

understanding of how the Internal Commission works. . . . [D]on't let anyone try to lecture me on the commission's . . . efficiency and timeliness.

This Commissioner goes on to say:

If someone or some entities make a profit for being at the right place at the right time, I will live with that outcome. In the grand scheme of things, if it is a contest between speed and government trying to extract a significant piece of the transaction through a lengthy process, I'll take the speedy resolution."

Are you kidding me? What planet did he just parachute in from? This is a current member of the FCC. Somebody needs to tell him about the President's Executive order, right here: "Buy American and Hire American." It doesn't say "hire Luxembourg companies." I have nothing against Luxembourg companies; I just prefer American companies. It doesn't say "buy Canadian companies and hire Canadian."

I can tell you what is going to happen if the FCC does this. First of all, the American people are going to lose \$60 billion. No. 2, they are going to get sued. They say they can do it faster—I don't believe them—but I know this much: I know a little something about litigation. I used to do it for a living. They are going to be tied up in court for about 10 years—I can tell you that—because the Federal Communications Act requires a public auction.

I can tell you what else is going to happen. The people who live in rural communities are going to get the little end of nothing because we won't be able to control who gets this C-band. I will bet you that the companies that end up with it start—and I hope I am wrong—and remain in the cities. So if you live in the country, where I was raised, you won't get the benefit of 5G.

Also, if we give it to these three foreign companies and they get to decide who gets the C-band, how do we control who ends up with our spectrum? What if they give it to Huawei? What if they give it to a company that violates our national security and our national intelligence?

This is a really bad idea, folks. There is a bill that has been offered. It is a bipartisan bill in the House. I am going to sponsor it in the Senate. It is offered by two Republicans and two Democrats. The bill is very simple. It says: Do the right thing. This spectrum belongs to the American people. This C-band belongs to the American people. That \$60 billion belongs to the American people. I am asking my friends at the FCC to do the right thing. Do what you have done 100 times already, and let everybody bid. Let everybody bid. Take the \$60 billion that you get from the American people, and let's spend it on something the American people need.

I thank you for your time and attention.

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. BROWN. 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—S.R. 420

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, earlier this week, we celebrated Veterans Day, a day we honor the sacrifice and the service of those who fought in Normandy and Pearl Harbor and Inchon, at Khe Sanh, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kandahar, Mosul, and everywhere else where veterans work to protect our country. We owe them and their families a debt that we often fall short in repaying. That is what this is about today.

For years, the VA has been presented with scientific information from the National Academy of Sciences making it clear that the list of the conditions stemming from Agent Orange exposure is extensive. It includes hyperthyroidism, bladder cancer, Parkinson's-like symptoms, and hypertension. In the late iteration of the Veterans and Agent Orange Exposure Update 11, published a year ago, the National Academies recognized that those illnesses—hyperthyroidism, bladder cancer, Parkinson's-like symptoms, and hypertension—all have suggestive or sufficient evidence associated with Agent Orange.

Historically, the VA added illnesses in those two categories to the list of presumptive medical conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure. On a bipartisan basis, this Congress has done the right thing time after time. We are all on the same side when it comes to helping veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam.

We recently found out that former VA Secretary Shulkin decided to add three of these conditions to the list of presumptive medical conditions associated with that exposure only to have OMB—the Trump administration—block his decision. In an email to Director Mulvaney, Secretary Shulkin said adding these conditions was "imperative." Yet no action took place. There are 83,000 veterans living with at least 1 of the presumptive medical conditions—83,000. They are in Tennessee. They are in Georgia. They are in South Dakota. They are in Ohio. In a discussion with blue water Navy veterans last week, I learned that since the Department put a stay on adjudicating their Agent Orange claims earlier this year, 12 veterans have died. Time is running out. Some might accuse this body of waiting until they all die. As hard as it is to say that and hear that, we are waiting until they all die before we move.

