to a year. Given that 60 percent of maternal deaths occur in the weeks and months after delivery, it is imperative that these new moms have the protection of Medicaid longer than 60 days.

We understand that many States' Medicaid Programs, including my own, are strapped for cash. Our bill will pay for itself by increasing Federal tobacco taxes. That is right. This Senator just called for an increase in taxes. You bet I did. The last time we dramatically increased the Federal tobacco tax was to create the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Is it worth it for kids to be born healthy and live to their full terms in life? Of course.

Given that Big Tobacco and its vaping interest have made billions of dollars at the expense of children and, I might add, of the African-American community, we believe they should help pay for this undertaking. As I said, in 2009 that is exactly what we did to create the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Next, the MOMMA Act would improve access to doulas. Too often, Black women are not listened to or taken seriously by healthcare providers. Doulas can help to provide education, advocacy, and support for women whose voices are often ignored.

To this point, our bill would also improve implicit bias and cultural competency training among healthcare providers. Sadly, the United States is still struggling with racial bias in healthcare.

Finally, our bill would improve hospital coordination and the reporting on maternal health outcomes, and it would ensure the widespread adoption and implementation of services to improve care.

If you have listened to the speech so far, you are probably thinking there is one thing he didn't mention—that many of those African-American women are in poverty, that they are low-income women. That probably explains why they don't have adequate care during their pregnancies or adequate care for their new children.

That is what I had concluded, but it is wrong. The statistics I have given you about racial disparity do not link up with one's economic status. Even African-American mothers who have high incomes and high educations are facing the same threats of maternal mortality. It is not driven by income or poverty. There is something more to the story. Don't we owe it to ourselves to look at it?

There are issues that divide this Chamber, and one of the issues, of course, is abortion. There are people with differing views on both sides of the aisle. It is always a contentious debate, but can't we all agree—pro-choice and pro-life—that we ought to focus on this, on the mothers who are delivering babies, to make sure that the mom survives and that the baby survives? That

is what this act is all about, the MOMMA Act.

There are 23,000 infants and 700 new moms who die each year in the United States—some of the worst statistics in the world. We could prevent them with screenings, interventions, and the right healthcare. On a bipartisan basis, I can think of no better way to help babies and moms than to keep them alive and healthy, and that is what the MOMMA Act would do.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. President, on June 26, 1913, on a beautiful day in Springfield, IL, Governor Edward Dunne signed into law a bill making Illinois the first State east of the Mississippi where women could vote.

It was not equal voting rights, to be sure.

The new law gave Illinois women the right to vote only for Presidential electors and most local offices—but not for Governor, State representatives or Members of Congress. Still, it was historic.

Word of the milestone sped around the world.

When the legendary Chicago humanitarian Jane Addams—the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize—announced the news at an international suffragette conference in Budapest, delegates roared with approval.

The suffragettes' battle to achieve even limited voting rights was long—it took nearly 60 years—and bitterly fought.

The first time the suffragettes took their campaign to Chicago's street corners, in 1910, they were ignored by some and derided by many—including many women.

When Illinois suffragettes traveled by train to Washington in 1913 to lobby President Woodrow Wilson for voting rights for all American women, their train stopped at Harper's Ferry, WV—this same place where fiery abolitionist John Brown made his stand against slavery.

As they spoke publicly for voting rights, the women were pelted with snowballs by men and boys, but they didn't back down.

In Washington, D.C., suffragettes from Illinois and other States encountered angry mobs and police who refused to intervene.

More than 100 women ended up in hospitals. Still, the women didn't retreat.

In 1914, 200,000 women registered to vote in Chicago, and eight women ran for aldermanic seats.

Five years later, on June 10, 1919, Illinois became the first State in the Nation to ratify the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, giving all American women the right to vote in all elections.

That is a distinction we are proud of. By 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified by the necessary two-thirds of States.

Next year, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the women's right to vote in America.

As this Women's History Month draws to a close, I want to take a few moments to recall the courageous women who have helped advance the cause of freedom in my State and in our Nation and the women who continue to shape our Nation's shared destiny.

This Congress—the 116th Congress—includes more women than any Congress in our Nation's history. In the House, America's first woman Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, returned to her leadership post with 102 women as her colleagues.

