

the table, telegraphs our foreign policy to our adversaries, and emboldens those who wish us harm.

No one seeks a conflict with Iran—not the President of the United States, not this body, and not the American people. The U.S. Government has made clear our willingness to negotiate with Iran.

The Iranian people are a proud people. They have a proud history. They are the descendants of the Persian culture, one of the greatest cultures on the face of the earth. The Iranian people deserve better than what they are getting from the regime in power now in Iran.

The fact remains that the Iranian regime is faced with a sharp choice. The regime must choose between continued terrorist activity and behaving as a responsible member of the international community. The Iranian regime should sit down and think about the road that they are pursuing.

Like all countries, they want national security for their people. Is the road to national security trying to develop a nuclear weapon that the world has told them they can't develop? Is it continuing funding terrorists? Is it continuing the malign activities that it continues within Syria? None of these things gives them the national security they want.

They should take a lesson from North Korea. North Korea pursued this for generations. But in the last 18 months, North Korea sat down and said: Do you know what? Our national security is better served by picking door No. 2 instead of door No. 1. As a result of that, the threat that North Korea has been under has been greatly lifted.

This particular amendment is an amendment that has a place in the debate, but it has no place in this particular bill. First of all, it is not within the jurisdiction of the committee that has this bill in front of them. It is within the jurisdiction of our committee, the Foreign Relations Committee. These issues on war powers and the President's ability to use military force deserve thoughtful and reasoned debate. It is not a cavalier amendment like this that takes away the ability of our men and women to actually defend themselves.

I urge my colleagues to cast a “no” vote on this amendment and get on with the serious business and the important business of passing the National Defense Authorization Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter from the chairman and the vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee regarding the referral of S. 1879 be printed in the RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,
Washington, DC, June 25, 2019.
Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL: Pursuant to section 3(b) of S. Res. 400 of the 94th Congress, as amended by S. Res. 445 of the 108th Congress, we request that S. 1879, the Protect our Universities Act of 2019, be sequentially referred to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence for a period not to exceed ten days.

Sincerely,

RICHARD BURR,
Chairman.
MARK R. WARNER,
Vice Chairman.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, this month, we surpassed the record for the longest period in American history without an increase in the minimum wage. It has been nearly a decade since minimum wage workers last got a raise—literally a decade. Because of inflation, the salary of a minimum wage worker today is worth \$3,000 less than it was in 2009. Think about that. It is not like minimum wage workers are making a lot of money. A minimum wage worker's salary today is equivalent to \$3,000 less than it was a decade ago because of inflation.

President Trump and Republicans in Congress don't have a plan and don't even propose to have a plan. In fact, they block any plans the rest of us have. They don't have a plan to give millions of workers a raise. Why? Because the corporate lobbyists going in and out of the office of the Senate majority leader don't want them to.

We know it is not just minimum wage workers who are losing out on money in their pockets because the President and the Members of this body always stand on the side of corporate interests, always put their thumb on the scale supporting corporations over workers. Look at the priorities Democrats fight for every day in this body, and then look at what this administration does. It is pretty clear who is on the side of American workers.

Democrats have plans to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. President Trump is against it. He wants to do nothing to raise wages.

Democrats have a plan to strengthen collective bargaining rights to give workers more power in the workplace—the PRO Act. President Trump nominates judge after judge who puts their thumb on the scale for Wall Street over consumers and workers.

Democrats have a plan to put more money back in the pockets of 114 million American workers—the Working Families Tax Relief Act. It means if you are making \$25,000 or \$30,000 and if you have children or if you don't have children, through the earned-income

tax credit, you get more money in your pocket. Again, President Trump and the special interest Republicans in this town show their hostility to workers by opposing it.

President Trump, though, did sign a tax cut for corporations that led to record stock buybacks. The tax cut that President Trump pushed through this Senate, with the majority leader doing his groundwork for him—the bill he pushed, the tax cut he pushed through the Senate, over time, more than 75 percent of that tax cut will go to the richest 1 percent of the people. Think about that. There was \$1½ trillion in tax cuts. Who benefits? Seventy-five percent of the benefits go to the richest 1 percent of the people in this country.

Democrats also have a plan to give American workers more control over their lives and their schedules—the Schedules that Work Act, which we will be introducing soon.

We have a plan to protect workers from companies that steal their hard-earned money by refusing to pay them for the hours they have worked—the Wage Theft Protection Act. Think about how that works. You work at a salary. Say you are making \$35,000 a year. You are a night manager at a fast-food restaurant. The company decides to list you as a manager, so you are making a \$35,000-a-year salary. The company can work you 42, 45, 50 hours a week and pay you not a cent for the hours above 40 because you earn that salary and because the company declared you manager. I call it wage theft.

