

at that time, State Department officials gave Christopher Steele information that they said was from a Turkish businessman who had been visiting with a Russian member of the FSB that was derogatory to President Trump, and they were encouraging Steele to take that back and then use it before the election.

The irony of the day today for me is, while the House is impeaching the President, at the same time that is being debated, Michael Horowitz, the inspector general, is giving testimony about individuals in the Obama-era State Department getting information from foreign individuals, slipping it to individuals working on the Clinton campaign, and literally using foreign sources to fight against Candidate Trump from Hillary Clinton's staff at the State Department.

Sometimes the world feels more upside down than others. This is one of those weeks. A year ago today, the Senate was working in a bipartisan fashion to be able to pass the criminal justice reform bill, called the FIRST STEP Act. It was a landmark piece of legislation dealing with helping us in Federal prisons deal with recidivism. That was a good day for us in Congress.

We started getting more job training to people who are in prison, more opportunities for faith-based programs in our Federal penitentiaries—just like they are in our State penitentiaries—more opportunities for prisoners to connect with their families because the vast majority of prisoners in our Federal prisons will be released one day, and it would be helpful if they had job training and if they had a faith-based background, if they choose to, and if they have connections to make with their families. It helps us bring down the crime rate in the days ahead. That was a year ago today in the Senate, instead of fighting through the impeachment process that is happening now.

There are a lot of people who said to me recently that nothing is getting done. That was true for the past couple of months while we have been waiting on the House to be able to move on other issues, but this week has been a pretty busy week moving through pieces of legislation.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. President, JIM INHOFE, who is the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, has led this Senate and has led, quite frankly, all of Congress through a process on what is called the NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act. That got passed this week. That is an incredibly important bill, not just to us in Oklahoma but to us across the Nation and for our national security. It included things like a pay raise for all of our servicemembers. It included additional benefits of things going to our family members as they move from place to place, living with their servicemember, and helping them in their transition.

It addressed the issue of housing, which is so important to Oklahoma, as

we have had problems with private contractors at some of our bases in Oklahoma not living up to the standards of their contract. JIM INHOFE has been the one actually fighting to get that fixed. He has been the one who has taken the lead on that.

This is incredibly important to us in Oklahoma for our five bases and posts, as well as our National Guard and our reservists. Just in Oklahoma, there will be \$2.2 billion for the KC-46A refueling tankers. They will be trained in Altus, and they will be repaired and serviced at Tinker Air Force Base. The authorization for the T-X Program, which positively impacts Vance Air Force Base, is incredibly important.

The improvements to military family housing, which I have already talked about, included an amendment in the bill which dealt with reservists, in what is called the DD-214 Act of 2019. If you are not in the military, you have no idea what that is. If you are in the military, you know exactly what that is. There was a problem that guards and reservists didn't have the same kind of records in the DD-214 that Active Duty does. We are fixing that now so that when guards and reservists get close to retirement, their records are all in place.

We have a continuation of the Paladin Integrated Management System, which is at Fort Sill. We have the authorization of the Fort Sill barracks that are so incredibly important to be able to have better living facilities there as well.

The fuels storage complex at the Tulsa International Airport is very important for the 138th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard.

Language to enhance our direct higher authority, which is so incredibly important—we expand that again to make sure civilians who are being hired in places like McAlester and Tinker continue to be able to serve there. Those civilian service folks are so incredibly important to our national security.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, that was just in the NDAA that passed this week. There are 12 appropriations bills we have been working on for months that I am glad the House has finally come to a decision to work through this impeachment process, and we can actually get on to the 12 appropriations bills. They affect a lot of things for Oklahoma.

Appropriations bills that are moving through tomorrow will have things like \$50 million for medical student education. That is really important to us for the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University in the awards they have received for medical education.

We have been through our share of disasters this year in flooding in Oklahoma. The funding to continue those grants in that process is in this set of bills.

We have \$710 million for SAFER grants, which deal with fire departments throughout the States. It is in-

credibly important because they are the first responders to acts of terrorism.

The ag bill itself is moving through right now. It deals with a lot of the disaster supplementals that are incredibly important to us—in fact, to many of us in Western Oklahoma.

This set of bills not only does a 3.1-percent increase for our military servicemembers but it also does an increase of 3.1 percent for our civil servants, many of them who work in Oklahoma, and they do a remarkable job of being able to serve our neighbors.

