

Research Center in Cleveland and the Plum Brook testing facility. We got to see how those scientists and engineers—the best in the world—are working to complete the Artemis Program. Again, this is an ambitious effort to put a woman on the moon and the next man on the moon within the next 5 years, laying the groundwork for our mission to Mars.

It was great to be home. It was great to have the opportunity to visit with folks all over the State of Ohio. We were busy, but it is also great now to have the opportunity to come back refreshed and to talk about how we can make a bigger difference for them here in the U.S. Congress with some of the legislative initiatives I have talked about today.

There is so much we can and should do this fall. I am eager to roll up my sleeves and have a productive session here, working on a bipartisan basis to get things done for the people I represent and for all Americans.

Thank you.

I yield back my time.

**The PRESIDING OFFICER.** The Senator from Texas.

#### VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I think people are surprised when they come to Texas and find out how diverse a State it really is. Not everybody there looks like me or pronounces their last name the same way.

In fact, we are a huge melting pot of people from all over the country and, literally, many from around the world who come to the State because we have a growing economy, creating jobs and opportunity. People can find work to provide for their family and achieve their dreams.

It shouldn't surprise anybody that Texas is increasingly diverse. We have benefited a lot from the variety of folks and cultures and ideas that have come around the world and planted roots in the Lone Star State.

When I ask folks if they know what the second most spoken language in Texas is, they say: Well, that is easy. It is Spanish.

I say: Well, that is right. Let me give you a harder one. What is the third most commonly spoken language in Texas?

After a couple of guesses, they are usually surprised when I say Vietnamese.

It is not in the overall numbers of Spanish or English, to be sure, but we have a vibrant Vietnamese community in Texas that was established after the fall of Saigon and the Vietnam war. Many of them immigrated to the Houston area or to the metroplex area.

Of course, they have faced many of the same struggles as those who have come to America throughout our country's history. In addition to adjusting to a new home, language, and culture, they have dealt with some ugly aspects of their new home: racism and bigotry.

From those challenges and from overcoming those challenges, they

have derived tremendous strength, demonstrated outstanding drive and a desire to succeed.

Our Vietnamese-American communities in Texas are growing and thriving, and they continue to play a very important role in our increasingly diverse State.

I had the chance to meet with a number of my Vietnamese-American constituents during the August break, and we talked about some of the issues that concern them the most.

Just last weekend, in fact, I visited Cali Saigon Mall in Garland, TX, for their annual children's festival. I participated in an on-stage discussion with a number of community leaders. Although the children seemed more interested in the tiger dance or musical performances and the colorful costumes, it was a great opportunity for me to hear from these folks firsthand. We had a serious discussion about the human rights climate in Vietnam, which has continued to decline.

The Vietnamese Government limits political freedom by denying its own citizens their right to vote in free and fair elections. It denies them the freedom of assembly and expression and due process rights—the sorts of basic rights we call human rights here in the United States.

Last year, one of my constituents, a young man named William Nguyen, was unjustly beaten and detained for participating in demonstrations in Ho Chi Minh City. We were fortunate enough to secure his release back home after the government convicted him on trumped-up charges. I was glad to welcome him back to the good old U.S. of A.

Sadly, the people who continue to live in Vietnam have to escape from a brutal Communist regime, which continues to disregard the most basic human rights, threaten religious freedom, and silence the press.

Vietnam remains one of the lowest ranked countries in the world when it comes to freedom of the press. In 2018, Reporters Without Borders ranked Vietnam 176th out of 180 countries worldwide.

It should come as no surprise that Vietnamese Americans who have lived under this type of rule—or who have family members who still do—don't take our freedoms here in America for granted. It is just the opposite. These immigrants are great patriots who fully appreciate the freedoms they enjoy here in America because they realize how close they came to seeing those same freedoms denied in their home country.

With them, I share their concerns about the rising interest here at home in failed ideas, like socialism, and will continue to dispel rumors that socialism can provide more than the free enterprise system, which has created the very prosperity that Vietnamese Americans and other immigrants enjoy here in the United States.

In addition to our efforts to strengthen our own democracy, we need to do

more to strengthen democracies around the world and to protect basic human rights. Earlier this year, I reintroduced the Vietnam Human Rights Sanctions Act to try to do just that. This bill would impose travel restrictions and other sanctions on Vietnamese nationals complicit in human rights abuses against their fellow citizens. These sanctions would not be lifted until the Vietnamese Government releases all political prisoners and stops the use of violence against peaceful demonstrators.

