

I have the president of a community college in Memphis who tells me he loses 1,500 students a year because of the burdensome nature of the application.

Former Governor Bill Haslam, of Tennessee—our State—has the highest percentage of students who fill out the FAFSA, which is the Federal aid form for grants and loans. He says the single biggest impediment toward there being free tuition for 2 years of college in our State is the complex FAFSA.

I don't think it is unreasonable to say, while we help students at historically Black colleges, that we help those same students by simplifying their FAFSAs. Why don't we give them the short-term Pell grant that Senator KAINE and Senator PORTMAN and a dozen other Senators, including the Senator from Maryland, have introduced? Why don't we increase the size of the Pell grant in a way that we agree in a bipartisan way?

In other words, we don't have to discuss something until we find something we can't agree on. Why don't we take the things we do agree on, which are considered in the package that the Senator just objected to, and pass them?

There are 29 Senators—more Democrats than Republicans—who have formed these bills. If we can add to that other pieces of legislation, let's do it. Yet let's take the permanent funding for historically Black colleges—the simplification of the FAFSA, the short-term Pell grants, and the Pell grants for prisoners—and pass that.

As I said, we are not on vacation. We should be able to do this in the next few weeks or in the next few months. I mean, how long does it take just to pass something we already agree on? It shouldn't take us very long.

I am disappointed that the Senator has objected. I hope to keep coming to the floor and asking for the Senate to approve it. More importantly, I hope to keep working with the distinguished Senator from Washington State on our Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. We have often been able to work these matters out even when they are contentious and offered to the Senate a bipartisan package. I hope we can do that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL JEFF BURTON

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate MG Jeff Burton, a man of remarkable achievement and character, on a career dedicated to public service. After 7 years of serving as the adjutant general of the Utah National Guard, Major General Burton leaves behind a distinguished legacy.

The Utah National Guard provides military forces that are ready to assist both State and Federal authorities in times of emergency and in times of war. It is comprised of 7,300 soldiers and airmen from the Utah Army National Guard and the Utah Air National Guard.

As adjutant general, Major General Burton oversaw the training and military preparation of soldiers and airmen throughout the State. He is a principled and dedicated leader who has set a high standard of conduct for the men and women under his command.

Major General Burton and his wife, Charn, have always cared for and supported Guard members and their families, particularly in the tragic times of loss. Their devotion to the servicemen and servicewomen of Utah cannot be overstated.

Major General Burton's life of service extends beyond his time as adjutant general. He was an assistant professor at both Brigham Young University and Utah Valley University, where he taught military science.

He was awarded the Bronze Star for his exceptionally meritorious service as the commander of the 1457th Engineer Combat Battalion during Operation Iraqi Freedom, during which his unit played a significant role in the initial ground war. Under his leadership, his unit also helped to rebuild the country after its having been devastated by conflict.

Our great State of Utah owes Major General Burton a debt of gratitude for his decades of service. We wish the honorable general all the best in his next chapter.

Thank you, Major General Burton, for your service to our State and to our Nation.

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. SCHUMER. Mr. 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.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last week, the House of Representatives voted in favor of a set of procedures to govern its impeachment inquiry, laying out a formal process to examine the facts in a deliberate and fairminded process.

Our Republican colleagues keep changing their arguments as to why they are opposed to what the House is doing. First, there needed to be a vote. There was a vote. Second, make it public. Now it is public. Third, there is no quid pro quo. Now there is a quid pro quo, they even admit.

So now they are saying it is not impeachable. The shifting stands of the Republicans' argument in the House and Senate, which seems to shift all the time, indicates they don't seem to have a real interest in following the facts to where they lead but rather just defending Trump, regardless of the facts. That is a huge mistake for the Republic and for the Senate and how we should conduct ourselves.

So let me elaborate. For weeks, congressional Republicans criticized House Democrats for not scheduling a vote. As soon as the vote was taken, the same Republicans criticized the process once again.

