

of Representatives has to remove President Trump from office. We have heard over and over again from our Democratic colleagues that impeachment will not interfere with their ability to legislate and to get work done, but their actions speak louder than words.

While I think the decision to block defense funding is the most egregious example so far, it is far from the only one. The extent to which they will go to try to defeat and slow down and impede the President and anything he might be able to point to as a victory—here is another example.

It has been more than a year since the landmark trade agreement between Mexico and Canada was announced, but we are still waiting for Speaker PELOSI to show the green light and pass the USMCA and send it to the Senate, where I am sure it will pass overwhelmingly. This agreement will provide billions of dollars in economic growth, new jobs here at home, and greater stability for our economy, but we haven't been able to reap those benefits because the agreement is being stalled in the House.

Well, why is that? Well, it could be because they are obsessed with and preoccupied with impeachment, and they can't seem to get anything else done. The Speaker claims progress is being made, but it has been the same song and dance for months with nothing to show for it.

In the Senate, unfortunately, things aren't a lot different. A bill I introduced with our Democratic colleague, Senator BLUMENTHAL from Connecticut, to reduce drug prices, has gotten caught in the crosshairs of this partisan fighting too. This bill has broad bipartisan support. It would lower Federal spending by more than one-half billion dollars in over 10 years. It would also save consumers out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs.

According to Politico, the Democratic leader is blocking the bill, despite the fact that folks in both parties in Congress, as well as the President, have said that they are eager to pass legislation to reduce drug prices. The Democratic leader will not let it come to the floor.

To me, this is the greatest example of our dysfunction here: When the President is for something, when Democrats are for something, when Republicans are for something, when the House is for something, when the Senate is for something, we still can't seem to get it done. That is a hard one to explain. Sadly, the list doesn't stop there.

Here is another example. Earlier this year, the Senate unanimously—unanimously—passed a bill I introduced to reauthorize the Debbie Smith Act. This program supplies funding to State and local crime labs to test DNA, or forensic evidence, and to reduce the rape kit backlog. It is about as nonpartisan an issue as they come. Unfortunately, that didn't make it immune from the

gamesmanship in the House. After months of refusing to act on this bill, we sent it over—I think it was in May. They did nothing for a long time, and they allowed the Debbie Smith Act to expire.

When something as noncontroversial as reducing the rape kit backlog gets politicized, you know you are in trouble. Well, I was finally glad to see last week that the House changed its tune, thanks to a lot of pressure both from within and without, because their refusal to reauthorize the Debbie Smith Act and this critical rape kit backlog funding was indefensible. So I am hopeful we can get that bill to the President's desk now after this long and unnecessary delay.

We all knew that the Democratic obsession with removing the President from office began before he was inaugurated, but no one expected it to get this far out of hand or for the dysfunction to be so pervasive. Their impeach-at-any-cost attitude has now brought the work of Congress to a screeching halt. Legislation is collecting cobwebs in the corner while our Democratic colleagues are conducting secret hearings behind closed doors in an effort to reverse the 2016 election.

While they are continuing this charade here in Washington, their constituents are likely wondering what it is their elected representatives are doing to make their lives better at home. Are they passing bills to bring down drug prices, like the bill I have with Senator BLUMENTHAL? Are they trying to strengthen the economy by improving trading relationships among Mexico, Canada and the United States? Are they passing legislation to support our men and women in the military?

I am sad to say that for our Democratic colleagues, the answer to each of those questions is no—no time for tackling the big problems but plenty of time for the politics of trying to remove the President from office, 1 year before the next general election.

Speaker PELOSI knows this is going to divide the country, and it is going to occupy everyone's attention here in Washington, DC, until it is concluded, and she also knows that the likelihood of getting 66 votes in the Senate to convict the President and to remove him is incredibly unlikely. It has never happened in our Nation's history, even though President Nixon did resign. No previous President who has been impeached has actually been convicted and removed from office.

The inability to separate their obsession with the President from their duties here in Congress should be embarrassing.

Impeachment may consume the news cycle, but it shouldn't stop all of us from working together in the best interests of our constituents and the American people. I hope our Democratic colleagues will reconsider.

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

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

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I am here on a sad note and then on a happier note as well. I am going to try to tie the two together.

REMEMBERING KAY HAGAN

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I have been privileged to serve, and this my 19th year here in the U.S. Senate. A long time ago, I served as a naval officer in the Vietnam war and as later State treasurer, Congressman, Governor of Delaware, and now I serve as U.S. Senator. I have had the privilege of serving with literally hundreds of people here, in the House, as Governor, and certainly in the Navy and the armed services during the Vietnam war.