We simply can't avert our gaze and allow these practices to continue without any sort of accountability. I say the same for what is happening now in Hong Kong.

I appreciate the many Vietnamese Americans who have shared their experiences with me on this topic, and I will continue to advocate for a brighter future for the people of Vietnam.

#### TRIBUTE TO SANDY EDWARDS

Mr. President, on one other matter, I want to take a moment to recognize a member of my staff who is nearing her retirement—Sandy Edwards.

Sandy is the regional director in my Austin field office. She has been with me for nearly two decades—first, in my office when I was attorney general of Texas and now in the U.S. Senate, where she serves, as I said, as my central Texas regional director.

Everybody who knows Sandy knows she has the heart and spirit of a public servant. She works hard to make sure that every Texan who contacts my office feels appreciated, understood, and is happy with the support they receive.

She knows that our faces represent what people get for their tax dollars. With Sandy, central Texans have gotten some serious bang for their buck. Over the years, she has, of course, developed countless relationships with people and organizations that are working to improve our Texas communities in Central Texas.

I will never forget one year spending a December evening out in East Austin at an incredible nonprofit called the Community First! Village. We joined formerly homeless people for a Christmas tree lighting and spent a cold, rainy night with them rejoicing at what this organization and the good-hearted people who work there have helped them to achieve.

At one point, in 2012, Sandy had me biting down on a Starburst candy so students attending Girlstart Summer Camp could analyze my dental impression. I never got a report back of exactly how that turned out.

Sandy is not a fair-weather friend. She has also been by my side during some very difficult times. For example, in 2009, following the horrific shooting at Fort Hood, she was there as I fought to find words to provide even an ounce of comfort to the grieving post and the families there. We paid our respects to these American heroes and watched the ramp ceremony as their flag-draped caskets were loaded into a C-17 for their flight to Dover.

Then there was 2013 in West, TX. That is not the region. That is the name of the city. Following a massive fertilizer plant explosion, it tore through a tight-knit community and claimed the lives of 15 people, including most of the town's volunteer fire department. Sandy, of course, was on the ground, as she always is, helping to connect with the first responders and local officials, making sure they had the support we could provide from our office.

She was there during the Bastrop fires in 2011, the Wimberley flooding in 2015, and the deadly hot air balloon crash in Maxwell, TX, in 2016. Sandy has been a gracious helping hand during the tough times and an enthusiastic cheerleader during the good ones. I am sorry to lose such a devoted staffer and friend, and I know my team in Texas will miss her bighearted participation in our team effort.

I don't think it is really a coincidence that Sandy chose the month of September to retire because, of course, this is the start of her beloved Texas Longhorns' football season. I know she is looking forward to attending UT games this fall, along with her husband Stan and perhaps her son Kyle and his wife Brittney. I know for sure she will enjoy spending more time at her family's ranch in the Texas Hill Country.

I come to the Senate floor to publicly express my appreciation, as well as that of my entire staff and I would dare say every single Texan who ever met her, and to thank Sandy Edwards for the lives she has touched and made better. I say, thank you, Sandy, and I wish you a well-deserved next chapter in your life.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Louisiana

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, \$1 million a minute—not \$1 million an hour or a day or week, \$1 million a minute. That is how much we borrow every minute to operate the Federal Government. It is \$1.4 billion—that is nine zeros—a day. That is how much more we spend than we take in. Some people have said—I have heard Americans say this—that we spend money like a drunk sailor. That is not accurate because a drunk sailor stops when he runs out of money. We just borrow.

We don't just print this money. We issue Treasury notes and Treasury bonds and Treasury securities. We borrow it. Some Americans loan it to us. Some folks in other countries like Japan and China, they expect to be paid back, and we do have to pay them back. In a couple of years, we are going to be spending more in our budget on interest on our debt than we are spending on defense.

Now we are in the middle of putting together a budget for the American people. The first thing we had to do was agree on how much money we are going to spend. They call that the topline number, but that just means how much money we are going to spend

for the next 2 years. You will not be surprised to learn we are going to spend more.