For whatever political reason the administration seems to place on this, we need to ensure that veterans receive the healthcare and the compensation they earned. They shouldn't have to fight these one at a time when there are sick men and women veterans of

Vietnam. We did this to them. The American Government decided to spray Agent Orange. We knew it was harmful. We know it is harmful. We knew it then, and we know it now. The chemical companies knew and the government knew. Why does the administration now think it is OK to abandon our commitment to these veterans? If you are exposed to poison while serving our country, there should be no question that you deserve the benefits you earned. Period. No exception.

Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 420, encouraging the President to expand the list of the Department of Veterans Affairs of presumptive medical conditions associated with exposure to Agent Orange to include parkinsonism, bladder cancer, hypertension, hypothyroidism, which was submitted earlier today; I further ask that the 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?

Mr. ISAKSON. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Reserving the right to object, I want to say to my committee member how much I appreciate his dedicated work. In the committee, we work on a lot of things, including the diseases in here, getting presumptive conclusions done so we can cover as much as possible, but medicine is not exact. Diseases are not exact. Circumstances are not exact. When you make a decision to include a benefit for our veterans, you are making a commitment to spend that money from the taxpayers of the United States of America.

In the committee—and the Senator is part of it, and he knows this because I helped him a lot—we just approved blue water Navy funds, which is going to be one of the largest increases in the history of benefits going to our veterans. We are circumventing into that some of the due diligence—which you really ought to do before you make a presumption of the diseases caused in all cases.

I am an alumni of the Georgia Air National Guard and a veteran. I am chairman of the committee. I think the world of the Senator from Ohio. What he is trying to do is great and right, just as he wanted to lead us to help get us where we got to on the blue water Navy funds, but I object to this motion as one who would benefit because I have Parkinson's. I went into service during the 1960s, during a year that would be considered the Vietnam era. I didn't serve in Vietnam, but I served in that era, so I would have consideration if I got Parkinson's disease—which I have Parkinson's. Then they can use that as a conclusion to find out if it

was presumptively caused or not by the exposure I had.

I am just telling you as one who, if I wanted to, could take a benefit from this end run. I am not going to do it because I think it is time, as chairman of the committee—that it is time we make sure that every benefit we promise veterans, that we have the money to do it so we don't spend too much money on other benefits and leave ourselves short for theirs.

I object to the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Senator ISAKSON knows this is no sort of false kind of flattery. He knows how much I think of him. He runs the most bipartisan committee in the Senate. I have been honored to be on it my entire 13 years in this body. No Ohioan ever served on this committee as long as I have. I consider that a privilege, No. 1, and an opportunity to pay people back.

I didn't serve in the military. I know Senator ISAKSON did. President Trump had deferments from Vietnam. He didn't serve in the military. I think that maybe perhaps, because I didn't serve in the military, I should work a little bit harder to make sure those people, most of whom are older than I by a little bit, during the Vietnam war—that they be treated better than they were by the country and by the public upon their return from Vietnam; that they, in this case, get the benefit of the doubt and the history of what happened with Agent Orange.

You may remember years and years ago, veterans—people who had fought in Vietnam and had been exposed to Agent Orange—had to prove, initially, case by case, why they got sick, which was darn near impossible, especially when you are sick, trying to do that and go through that pain.

Congress, on a bipartisan basis, did the right thing back then. They put a list of these illnesses together that exposure to Agent Orange was likely responsible for. If you had one of these illnesses and you were boots on the ground in Vietnam, you automatically qualified. You didn't have to fight in court. You didn't have to get lawyers or do any of that. That was then.

Now, even though Secretary Shulkin—and I don't know how many Secretaries have come and gone. The President can't seem to keep Secretaries of the VA or staff of the VA because of the erratic policy he follows with veterans. The President of the United States goes to New York and makes a great speech about veterans, and we all applaud that, but then he is not willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. These are four illnesses Secretary Shulkin thought—you heard the term I used earlier, which is the term he used—he used the term about these conditions that it was “imperative” that we do something.

