

Sergei Magnitsky was a Moscow-based lawyer who represented an investment company, known as Hermitage Capital, whose American-born founder was Bill Browder. In the course of Mr. Magnitsky's representation of his client, he discovered a major tax fraud issue—\$230 million of taxpayer moneys being funneled through shell companies with business ties to President Putin. Mr. Magnitsky did what any good lawyer would do in discovering corruption and reported it to the local authorities. As a result, he was arrested and tortured. Ultimately, he died in prison. He was in prison for nearly a year without having a trial.

Unfortunately, this is not a unique circumstance in Russia, but we in the global community decided that we could not let this injustice go without taking action. Those responsible needed to be held accountable. Yet, in Russia, those responsible for this tragedy were promoted and received awards.

So there needs to be accountability for those who violate basic human rights and their government will not take action.

I first learned of the Magnitsky tragedy in my role as a member of the Helsinki Commission. I was the chair and ranking Democrat on the Helsinki Commission. The Helsinki Commission is the way we enforced the Helsinki Final Act that was passed in 1975, and it adheres to basic principles of human rights. It gives every member-signator of the Helsinki Final Accords the right to challenge what is happening in other states. Russia is a signator to the Helsinki Final Act. The United States is a signator, and we raised the Magnitsky issue.

Then, working with the late Senator John McCain, I authored legislation known as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act. It was enacted into law in 2012, and what it does is it says that those who were participating in gross human rights violations in Russia—related to what happened to Sergei Magnitsky—that those who were responsible would not be allowed to visit the United States by being granted visas or to use our banking system. Why was that so important? Because these corrupt officials like to have their assets in dollars, not rubles, and they like to visit the United States, and they like their families to visit the United States.

What is unique about the Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act is that Congress can initiate the executive branch taking up particular names.

It is interesting—I have heard from many Russians who fully support what we are doing. We are giving them an opportunity for their voices to be heard.

Mr. Putin lobbied against its passage, but it passed Congress by an overwhelming vote. To date, 54 individuals have been sanctioned under the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012, and it has been very effective. We have been told through press

accounts that in the summit meeting between Mr. Putin and President Trump, it was one of the first subjects that Mr. Putin raised in regard to the Magnitsky sanctions. And I must tell you, it provided U.S. leadership a way to stand up and hold human rights abusers and corrupt individuals accountable for their crimes. As a result of our action, other countries acted—Canada acted; European countries acted—and we were able to get much more effective use of this sanction against human rights violators.

The Magnitsky legacy is not limited to Russia. Unfortunately, there are powerful, corrupt, and dangerous human rights violators globally, where countries do not hold these violators accountable for their actions. So once again partnering with the late Senator John McCain, I authored the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, which was enacted in 2016, and we have used that act. We used it in Saudi Arabia to deal with the tragic death of Jamal Khashoggi. Over 100 individuals have been sanctioned under Global Magnitsky, including those in the DRC, Nicaragua, and Burma as result a result of the Rohingya tragedies. Once again, U.S. leadership was there. As a result of our action, we saw action in Canada, and we saw action in the European Union.

As we commemorate the 10th anniversary of Sergei Magnitsky's tragic death, let us recognize that Sergei's life and legacy have led to two of the most significant human rights accountability laws that exist today. Because of Sergei Magnitsky, the United States and many of our allies now have the tools available to hold human rights abusers accountable and to deter would-be perpetrators from committing such crimes in the first place.

I urge my colleagues to continue to honor Sergei Magnitsky through our actions. Let us stand by our values and continue to ensure the protection and defense of human rights around the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

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

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I know people are waiting to see what might happen around here. We will have before us a continuing resolution to fully fund the Federal Government through December 20. I wish this was not necessary, and that we would have just passed all of our appropriations bills. But while I wish the step was not necessary, I would urge all Members to vote aye.

I wish we were further along in our work, but it is not for lack of trying. It is no secret what is holding up negotiations—the President's demand for \$8.6 billion more for his vanity wall along the southern border. This is a wall the President gave his word to the American people that Mexico would pay for it, and now he is telling the American people: No, I want the American taxpayers to pay for it.