Republicans criticized House Democrats for conducting classified hearings, even though the material discussed concerns our national security and Republicans readily participated in those hearings. Then once the House voted on the plan for open hearings, predictably, the same Republicans kept criticizing the process, coming up with a new argument: The idea that there was no "quid pro quo," which the President himself stated, although he was contradicted by Mr. Mulvaney, and that seemed to be the linchpin of their defense of the President in the last few days and weeks.

But now, all of the sudden, knowing maybe what is coming out, all of the sudden, our Republican colleagues are saying: Yes, there was a quid pro quo, but it doesn't matter. It is not impeachable. Some of them even think it is not even wrong, which is absolutely absurd.

So instead of the shifting sands of defenses of the President on a near daily basis, my Republican friends should let all the facts come out and make their judgments based on the facts. Instead of changing their argument every third day when faced with new facts, they should remain dispassionate and say we are going to look at the facts, instead of just jumping to find a new defense of the President no matter what the facts.

If you are defending the President because there is no quid pro quo and there is quid pro quo, maybe you should be saying: Maybe something is going on here. But, no, a new argument pops up.

The investigation is not yet complete. Jumping to conclusions before all the facts come out is misguided. It is unbecoming of a Senator's role as judge and juror of a potential impeachment case.

Now, last night, the President held a political rally in Kentucky with several Republican elected officials, including the junior Senator from Kentucky who publicly and explicitly urged the media to expose the identity of the Federal whistleblower. The President, of course, quickly praised the Senator's idea.

I cannot stress just how wrong this is. We have Federal whistleblower laws designed to protect the identity and safety of patriotic Americans who come forward to stand up for the Constitution. There are Members on the other side of the aisle, including senior Members and chairs of committees, who spent their entire careers defending whistleblowers and the laws that protect them and their families.

So where are they now? I was pleased to hear that my colleague, Senator THUNE, spoke out and said that whistleblowers must be protected. I believe

that Senator GRASSLEY is saying the same. They are both right. But there should be bipartisan outrage at the public attempts by the President and a Member of this body to expose the identity of a Federal whistleblower. You do not get to determine when our whistleblower laws apply or do not or whether you like what the whistleblower said or you do not. They are laws. This whistleblower, whose complaint was deemed “credible” and an “urgent matter” by a Trump appointee, is protected by these statutes. Every single Member of this body should stand up and say that it is wrong to disclose his or her identity.

Our rhetoric can sometimes be overheated, but I am appalled by these developments. There is no other word for it. We are in a moment of history when the Republicans, over only a few weeks, have shifted from saying that no laws were broken to saying that laws were broken, but it is not impeachable, to outright advocating that laws be broken.

Where is the internal gyroscope, the clock of decency and honor on the other side? They are twisting themselves in contradictory pretzels to defend this President who is going to bounds that we have rarely seen in this body with any party with any President.

I don't understand what sort of effect President Trump has on people of integrity and some degree of strength, who just fold whenever he says something, twist their arguments, change their arguments, do 180-degree hairpins about their arguments, all because they are afraid of telling the truth to power, the truth to this President who never likes to hear it.

#### GUN LEGISLATION

Mr. President, on guns, on August 5, days after mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton, President Trump declared that “we cannot let those killed in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, die in vain.” He said, “Republicans and Democrats must come together and get strong background checks.”

Those were the words of President Trump. A few weeks later, Leader MCCONNELL promised that a debate on background checks would be “front and center” in the Senate after the summer work period. These were Leader MCCONNELL's words. He said, “What we can't do is fail to pass something,” he said.

Well, it has been 3 months since those statements. Leader MCCONNELL's Senate has not only failed to pass them, it has not even debated some of them. And then on Friday, the Washington Post released a story that all but confirms the worst fear of families torn apart by guns violence—the headline of the Washington Post: “Trump abandons proposing ideas to curb gun violence, after saying he would, following mass shootings.”