I think it was a bad deal. I voted against it. Our agreement on what we are going to spend in the budget we are putting forward now, according to the CBO, is going to add to our \$22 trillion—that is 12 zeros—deficit. In fact, what we just agreed to, the additional spending, is going to add, according to our Congressional Budget Office, \$12 trillion over the next 10 years.

I voted against it. I lost. The majority rules. Now we are trying to put together a budget with all this extra money, and our challenge is or ought to be: How do we spend the money the American people are going to give us in an efficient way? I think every single Member of the Senate wants to do that.

I want to talk for a few minutes about an issue that is going to come up. It is going to come up through the subcommittee I chair. It has to do with elections, and it has to do with money.

Russia tried to interfere with our election. You can write that down and take it home to mama. It is true. They did it. They didn't change a single vote, but they did try to influence the way Americans did vote. To try to prevent that from happening again in 2018, this Congress gave our States \$380 million to shore up their election systems. They haven't spent all that yet.

This Congress also took other steps. The Senate has unanimously approved two bipartisan election security bills. I think they are both now pending in the House. We passed the Defending the Integrity of Voting Systems Act. That is going to make it a Federal crime to hack any voting system in a Federal election. We passed the Defending Elections Against Trolls from Enemy Regimes Act. We call that the DETER Act. It will bar people who interfere in our elections or attempt to do so from entering the United States. Our Department of Homeland Security, very able women and men, and our cyber security advisors there, smart people—they are helping our State and local officials, on a daily basis, guard against threats.

We had a classified briefing. By "we," I mean all Members of the Senate, Republicans and Democrats. "Classified" means it is in our room down in the basement where foreign agents cannot listen in. The FBI Director was there. The Director of National Intelligence was there. Most senior ranking members of our military were there, and the topic was: How did we do in 2018? We know the Russians and others took a run at us in 2016. They didn't succeed, but they tried. How did we do in 2018?

Let me tell you, our men and women at the FBI and in our military and in Homeland Security, they are on it. Our 2018 election went off without a hitch. I am not saying some foreign despots didn't try to influence how we voted, but they didn't change a single vote. Our people did a great job, and every

Senator, Democratic and Republican, in that room, in that classified setting—I can't tell you the details. I wish I could. If I could, you would be impressed. But everybody walked out of there and said: Man, we are on it. The 2018 elections went off without a hitch, and, by God, we are ready for 2020.

We didn't just do that. I am going to go back to what I just said. We gave our States \$380 million. They haven't even spent all of it yet, but there is going to be an effort to spend a whole bunch more to give it to the States. I don't know how much, but at least \$200 million, maybe \$400 million, maybe a billion. If I thought it was necessary, I would vote for it.

Some of my colleagues, in perfectly good faith, think the States need more money, even though they haven't spent what we gave them to begin with and even though all of our intelligence officials say we are ready for 2020. Some of my colleagues, in good faith, think they need more money, but some of my colleagues see this as a first step to nationalizing elections, and that is what worries me.

Do you know what makes our elections safest of all? You can't just hack one system. You have to hack 50. You have to hack 50 because the States run elections, and they do a pretty good job. They do a really good job.

There is an effort—not by all but by some—to get the Federal Government in charge of elections. Do you know how you do that? You don't just jump in and grab them. You sneak up on them. I will tell you how you sneak up on them. You start giving them money, and you get them addicted. You give them a little more money, and you get them addicted. Then, the next thing you know, the Feds are running the elections, and not for all but for some of my colleagues that is what this is about.

This country started out as a self-reliant, tax-averse Union of States. They were very skeptical of the Federal Government. Our original States and all those after them, they insisted on running their own elections, and it has worked. We don't need the Federal Government in charge of elections.

There are some of my colleagues coming this time—and, look, I am not impugning their integrity. They are entitled to their opinion because this is America, but I am entitled to mine. In the effort last year, we were able to beat it back. I am afraid some of my friends on this side of the aisle this time are having second thoughts. I am hearing all kinds of rumors. It is amazing what you can pick up around this place if you just walk around the floor and keep your mouth shut and your ears open. You hear all kinds of stuff.

I am here to say, if we do it, we are going to look back, when the Federal Government is running our elections and screwing them up, and say this is where it began. If you want to put the U.S. Federal Government in charge of your elections instead of the States, if