Here in the Senate, we now have 25 women Senators—the most in our Nation's history.

The congressional delegation from my home State of Illinois also has more women members than ever before—including the youngest African-American woman ever elected to Congress: Representative Lauren Underwood, but we still have a long way to go to reach true gender equality in America.

This Congress may include record numbers of women, but women still make up only 25 percent of the Senate and less than that—a little over 23 percent—in the House. Those numbers ought to be higher.

The number of women serving in State legislatures has quintupled since 1971. Women now make up nearly 29 percent of State legislatures today.

In Illinois, women make up one-third of the General Assembly. That's progress, but all States—including Illinois—can and must do a better job of recruiting, supporting, and electing women leaders.

Women are making history in other professions and other ways, too.

More than 200,000 women serve in the U.S. military today, and America has 1.6 million women veterans. My friend and fellow Senator from Illinois, TAMMY DUCKWORTH, is one of those veterans. She is amazing. She lost both legs when a Blackhawk helicopter she was co-piloting was shot down in Iraq. As soon as she healed from her injuries, she asked: "What else can I do to help other veterans and help my country?"

I encourage the Department of Defense to do more to harness the patriotism and talent of American women by opening more combat roles to women.

It has been said before, and I agree: You can measure a nation's character and its hopes for a better future by how it treats women and girls.

While America has made great progress, in gender equality, especially in the last two generations, we still have far to go.

It has been nearly 60 years since President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law in 1963. Yet American women in general still earn only 80 cents for every dollar earned by men. For women of color, the gap is even greater; African American women earn only 61 cents, and Latina women earn only 53 cents for every dollar a White

man makes. These disparities persist even among women and men who do the same or comparable work. That is wrong, and we need to close the pay fairness gap.

Many women across the country still lack access to affordable healthcare, including reproductive health care services.

Roe v. Wade was decided more than 40 years ago, but attacks on access have limited a woman's right to choose in many States, and too many women, especially women of color, are dying during or shortly after childbirth.

Here is a sobering fact: The United States is one of only 13 countries in the world where the maternal mortality rate is worse now than it was 25 years ago. Every year, more than 700 women in our Nation—most of them women of color—die as a result of their pregnancies, with more than 60 percent of these deaths being completely preventable.

This is unacceptable. Having a baby anywhere, especially in the United States, should not be a death sentence. We must do better.

The Equal Rights Amendment has been waiting for passage since the 1920s. My home State of Illinois finally ratified it last year.

Here is an idea. Let us work together to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in this Congress.

For the 100th anniversary of women's voting rights in America let's pass the ERA. If we truly believe in gender equality, let's put it in writing in the U.S. Constitution.

Let's not just celebrate Women's History Month; let's build on women's historical successes and make this an even more perfect Union.

MUELLER REPORT

Last Friday, Attorney General William Barr announced that Special Counsel Bob Mueller had submitted a lengthy report from his investigation to the Attorney General.

On Sunday, Attorney General Barr sent another letter to Congress summarizing Mr. Barr's view of the "principal conclusions" of the Mueller report.

This letter is very troubling, particularly because the Attorney General inserted his own judgment about potential obstruction of justice by the President rather than letting the Mueller report speak for itself.

I have said repeatedly that I trust Bob Mueller. I believed he could be trusted to do a thorough and fair investigation into what happened with Russian meddling in the 2016 election. I still feel that way.

We have now heard Attorney General Barr's description of what Special Counsel Mueller found, but, respectfully, that is not good enough.

The American people need to hear Special Counsel Mueller's description of what he found.

Attorney General Barr is a political appointee. The reason a special counsel was appointed in this case was to take politics out of the investigation.

The Mueller report needs to be made public without delay. That is what we need to have confidence in the outcome of this investigation. The House of Representatives voted 420 to 0 for making the report public. Even the President claims he wants the report to be public, but we are already seeing an effort by the White House and Republicans to walk back from transparency of the Mueller report.

On Monday, White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said the White House will "want to make sure we're protecting the office of the presidency; have to look at things like protecting executive privilege and sources and methods."