We used to have laws in this country that we enacted many years ago, updated with President Ford, President Nixon, and then President Obama, but President Trump has said no and scaled that back. His administration rolled back rule after rule that protects workers from companies that cheat them out of the wages they have earned.

Again, whose side are you on when you have a President who is hostile to workers and who betrays workers while talking a good game but is clearly on the side of corporate interests every single time?

Democrats are united in demanding that any new North America Free Trade Agreement—any new NAFTA have strong labor standards so we don't end up with another race to the bottom on workers' rights and benefits. So far, President Trump hasn't produced a deal that protects workers from corporations that want to move to Mexico so they can pay the workers less. In fact, the Trump tax cut bill that Senator MCCONNELL—down the hall—fought for and rammed through this Senate by only a couple of votes gave corporations a 21-percent tax rate.

You shut down the Lordstown GM plant in Youngstown, OH. You are paying a 21-percent tax rate. When you move to Mexico, you pay half that tax rate. You pay 10.5 percent. That is

what has happened as the President has failed to renegotiate NAFTA to help workers.

Let me give you an example. Let me give a real quick story. After NAFTA passed, 5 months later, I went to the Mexican border with a friend. I went across the border and visited a Mexican auto plant. That auto plant looked just like an auto plant in Cleveland or just like an auto plant in Cincinnati and just like the Jeep plant in Toledo.

There was one difference. The workers were working hard. The floors were clean. The technology was up-to-date. There was one difference between the auto plant in Mexico and the auto plant in Toledo. The difference was the Mexican auto plant didn't have a parking lot because the workers who work there can't afford to buy the cars they make.

Yet President Trump's renegotiation of NAFTA left those workers' wages out so the workers will continue to be far, far underpaid in Mexico, will have weaker environmental laws—especially with the Trump tax plan—encouraging more American companies to move to Mexico.

On another issue so important to so many in this country, especially elderly people, Democrats have a plan to lower the price of prescription drugs. One news outlet said it combines just about every policy idea that drug lobbyists hate. Yet President Trump and Members of this Senate, all with good healthcare paid for by taxpayers—don't ever forget that. All of us who represent people in this country have good healthcare paid for by taxpayers. They are all trying to take away the protections for Americans with preexisting conditions.

Let me go back to the overtime issue for a minute. Three years ago, I stood

in Columbus to announce the Obama administration was going to raise the salary threshold to earn overtime pay and make millions of more workers eligible. That would have meant 4 million Americans and 130,000 Ohioans were going to get a raise. As I explained earlier, when you make \$35,000 or \$40,000 and are paid a salary, they call you management. So when you work more than 40 hours, you don't get paid a nickel for any time you work over 40 hours. So what President Obama's rule did was give a raise to 130,000 Ohioans, 4 million workers, but workers didn't get that raise because attorneys general—far-right and extremely conservative attorneys general—around the country first sued to stop it, and then when President Trump won the election, he came up with a new rule that leaves most of those workers behind.

We are talking about people making \$38,000 or \$40,000 a year—middle managers at banks, restaurants, and grocery stores. They are often required to work 60 to 70 hours a week without getting a cent of overtime. It is an American value and what we stand for as a nation. It is how we should govern, through the eyes of workers, through the dignity of work. If people work 50 or 60 hours—obviously, Senators and bank presidents and CEO's and doctors and lawyers shouldn't get paid overtime, but people making \$35,000 or \$40,000, if you work more than 40 hours a week, you should get overtime. That is what we used to do in this country, but we don't do it all the time now because of President Trump's opposition.

Democrats have a bill to fix this, the Restoring Overtime Pay Act, that would allow 4.6 million Americans to be newly eligible for overtime pay.

The President clearly doesn't understand how somebody living on \$35,000

or \$40,000 a year—what that person's challenges are. The President thinks it is fine to leave those workers behind. So much for fighting for American workers. That was his campaign promise. He would put them back to work. He would have good manufacturing wages for them. He would pay them. He would make sure they made good wages. It is all part of Donald Trump's phony populism. He divides to distract from the fact that his administration looks like a Wall Street retreat.

True populism is never racist; it is never anti-Semitic. True populists don't pass tax cuts for rich people and leave out workers with children. Populists don't choose Wall Street over consumers. Populists don't choose corporations over workers. Populists don't choose health insurance companies over sick people.

It all comes down to whose side you are on. Are you going to fight for the dignity of work or are you going to fight for the privilege of the wealthy?

The President promised to fight for American workers. He breaks that promise every day. He has broken that promise for more than 2 years. If you love this country, you fight for the people who make it work. I wish President Trump would remember that.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:04 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, June 26, 2019, at 10 a.m.