There are a lot of different areas that deal with things like military construction projects that are all over our State that affect not only the military but civilians and those who have re-tired as well.

There are a lot of changes here, including dramatic funding increases for the Department of Veterans Affairs to fulfill what is called the MISSION Act. That allows more veterans to get care closer to home, where they are not having to drive 100 miles to get radiology work, and they can do that in a rural hospital close by. They can connect with their family doctor, just like their spouse does. This gives them greater opportunity to do this.

This set of bills also deals with the electronic logging delays that are so incredibly important to those who are hauling ag and livestock. This deals with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Those of us who are in Southeast Oklahoma know how incredibly important it is to resolve the American burrowing beetle that no one else will pay attention to but is incredibly important to us so the Fish and Wildlife Service finally gets this downlisted. This gives the instructions for them to do this.

There are oversight dollars that are put in place to USDA to oversee the SNAP program, often called food stamps, which is actually SNAP. That program gives greater oversight to deal with fraud so people who need the help get the help and the people who are abusing are confronted.

The set of bills also deals with what is called the RURAL Act. It is really important to our co-ops across the State. They deal with the cost of doing business, which continues to provide inexpensive energy all across our State.

The border wall funding remains. It is the exact same dollar amount as it was last year. That was quite a fight in the conversation to be able to go through the House and the Senate. There are some who believe we should have no fences and no barriers and open borders. I am amazed at how many people do not know that the last four Presidents—now five in a row, including President Trump—have all built border fencing. For the previous four Presidents, they didn't face the same fight that President Trump does in building border fencing. In the previous four Presidents, it was all about national security. It is important we

have fencing in certain areas to keep that area secure. For President Trump, it is suddenly a divisive issue. We maintained that funding for the border fence to make sure that continues through these bills that are moving through.

There is a repeal of what is called the nonprofit parking tax. A lot of folks aren't following this, but if you work for a nonprofit, you certainly are. It was something that was in the tax bill that should not have been there, and it caused great confusion for all of our nonprofits and all of our churches all over the country and certainly all over my great State.

This section is something I and CHRIS COONS from Delaware have worked on for months and months, to finally get it fixed for all these nonprofits. For those of us who know and love the work the nonprofits do all over the country, this is one of the prime issues they want to finally get resolved so they can get back to focusing on taking care of people who are homeless and hungry and needy, rather than having to count parking spaces and turn in, literally, a 30-page form to the IRS.

Finally, dealing with the medical device tax, which has lingered for years. It is an important issue for us to resolve because it is raising the cost of people getting medical devices. We did a boost in funding for NIH, National Institutes for Health. That deals with an increase in funding in things like Alzheimer's, which we should continue to invest in. That also deals with things in Oklahoma: some of the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, Stephenson Cancer Center at OU, and also some of the rural healthcare programs, especially dealing with telemedicine. If you are in a rural area in Oklahoma, it is a long way to go to get healthcare.

This bill also deals with something called the SECURE Act. The SECURE Act deals with seniors' retirement. Right now you can't continue contributing to your IRA past 70%. You are forced to take it. Lots of folks are now choosing to work later and later. Some retire earlier. That is fine. That is their choice, but for folks who choose to retire later, they don't want to be forced to take their IRA. They want to still be able to contribute. This allows them to be able to do this.

This also allows part-time workers to participate in 401(k) plans. It is incredibly important for a lot of people just saving for their own retirement. People should not count on just Social Security. People should also set aside their own retirement funds as well in addition to Social Security. This allows more folks to do that and to continue doing that.

There are several things on foreign policy that maybe some Oklahomans are not paying attention to but are important to us—things like the F-35 program to Turkey. It is one of the areas that I led in this bill. It says that Turkey should not be allowed to continue

to have the F-35. They purchased Russian air defense systems. They are turning toward Russia. Why would we sell to Turkey our most precious, highly technical, highly secured technology like the new F-35 when the direction Turkey is headed in the days ahead is unknown? This bill stops the delivery of the F-35 to Turkey.

This bill also finally gives victims of terrorism their day in court. Decades ago, victims of terrorism asked to hold to account organizations like the Palestinian Authority, or the PLO, in areas where they carried out acts of terrorism that killed or injured Americans. We decided as a Congress decades ago to allow that, but the courts stepped in and stopped it with this little loophole, and we, as Congress, have never fixed it. I worked with Chairman GRASSLEY and with multiple others to get to a point where we can resolve this. This bill includes the fix so that victims of terrorism can finally get their day in court.