I should point out that he already has \$10 billion on hand. He could not possibly build that much of his wall, anyway, over the next fiscal year with the eminent domain that would have to be done in Texas and elsewhere. And, of course, the wall they have built, at a cost of millions of taxpayer dollars a mile, can be defeated by a \$100 saw at the local hardware store. The President was talking about how they will make it so high that it will be hard to get over it, but you can just kneel down and cut a hole to go through it. But he has \$10 billion on hand for his wall. It could not be spent in the next year no matter how much the government is overcharged for the wall.

He stole \$6.3 billion of that from our troops and their families, and despite the fact that the vast majority of that money has yet to be spent, he wants more.

If we hadn't had this issue, we would have had our work done by now. To quote one of the most famous baseball players, "It's deja vu all over again." The President is once again putting his own personal interests ahead of the interests of our country.

I would like to remind the Chamber what is at stake in the annual appropriations bills. These are the things that are being held up because the President wants us to forget his promise that Mexico would pay for this wall.

What is being held up? Well, education for our children. Cutting-edge medical research. Anybody who has a family member with cancer or diabetes or any other disease wants their tax dollars being spent on medical research. Support for our Nation's farmers, medical care for our veterans, addressing the opioid crisis, environmental programs to keep our air safe to breathe and our water safe to drink—all of these things are being held up, all are being put on autopilot because the President cares about his wall—his symbolic wall—far more than he does about medical research or medical care for our veterans.

So we find ourselves at a critical juncture. We could pass another continuing resolution to allow us to continue to negotiate in good faith, which I am committed to do, or shut down the government. Well, that is really not a choice.

The continuing resolution before us is a good bill that will allow us to continue our bipartisan, bicameral negotiating on the fiscal year 2020 appropriations process. I hope all Senators will support it.

I would note for Senators how the Republican chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator SHELBY, and I, as vice chairman, have kept the process in a bipartisan fashion. Almost all of our appropriations bills have come out of committee unanimously or virtually unanimously. They have come to the floor, and then they have gotten an overwhelming vote. Let's rely on those Senators in both parties who are willing to set aside political posturing and who are willing to set aside symbolism and instead have substance.

In addition to continuing to fund our government for 4 more weeks, our bill tackles some issues that have to be addressed right away. It provides the Commerce Department with the necessary funds to carry out the decennial census, which is required by our Constitution. It provides funds for mobile centers to ensure that the census reaches those in the hardest to reach areas. It fulfills our constitutional obligation to make sure every American is counted.

The bill includes a provision that would block a looming \$7.6 billion rescission of highway funding set to hit the States July 1—the States of virtually everybody in this Chamber, Republican and Democratic alike. Without this provision, each of our States would see significant cuts to its highway funding. That is the last thing we need given the dire state of infrastructure in America today.

The bill includes a pay raise for the military, which is set to go into effect in January. It also includes legislation to ensure that victims of state-sponsored terrorism get the compensation they are entitled to. More importantly, it ensures that the government remains funded and open while we continue to work on full-year appropriations bills.

Now, even if we passed this bill today or tomorrow, we have only 4 short weeks to complete our work. It can be done. I am committed to staying here, as we have in the past. We all worked nights, weekends, and I must say the tremendous Appropriations Committee staff worked even more hours.

But it cannot be a one-sided negotiation. And we cannot be expected to divert billions more in taxpayer dollars to fulfill President Trump's cynical campaign promise as part of the final deal. It does not have the support in this Chamber or among the American people to carry the day.

If we had an up-or-down vote in this body—will you take this money away from housing for our troops, for medical research, and all these other things, to pay for an ineffective wall so the President will not be embarrassed by not keeping his word that Mexico was going to pay for it? Of course, that would fail. Of course, that would fail. Nobody wants to go back home and say they did that.