Among my all-time favorite colleagues of all of those, whether it was in the military service, the State of Delaware, or here in Congress, one of my all-time favorite people to serve with was a woman from North Carolina, from a place called Shelby.

My wife is from North Carolina, from a place called Boone. Her family is from North Carolina. She has her father down there. Boone is up in the mountains. She has sisters. She has sisters in Raleigh, and some of her family has actually lived in Shelby, NC.

There was a woman born there on May 26, 1953, named Kay Hagan. I don't know that she was born Kay Hagan, but she became Kay Hagan, and maybe that was after getting married. But she was the daughter of a homemaker named Jeanette, and her dad had a tire business. Later, he worked as a real estate broker. Apparently, politics was in her blood. Her dad also served as mayor, later on, of Lakeland, FL. That was where Kay Hagan spent most of her childhood.

Lakeland, FL, is near to me because it is the spring training camp for the Detroit Tigers. I have been a Detroit Tigers fan since I was 9 years old. So it has been a while. For the people watching the World Series, three of the best pitchers in baseball used to pitch for my Tigers. They went through training camp in Lakeland and ended up with other teams that took them into the World Series.

Kay was not around to watch any of those former Tigers pitch because she passed away just about 3 days ago.

Her uncle was a former Governor of Florida, with whom I served. Lawton Chiles was one of the sweetest, best guys I have ever known. He served here in the U.S. Senate for many years—sort of a centrist Democrat. He was beloved in his State and beloved here as well.

Both Kay's dad and her brother served in the U.S. Navy. I did 23 years

in all, Active Duty and Reserve, in the Navy, and I treasure those days.

Apparently, Kay also spent summers on her grandparents' farm. They had a farm not in North Carolina but in a place called Chesterfield in South Carolina. Chesterfield used to be a tobacco brand. It was called Chesterfield. She spent summers on her grandparents' farm in Chesterfield, SC, and there she helped to string tobacco and harvest watermelons.

I grew up in Danville, VA, the world's biggest tobacco market. The kids in my classes at school—the really cool kids, apparently—strung tobacco and probably harvested watermelons, as well, as Kay did.

She graduated from Lakeland High School in 1971 and went on to Florida State University and received her JD from Wake Forest Law School in 1978.

Her husband Chip, whom she married, I think, in 1977, was a transactions lawyer. She raised her family in Greensboro, NC. If you go 30 or 40 miles north of Greensboro, you are in Virginia, and that is where I grew up, in Danville, VA.

When I first met her, we kind of talked about her background in the Navy and her father, and we talked about Lakeland, FL, and my affinity for the Detroit Tigers, who have trained there for decades. We talked about her raising her family in Greensboro. I spent a lot of my childhood in Danville, just north of Greensboro.

I told her a story about going to Greensboro with my dad, as a kid, and we got ourselves a hunting dog from Greensboro, where she raised her family.

She leaves behind three kids—Jeanette, who was named after her mother, Tilden, and Carrie. She also is a grandmother of five grandchildren whom she loved and adored.

Before she got into politics she worked in the financial industry. She became vice president of what was then North Carolina National Bank and went on to become today part of Bank of America.

She worked as a campaign manager for a guy named Jim Hunt. Jim Hunt was Governor for 8 years. In North Carolina, you can be Governor for 8 years, and you have to step down, or you can come back and be elected again. He was elected for another 8 years. She worked for Jim Hunt, a great education Governor, who always surrounded himself with just the best people in the world. I treasured serving as a Governor with him and his friendship, and the fact that she had been his campaign manager endeared her to me.

She was first elected to office, I think, when she was elected to the North Carolina General Assembly, not as a State representative but she was elected as a State senator. She served, I think, five terms, representing Guilford County down in North Carolina.

She ran for the Senate in 2008 against Elizabeth Dole, another person for whom I had great affection, as I did for

her husband, Bob. Both of them actually served here in the Senate, Bob and Elizabeth Dole. Elizabeth is from North Carolina.

We were fond of her, and when the two of them ran against each other, it was tough, but stuff like that happens. Kay won, and she came here and served for 6 years until 2015.

She left the Senate in 2014. She was defeated by THOM TILLIS, who serves here today. She lost by, I think, less than 50,000 votes, so it was a close vote. After her term ended in the Senate, she went on to work as a fellow at the Harvard Institute of Politics and a senior policy consultant at a law firm, Akin Gump.