According to the Washington Post, the President has abandoned his brief flirtation with supporting expanded

background checks because his advisers believe it will hurt his chances of reelection, “a reversal from the summer when the President insisted he would offer policies to curb firearm deaths.”

Maybe it is not surprising with this President—it isn't unfortunately; he goes back on his word day after day—but it is profoundly disappointing. Democrats, despite our skepticism, tried to work in good faith with our Republican colleagues to respond to the tragedies in El Paso and Dayton. Many of my colleagues, Senator MURPHY and Senator MANCHIN and others, worked with Republican Senators and ferried back and forth to the White House to find a proposal that could become law that would save American lives. We gave the White House every chance to get to “yes.”

But despite those efforts, Leader MCCONNELL has not moved even one gun safety bill to the floor, and President Trump is opposing votes on any—any—potential compromise, just like on infrastructure, just like on immigration reform, just like on a myriad of other issues, President Trump would rather do nothing to help the American people because it would upset political allies like the NRA.

He will make bold and sometimes surprising promises in the heat of the moment. When there was a huge pressure to do something about background checks because of the shootings across the country, he said he would, but then this man who tries to portray himself as a tough guy backs off when lobbyists say he can't do it. That doesn't show strength. It shows weakness and shows a lack of candor and honesty to the American people. It shows he is using the American people for his own political purposes, which he does over and over again.

Only time will tell how many lives it will take before President Trump and the congressional Republicans come to their senses and work with us to finally do something about the epidemic of gun violence in America.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Now, climate—yesterday, the Trump administration formally sent a notice to the UN that the United States will withdraw from the Paris Agreement in 2020. In the long list of dangerous policy decisions that President Trump has advanced over the years, this ranks as one of the very, very worst.

Future generations will look back on this decision as a dramatic step backward in the fight to address climate change. Future generations would note this date and how it hurt our planet, our economy, and our national security in the decades that followed.

President Trump has been an enemy of climate science in ways that no other President has been. Before becoming President, he called climate change a hoax, and unfortunately, his Presidency has treated it like one. He has stuffed his administration to the brim with lobbyists for Big Oil and Big

Coal; he has crippled the Federal Government's ability to research climate change. He rolled back emission standards and used fake science to underreport the effects of climate change.

Instead of protecting the interests of the people, President Trump has catered shamelessly to the interests of oil companies and corporate polluters. History will look harshly on President Trump's failure to lead the United States through our planet's climate crisis, and they will equally look on the Republican Senators who have just stood mute as he has done this.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### TURKEY AND SYRIA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the U.S. relationship with Turkey and certain actions that the U.S. must consider in order to protect our national security interests and those of our true allies in the region.

Today, more than ever, we need strong allies and partners in Europe. As the Trump administration does nearly everything in its power to erode our alliances and denigrate our closest friends, we find increasingly emboldened regimes in Russia and China. The U.S. cannot stand up to them alone. Throughout the Cold War, our diplomats worked assiduously to build strong bonds with allies, knowing that having close partners was better than having enemies on the world stage.

Our strongest allies should be those in NATO, those that have made a treaty commitment to mutual defense, those who share our values, those who work in concert with us to face the threat from countries like Russia and Iran with common cause. Unfortunately, Turkey under Erdogan embodies none of those things. Today, I would like to lay out a fact pattern that so many of my colleagues have come to see in recent weeks, that Turkey under Erdogan should not, Turkey under Erdogan cannot be seen as an ally.

How many more times do we need to see Turkey betray the values upon which NATO was established? How many more times do we need to see President Erdogan visit Moscow, Sochi, or any other Russian city to kiss Putin's ring? How many more journalists need to be locked up by Erdogan before we stop calling Turkey a democracy?

Enough is enough. Over my 27 years in the House and the Senate, I have followed developments in the Eastern Mediterranean quite closely. Turkey's