Let us be clear—We need to see the full Mueller report, not just summaries and not just page after page of redacted text. The sooner this happens, the sooner we can reassure the American people about the integrity of the process. The American people deserve no less.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The Senator from Montana.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, the decision earlier this week to undo the Affordable Care Act—the decision made by a bunch of unelected bureaucrats at the Department of Justice—is nothing short of a slap in the face to our democracy.

The Affordable Care Act was passed by majorities in the House and the Senate; it was upheld by the Supreme Court; and it continues to be supported by folks on both sides of the aisle.

Nonetheless, the Department of Justice, through the direction of the President of the United States, has decided to undo the ACA and all the things that are in the ACA.

This isn't the first time. For the last nearly decade, I have heard a seemingly endless number of speeches on the floor of this body, and we have seen vote after vote after vote after vote, under both Republican and Democratic leadership, to repeal the ACA. It hasn't succeeded.

So what the Department of Justice decided to do is take the law into their own hands and circumvent the legislative process. I guess they felt they had no other choice.

It didn't just happen this week. Last summer, they refused to defend a provision of the ACA that protects people with preexisting conditions. That is pretty interesting.

My best friend in life, other than my wife, has diabetes, and he is somebody who has fought diabetes since we were in junior high. His folks didn't have diabetes, but he did. He still does.

He was not able to have health insurance that was affordable until the ACA came along. He wasn't even allowed to change jobs for fear that when he did get health insurance when he changed jobs, he would lose it and then have to go uninsured until—until—the ACA came along.

So when the DOJ decided to not defend the provision for preexisting conditions, it left many of us scratching our heads.

Then, earlier this week, the administration took it even further by lending its full-throated support for overturning the ACA in its entirety, which would result in ripping healthcare away from tens of millions of Americans.

This administration's actions would put millions of Americans at risk by getting rid of every last protection that was enshrined in the law, including Medicaid expansion and coverage for preexisting conditions that are, without debate, providing lifesaving and affordable healthcare to folks across this country.

If they, the administration, succeed in dismantling our healthcare system, I guarantee you the cost of healthcare will rise through the roof.

Oh, yes—no, no—they will point to junk plans. There are junk plans out there. They are cheap, but they are called junk for a reason. Just hope, if you have a junk plan, you never get sick because they are junk.

Dismantling this healthcare system not only will cause healthcare to go through the roof—because we are going back to the old system—there is no replace here. They will replace it with the old system. It will imperil the sustainability of our hospitals across this country but particularly in rural and frontier communities.

Don't ask me about this; ask hospital administrators. They will tell you that if the healthcare bill is repealed, they will either have to change the entire way they provide healthcare or close entirely. Once again, it will mean American families are just one devastating diagnosis away from bankruptcy, particularly if you live in rural America.

This administration's heartless decision is going to have devastating consequences on Montana's families. Let me give some statistics from a Montana perspective:

Fifty thousand Montanans who buy their healthcare coverage on the ACA market would lose that. Now, 50,000 is not many people, right? In a State of just over 1 million, that is a lot of people.

Ninety thousand Montanans who receive coverage as a result of Medicaid expansion would lose their coverage. I have told the story many times about a gentleman in Butte, MT, who was fighting diabetes and, by his own admission, mental health problems. This guy was about 45 years old, by the way. When the legislature expanded Medicaid 2 years ago, he was able to get healthcare to finally get his diabetes under control, and he was able to see a psychologist to get the tools he needed to take care of his own mental health. It resulted in his ability—for the first time in his life, he said—to be able to get a full-time job and support his family. He was incredibly proud of that.

That is one story of many across Montana and across this country, where Medicaid expansion has done an incredible job getting people back into the economy and helping build our economy. Know, once the ACA is repealed, Medicaid expansion is gone.

In Montana, we have 152,000 Montanans with preexisting conditions that before the ACA would disqualify them from coverage for healthcare. If the ACA is repealed, they could once again face lifetime caps; so, when you get sick and need that health insurance the most, it will not be there because you would be up against a cap.

They already have Medicare, where more than 110,000 Montana seniors rely on Medicare prescription drug plans for coverage of prescription drugs. That is going to be gone. It would reopen the doughnut hole and make hundreds of thousands responsible for increased costs.

I can tell you, in Montana, where poverty is the highest is in Indian Country. They would lose their assistance to purchase coverage or cost-sharing reductions to eliminate out-of-pocket expenses—these are our Native Americans—or those who were able to get on expanded Medicaid would lose that.