She died October 28 of this year, 3 days ago, of encephalitis caused by a virus she contracted from a tick bite, and it is something that happened in 2016, and it was 3 years later that she finally died, which is very, very sad.

She was the second female Senator from North Carolina—first female Democrat to be elected from North Carolina to the Senate, the first female Democrat. She served, while she was here, on a number of committees. I did not have the pleasure of serving with her at the same time. She was on Armed Services. There is a lot of military in North Carolina, especially the Marines there on the East Coast.

But she was on the Banking Committee. She joined the committee after I left to be a member of the Finance Committee. She served on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee and Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

In 6 years, you vote on a lot of amendments, you vote on a lot of bills, you offer a lot of bills and amendments. She did all of that, and I just wanted to focus on one thing that she supported and worked on. She was a person who believed that we have a moral obligation to the least of these in our society. Matthew 25 speaks to a moral obligation—when people are hungry, what we should do about it, when they are naked or thirsty, what are our obligations, regardless of our faith.

Matthew 25 states: When I was hungry, did you feed me? When I was naked, did you clothe me? When I was thirsty, did you give me drink? When I was sick or in prison, did you visit me? When I was a stranger in your land, did you walk with me?

And she answered all of those questions: Yes, yes, yes.

She was somebody that thought we had moral obligations for the least of these, but since we didn't have unlimited amounts of money, we just couldn't waste our money, and we had to spend it effectively. She believed that we should not just give a person a fish and feed them for a day, but teach a person to fish and they would feed themselves for a lifetime.

She was a fitness buff. I love to work out, and my wife loves to work out, and she did too. I think that is one of the

reasons that she was able to fight this disease and fight it off as long as she did. There is a gym here that used to be little. It is a little bigger that it used to be. The one in the House is much bigger; they have a lot more people.

But they have a little swimming pool at the gym here, and I have never used it. For years, it was just men only. In fact, for years there was not even an opportunity for women in the Senate to actually have a fitness center to work out. She changed that. She led the fight to change that. I think when she lost her race in 2014 and the women in the Senate threw her a goodbye party, they did it at the pool and in the fitness center down in the basement of the Russell building.

In the 1970s, she was an intern in the Capitol—and we have some pages here. I don't think she was ever a page, but later she was an intern. She became an elevator operator. I am not sure if Harry Reid, who was our majority leader and minority leader here, he was an elevator operator, but there was sort of a pecking order, starting with pages at a very young age and interns later on, and then they become an elevator operator and have some other jobs here and then go off to do amazing things with their life.

And she certainly did that. She was operating an elevator here in the Senate that carried Senators, including her uncle Lawton Chiles, who I mentioned earlier.

Joe Biden visited Kay Hagan in North Carolina the day before her death—that would have been 4 days ago—and what Joe said of Kay is that she was a crucial partner in passing the Affordable Care Act and the stimulus package which got us off of our back when we were going through the worst recession since the Great Depression. Joe said that “She was a crucial partner” in passing the Affordable Care Act, which passed by one vote, and she was that one vote. I think she was probably prouder of that vote than anything that she did when she served here.

I want to segue from Kay, but before I do, she was always interested in figuring out the right things to do, not what was easy or expedient. She was always asking what is the right thing to do. I remember her being here and other Senators—Democrats and Republicans—and we were trying to figure out what to do on a particular issue. She would always say: What is the right thing to do?

She was one of those people who had deep faith, and she believed not only do we have a moral obligation to the least of these, but she thought that we ought to treat other people the way we wanted to be treated, and that is the Golden Rule.

As it turns out, about a week ago, I was invited to worship in a Hindu worship service in Delaware with a congregation of a thousand people, and I was reminded there that the Golden

Rule—to treat other people the way we want to be treated—is part of every major religion, the Golden Rule. I do not care if you are Catholic, I do not care if you are a Jew, I do not care if you are a Muslim, Hindu, some form of the Golden Rule is right there. She was a big proponent of the Golden Rule, and that was the work of her life.

She was also one of those people who focused on excellence in everything she did. She was committed to doing things well and wanted to be surrounded by staff that did things well. When things would go well for her and she would do a good job, she would always give credit to her team. When her team would fall short, she was not one of those people who blamed the team; she blamed herself.

Another thing I would say is she just didn't give up. She was tenacious—not very tall, not tall in stature, but, boy, was she tenacious. She showed this especially by the way she fought for her life to the very end 3 days ago.