U.N. peacekeeping contributions have hit a very high number in the years past—way beyond what was set as the cap. This bill keeps us down to the current cap so that we are not overgiving to the peacekeeping operations because we also expect other nations, not just the United States, to contribute to the peacekeeping operations.

I would love to say that everything in these bills is good, but it is not. People talk about making the sausage here. Quite frankly, I go back and think about the very first time I ever had a bite of supreme pizza. I don't know what everybody's family was like, but for us, growing up, we got a hamburger pizza. It was a plain one, which was the cheapest one, or cheese pizza. That was a very good pizza. But I remember the first time I went somewhere and had supreme pizza, and it was all loaded with everything on it, and I thought that it was going to be great—until I bit into it. I also found out it not only had the things I liked, but there were some things that I really, really didn't like in that bite, and many times the things that I really didn't like overpowered the things that I did.

There are some things in some of these bills coming up this week that I just cannot support. While I talked through a lot of things that are moving—and there are a lot of things moving this week—there are also some areas like the overseas contingency fund, often called OCO. You will hear it. It is a separate fund outside the budget that is supposed to be just for taking care of our military in the fight against Afghanistan and Iraq. We have been dialing down the fight in Afghanistan and Iraq and doing less and less and less of that. The President has already announced he is going to continue to withdraw troops in a wise way from those areas. Yet this agreement that has come down the pike this week also includes not less overseas funding

but \$10 billion more of the overseas contingency fund—\$10 billion more.

The wind production tax credit suddenly reappears. It is the zombie tax credit that we thought was already gone that now has just bounced back. Five years ago, Congress agreed that wind power was prolific around the country, and they no longer needed a Federal tax benefit to sustain their business. There was an agreement 5 years ago to, little by little, wean wind off, and 2020 would be the first year that it would go to zero. Except in this bill, magically, the wind production tax credit reappears. In the year that it was supposed to be zero, it actually pops up to a higher amount than it was even last year.

There are multiple different items called tax extenders in this package. We have additional tax dollars going to things like race tracks for horse racing. We have tax dollars going to motorsports race tracks. And we have tax dollars going to craft beer breweries because, I assume, craft beer breweries can't make it without getting tax dollars from their next-door neighbor—almost \$1 billion worth. Almost \$1 billion Federal dollars are going to help folks who do craft brewery. I am sure the folks who do craft brewery would love to have the tax benefit, but I think the Nation has not run out of beer, and we are not in a position that we need to make sure we subsidize that to make sure we sustain that for our national benefit.

The tax side alone of one of the bills that is coming—just one of the bills that is coming—is almost one-half trillion dollars in new debt. One of the bills has one-half trillion dollars in new debt. For a nation that has \$23 billion, many of us were shocked late on Monday night when the bill was dropped with an additional one-half trillion dollars in new debt.

There are some important things going on this week, and there are also some things moving through this Congress that need more attention than impeachment, and they are not happening. I hope in the days ahead, as we debate these issues and vote on these issues, we can deal with the things that are good that we all look at and say "We should do that," but we will be able to pause long enough to ask "Should we do those things?" and make wise decisions.

We are at the same spot we always are. Everything gets crammed in at the very end of the year, and it becomes a case where, if you don't vote for everything, then the government is going to shut down. That is why MAGGIE HASSAN and I—the Democratic Senator from New Hampshire—worked so hard this year to form a bill that we call the government shutdown prevention bill. We want to end the possibility that we will have government shutdowns so that there is not a time that we get to the end of the year, and everyone says: You have to vote for all this stuff or the government will shut down and people will be furloughed.

I would like to have a moment when we say that we will not ever have shutdowns again and we debate the issues that need to be debated in the time they need to be debated so that we don't dump one-half trillion dollars in new debt on our kids and go home for Christmas.

Let's get some things resolved. Let's solve the issues, and then let's spend some time with our families. I think the entire country needs to take a deep breath from the anger and bitterness and divisiveness. There needs to be a little peace on Earth and some good will toward men.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 551 and all nominations on the secretary's desk in the Air Force and Army; that the nominations be confirmed; 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; 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 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. Douglas M. Gabram

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN1117 AIR FORCE nominations (130) beginning ANNA M. ADKINS, and ending MARY E. ZANDER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 19, 2019.

IN THE ARMY

PN1260 ARMY nomination of Zachary B. Ciccolo, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of October 30, 2019.