These aren't nameless, faceless folks. These are folks like Donna from Big Timber, who, after battling cancer, wouldn't be able to access quality, affordable healthcare without the ACA. They are people like Jeffrey from Great Falls, who has a daughter with special needs and owns a business. He told me his family and business would both fall apart without the ACA. It means the many folks in Libby who rely on quality insurance to access their community health center to address the unique healthcare challenges their government promised to protect would be gone.

Look, I have sat in this body, and I have heard speech after speech after speech about the ACA, what it does good and what it does not so good, but I am telling you, if you want to cause a train wreck in healthcare, this is a great way to do it—repeal it and let everybody be on their own—and it is not going to be pretty.

If you start losing rural hospitals in rural America, they will not come back. You will see further depopulation in rural America—because, by the way, that golden hour is called golden for a reason when you get hurt. If that hospital isn't there, you are more likely to go live in a more urban population center where healthcare is more expensive.

Nobody in this body has ever said the ACA was perfect, but I firmly believe it was a lot better than what we had. We always have the opportunity to step forth and improve it. Repealing it is not improving it.

What repealing is, is a campaign promise. We have heard them before: We are going to repeal the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare. We are going to build a wall on the southern border, no

matter if it separates farmers from their land, no matter if it creates a different border on the southern border. It was a campaign promise, just like repealing the ACA was.

The reason we are in single-digit popularity in this body is that we don't listen to the people. We listen to a select few who have certain people's ears in this body, and we don't make decisions based on what is best for this country and the people who live here. This is just another example of that.

It is time the Members of the greatest deliberative body wake up, take the ACA and improve the things that are wrong with it, and do our level best to make sure people can afford to get sick. It is pretty basic.

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

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

NOMINATION OF NICOLE R. NASON

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the nomination of Nicole Nason to serve as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The Federal Highway Administration plays a central role in America's mobility. The administration is the lead partner to State and local transportation programs that maintain and improve our Nation's roads, highways, and bridges. It has been without a Senate-confirmed leadership director for far too long.

America's transportation infrastructure faces a number of challenges. Authorization of the Federal highway programs are going to expire at the end of September of 2020. We need to work together in Congress to write and pass a bipartisan highway infrastructure bill that upgrades America's roads and bridges.

The Environment and Public Works Committee, which I chair, has already begun the bipartisan process of drafting this legislation. The Federal Highway Administration needs a strong Administrator in the office, one who can work with Congress on the development and implementation of highway infrastructure legislation.

Nicole Nason is the right person for the job. She is well qualified, and brings impressive experience in transportation policy to this critically important position.

Under President Bush, she served as Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. That is the Department of Transportation's top road safety official.

Before that, she served as the Department of Transportation's Assistant Secretary for Government Affairs. In that role, she played a key part in ne-

gotiating the bipartisan passage of a 5-year highway reauthorization bill.

Ms. Nason most recently served as the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Administration, a position where she has managed nearly 2,000 employees and contractors.

Ms. Nason has won praise from a wide variety of groups. Helen Witty is the national president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. This is what she stated:

Nicole is a true champion of highway safety and will be an asset to the Department of Transportation as the Federal Highway Administration Administrator. On behalf of MADD, I wholeheartedly endorse her for this position.

The Associated General Contractors of America had this to say:

Ms. Nason is a superb choice to fulfill the Federal Highway Administration's leadership role in improving mobility on our nation's highways.

The Governors Highway Safety Association has stated:

Throughout her career, Ms. Nason has demonstrated a clear commitment to public service and, during her tenure as Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) a dedication to advancing highway safety.

Confirming Ms. Nason to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration will be an important step in supporting our Nation's highways, roads, and bridges.

The Environment and Public Works Committee recognized this when we reported her nomination by voice vote on February 5. That has been nearly 2 months ago. It shouldn't take this long to confirm such a highly qualified nominee to such an important position.

Nicole Nason will be an excellent Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. I encourage every Senator to vote to confirm her.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Nicole R. Nason, of New York, to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 15 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my friend and colleague, Senator BARRASSO, to speak on behalf of the nomination of Nicole Nason to serve as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

Ms. Nason is currently serving as the Assistant Secretary for Administration