I understand as well as anybody how important it is to protect taxpayers. I also remember less than 2 years ago

that Congress gave a tax cut—hundreds of billions of dollars, and 70 percent of it went to the richest 1 percent of people in this country—and we can't come up with a few billion dollars to help veterans who are dying from these four illnesses? We can't expand this list and give them healthcare as we try to comfort them at the VA in Cleveland and Dayton and Cincinnati and Columbus and in Atlanta—all over? This is no end run around process. These aren't four illnesses I heard somebody talk about in Steubenville or Cleveland that ought to be covered. These are four illnesses the VA has looked at, the scientific community has looked at, the medical community has looked at, and Secretary Shulkin—who served as Secretary of the VA, appointed by President Trump, initially was acting under President Obama—we can't give them the benefit of the doubt? This is no end run. We can't give them the benefit of the doubt and say, yes, we should cover this. I hope the chairman of the Veterans' Committee—that at some point we can sit down and talk and he can reconsider.

Why do we think we need to protect President Trump, who, like me, didn't serve in the military? For me, it—I will not get into that. But why can't we help these veterans and give them the benefit of the doubt, cover these illnesses, and move forward with the VA taking care of people the way we should?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, it has now been 13 months since the administration concluded negotiations on the United States-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement. It has been 13 months of uncertainty for U.S. farmers and ranchers, manufacturers, small businesses, digital firms, financial institutions, and many others. It has been 13 months of wondering what the rules of the road on trade are going to look like going forward.

We should have passed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement months ago. The Republicans in the Senate have been ready to take up this agreement for a long time, but trade agreements have to be considered by the House of Representatives first, and the House of Representatives is controlled by the Democratic Party, which is far more interested in partisan pursuits than in actually doing any meaningful legislating.

While the House Democrats are happy to consider far-left messaging bills that have no chance of going anywhere, they have no interest in working with the Republicans to actually get something signed into law. Why? The Democrats have convinced themselves that partisan posturing is more important than securing a bipartisan legislative victory, like a strong, new trade deal that will benefit the American economy. So they are currently opposing a trade agreement that would benefit millions of American workers.

Let's be very clear. The Democrats' decision to prioritize partisan politics is having real consequences for the American people. Right now, the members of our military are unable to fund new priorities because the Senate Democrats are blocking the consideration of Defense appropriations. Farmers and ranchers in my home State of South Dakota and around the country are struggling, but the House Democrats refuse to move forward on a trade deal—the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement—that would bring them relief.

Thanks to low commodity and livestock prices, natural disasters, and protracted trade disputes, farmers and ranchers have had a tough few years, and one of the biggest things we can do to help them is to take action on trade. Our Nation's farmers and ranchers depend on trade.

When I talk to farmers and ranchers at home in South Dakota, they emphasize that the most important thing Washington can do to boost our agricultural economy is to take action on trade agreements. Farmers and ranchers need access to new and expanded markets for their products, and, just as importantly, they need certainty about what international markets are going to look like going forward.

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement would help to meet those needs. It would preserve and expand farmers' access to two critical export markets, and it would give farmers certainty about what these markets will look like long term.

I am particularly pleased with the improvements the agreement makes for dairy producers. South Dakota has experienced a major dairy expansion over the past few years, and this agreement will benefit U.S. dairy producers by substantially expanding market access in Canada, where U.S. dairy sales have been restricted. In fact, the U.S. International Trade Commission estimates the agreement will boost U.S. dairy exports by more than \$277 million.

The agreement will expand market access for U.S. poultry and egg producers, and it will make it easier for U.S. producers to export wheat to Canada.

Of course, the benefits for the agricultural industry are just one part of this agreement. From manufacturing to digital services, to the automotive industry, virtually every sector of our economy will benefit from the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. The USMCA breaks new ground by including a chapter specifically focused on small and medium-sized businesses. It is the first time that a U.S. trade agreement has ever included a dedicated chapter on this topic. Roughly, 120,000 small and medium-sized businesses around our country export goods and services to Mexico and to Canada. The USMCA will make it easier for these businesses to successfully export their products.