PN1289 ARMY nomination of Andrew J. Oliver, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2019.

PN1290 ARMY nomination of Marjorie A. Kuipers, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2019.

PN1291 ARMY nomination of Yuandre G. Diejuste, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2019.

PN1293 ARMY nomination of Thomas E. Axtell, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2019.

PN1294 ARMY nomination of D014331, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 19, 2019.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

DEBBIE SMITH ACT OF 2019

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am delighted that we last week reached a compromise enabling Congress to send another 5-year reauthorization of the Debbie Smith Act to the President's desk this week. Both Chambers' adoption of that compromise, which passed the Senate by voice vote last night, with my support, signals Congress's continued support for the DNA Backlog and Capacity Enhancement Program.

Earlier this year, I called for reforms to the grant program that the Debbie Smith Act established. These reforms, suggested this year by the Government Accountability Office, would require both that the Justice Department articulate measurable, program-wide goals and that the National Institute of Justice take additional steps to prevent lobbying-related conflicts of interest. They would not resolve every issue with this grant program, but I believe the implementation of such reforms would substantially strengthen the program. I also advocated for reforms, which are included in the final legislation, that ensure the analysis of untested DNA in sexual assault cases is accorded higher priority under this program.

As mentioned earlier this week, I have called on the Attorney General to implement several of my proposed reforms through administrative action. I thank the Attorney General for committing to do so, in the attached letter dated December 11, 2019. My letter to the Attorney General on this subject, dated December 9, 2019, also is attached, and I ask unanimous consent that both letters be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, December 11, 2019.

Hon. CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. JOHN CORNYN,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRASSLEY AND SENATOR CORNYN: This responds to your letter to the Attorney General dated December 9, 2019, regarding the DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program. We write to assure you that the Department of Justice places a high priority on the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) reports and recommendations. The recommendations from the 2019 GAO report regarding the

CEBR program are being addressed by the Office of Justice Programs, and specifically, by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ).

In particular, NIJ concurs with the recommendations in the 2019 GAO report regarding performance measures. To create and implement appropriate and meaningful performance measures NIJ has: conducted an in-depth analysis of currently available program performance data to identify information gaps; made corresponding modifications to program performance measures to address these gaps; aligned its performance measures with consistently articulated program goals and permitted program activities; clearly delineated between measures intended to capture the state of DNA backlog and laboratory throughout, and those measures intended to gauge grant program impact; made clarifications to promote consistency in grant recipient data reporting; augmented its measures to efficiently capture the level of DNA funding used for outsourcing DNA sample analysis (which accounted for approximately only 10 percent of program costs for FY 2015 award recipients).

Consistent with the recommendations in the GAO report, NIJ will communicate enhancements to DNA CEBR program measures starting in calendar year 2020 and continuing through 2020. This will occur in advance of updated performance measures that will appear in the FY 2021 DNA CEBR Program solicitation. Grant recipients will be required to report against the specific articulated updated measures thereafter.

The 2019 GAO report expressed concern regarding lobbying disclosure certifications and a lack of controls to follow-up with grantees to help ensure they are meeting statutory requirements. As of February 2, 2019, all entities registering for federal awards in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) are required to review the Financial Assistance Representations and Certifications required by statutes or regulations in accordance with guidance under Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations. SAM.gov registration question 8.L. references compliance with the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, 2 U.S.C. 1601 et seq. Under this question, the registrant must attest as follows:

I have read each of the certifications and representations presented on this page. By submitting this certification, I, <VENDOR>, am attesting to the accuracy of the certification and representations contained herein. I understand that I may be subject to criminal prosecution under Section 1001, Title 18 of the United States Code or civil liability under the False Claims Act if I misrepresent <VENDOR> by providing false, fictitious, or fraudulent information to the U.S. Government.

In addition, OJP plans to send annual reminders to all OJP vendors with open active awards reminding them of the disclosure requirements under the Lobbying Disclosure Act along with instructions on how to submit the disclosures.

Finally, regarding GAO's concerns regarding controls for conflict of interest and lobbying, OJP has historically followed Justice Management Division procedures. However, OJP did not have these procedures reduced to writing, as acknowledged by GAO. OJP has memorialized the procedures in writing, which the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General has approved. The procedures are in process for implementation.

It is OJP's intent, as evidenced by the work already completed and the plan moving forward, to comply with the 2019 GAO report. We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact this office if we may provide additional assistance regarding this or any other matter.