We have billions of dollars in here to keep our borders secure. We want to keep our borders secure. Everybody

wants to, Republican and Democrats alike, but let's not waste the money on symbolism, especially if it means we do not do our medical research or take care of housing for our troops among all the other things I have listed. Do not do a bill with the hopes of, someday, Mexico will pay us back, just because the President promised they would. We all know they are not going to.

So, with that being said, we have made some progress. I do not go and call press conferences like some of my colleague do each moment along the way, but I have been working closely with a bipartisan group. We all look forward to continue to work with Chairman SHELBY and Chairwoman LOWEY and with Ranking Member GRANGER to get these bills across the finish line.

We owe it to the American people, and we have demonstrated—I think Senator SHELBY as chair, myself as vice chair, we have demonstrated that we can get the bills through with an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Just let us do it. Let's go forward and pass them. Let's do substance over symbolism.

With that, Mr. President, I see my distinguished colleague on the floor, so I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Senator from Tennessee.

INTERNET EXCHANGE ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, it is so interesting to be here on the floor and to hear such a variety of ideas and to know that, across the country, people are logging on and they are tuning in and they are watching how we go about our business. And one of the things that is so interesting as we pull the Internet and online activity into our lives and stay connected, we sometimes enjoy the idea of just “unplugging” for a weekend, going to somewhere in the country that holds a really special appeal. Certainly at this time of year, people will talk about going away for Thanksgiving, or maybe they went away during the fall to look at pretty leaves.

They see it as an escape and maybe even an opportunity to get just a little bit of smugness in their tone when they talk about how they have chosen a destination that has politely informed them to not expect WiFi and not to expect that Internet connection.

But here is a question for you: How many would make that trip, but still knowing there is not that connection, they take the smartphone, the iPad, or the laptop anyway? Of course, we know we all do that.

After all, we have been trained to respond to the buzzing, beeping, and the ringing of our device, and so eventually, what happens is we give up and we start wandering around, searching for a signal, and then declaring to all of the very unimpressed locals: Well, I don't see how y'all do it without being able to have access to high-speed Internet. How can you survive without broadband?

Well, to my colleagues, let me say this: They do it because they do not have a choice. You know, these days, encountering so much as a spotty cell signal causes concern for those of us who are accustomed to high-speed Internet and broadband connectivity, but I will tell you there are millions of Americans out there for whom a broadband connection or even the pop and hiss of a dialup connection is completely out of reach.

In a world where even simple online interactions require lightning fast connections, economies in rural America are falling behind. We read every day about entire industries setting up shop in budding metropolises like Nashville, TN, but to many, corporate America's glowing new hubs sound like remote outposts compared to the familiar crush that is here on the eastern seaboard.

Our perspective is skewed. Even so, businesses move inward because they see potential for growth with minimal risk, but there is only so far that they can push it. Rural communities do not have much to offer in terms of operational support or a reliable customer base, and most of them lack a crucial resource: the funding and infrastructure to back reliable broadband services.

It is true, “the cloud” needs a physical connection to Planet Earth, and broadband networks rely on physical “Internet Exchange” points. Without these hubs, subscribers of different Internet providers cannot communicate with one another.

While many businesses are certainly capable of fronting the costs associated with building the actual exchange points and running connections to other hubs, there is no incentive for them to gamble on a stagnant economy, so they go elsewhere, and local businesses go nowhere, unable to expand into the global online marketplace.

And just to think, a decade ago, we wasted an opportunity to bridge the digital divide, to even close the digital divide. Back in 2009, during the stimulus days, President Obama signed an economic recovery package that included 7.2 billion, \$7.2 billion to expand broadband services in underserved areas.

Well, predictably, those dollars began to flow into urban and suburban areas, leaving rural communities stranded on the far side of a gulf that Washington had ended up widening. Mistakes were made, but it would be an even bigger mistake to make rural residents suffer through it.

This year, I introduced the bipartisan Internet Exchange Act in an effort to get the Senate talking about broadband accessibility. When passed, the bill will offset the start-up cost of establishing broadband connections via a series of grants reserved exclusively for unserved rural areas. That is unserved rural areas, those that have been left out, those that did not benefit