I want to talk just a little about her vote on the Affordable Care Act and why she thought it was the right thing to do. Matthew 25 does not say anything about: I was lame and you gave me healthcare or access to healthcare. My own source of healthcare was the hospital, what did you do about it? That doesn't say that in the New Testament.

But I think the implication is clear. We have an obligation—I think a moral obligation to try to make sure everybody has access to healthcare and, hopefully, to affordable healthcare. That is what we tried to do with the Affordable Care Act, and that is why she supported it.

Sometimes people think the Affordable Care Act is just the exchanges, just the marketplaces. Every State has an exchange or marketplace that is there. It is sort of like a purchasing pool for healthcare that people can become a part of. If they don't work for an employer who provides healthcare, that is issued by the employer, and they are not old enough for Medicare or their income level is too high to allow them to participate in Medicaid and, in those cases, they have to find some way to get access to healthcare.

Back in 1993, the Republican Senator from Rhode Island, John Chafee—who is also a Navy guy, later Secretary of the Navy—he introduced legislation here in the Senate in 1993 as a Republican response to something Hillary Clinton was doing during her husband's administration that was working to find ways to make sure that everybody had access to healthcare in this country.

We worked on something called HillaryCare, and the Republicans ridiculed her efforts and those around her. She said basically in response: What is your idea? What is your idea?

The response was by Senator Chafee, joined by 22 or 23 Republican Senators, and part of what they came up with is that every State should have an ex-

change and every State should have the ability to set up the purchasing pool in their State. People who didn't have coverage could get their coverage in the exchanges.

Neither one was turned into law, but about 10, 12 years later, the new Governor of Massachusetts, MITT ROMNEY, took the idea of the exchanges and introduced the Mitt Romney Care so that the people in his State would have the opportunity to sign up for the coverage in their exchange.

We wrote the Affordable Care Act, we did it, and we took good ideas from all over the country and all over the world to provide healthcare to people that was affordable. One of the ideas that we stole to put in the Affordable Care Act was Governor Romney's idea of the exchanges.

And you know what? It was a good idea. It was a good idea. The first few years of RomneyCare in Massachusetts, they did a pretty good job of extending coverage. They did not do such a good job initially on affordability, and they kept trying, and they finally figured it out—competition in the marketplace, in the exchange, and more insurance companies providing, participating, and this worked well. We found in the first 2 years that the Affordable Care Act was standing up the exchanges 7, 8, or 9 years ago that it was a challenge. It was difficult.

What has happened now is the insurers are starting to figure it out. They priced too high. The States have come up with ways to buy down the risks for the insurers and to make a number of States' health insurance in the exchanges more affordable, so that more people can actually afford that help.

I would just close this here. The majority leader is standing here waiting to speak, so I will just close if I can by saying after a number of years seeing the cost of healthcare coverages in exchanges across the country go up, up, up—sometimes by double-digit rates—the insurance companies were trying to figure out how to price health insurance for people who have not had health insurance for years. It took them several years to figure it out, but they finally, for the most part, have. The cost of healthcare in exchanges doesn't go up by double-digit rates anymore.

In fact, we have 20 or more States now where the cost of healthcare coverage in the exchange is only going up a couple of percentage points, maybe less. In a half-dozen States, the cost of healthcare in the exchanges is actually going down. In the State of Delaware, when the exchanges open up tomorrow, the people will sign up for the healthcare exchange in Delaware, the price will not be going up next year. It will be going down by 19 percent. There are six other States where the consumer experience is similar, and that is encouraging.

A lot more insurance companies are offering coverage in the States, 23 last year and 45 this year—and that is going

to introduce competition and, we hope, a cycle that will allow more people to get better coverage for a lower price.

So, Kay Hagan, we miss you, and we considered it a privilege to have served with you here. Something good has come out of something very difficult. The passage of the Affordable Care Act was hard. It has been hard finding a way forward since then, but I think better days lie ahead, and market forces are starting to work, and that is a good thing.

And with that, I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for consideration of Calendar Nos. 468 through 477 and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

IN THE ARMY

The following named officers for appointment to the grade indicated in the United States Army under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Andrew C. Hilmes

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. James B. Hecker

IN THE NAVY

the following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Gregory C. Huffman

The following named officer for appointment in the grade indicated while serving as Surgeon General of the Navy under title 10, U.S.C., section 8077:

To be rear admiral

Rear Adm. Bruce L. Gillingham

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen Mark C. Schwartz