

civil rights issue of our time.” It has been 2 years, and we have heard almost nothing from the President about an education bill.

In the last State of the Union, just 1 year ago, the President said: “One of my greatest priorities is to reduce the price of prescription drugs. . . . Prices will come down.” But over the course of the last month, nearly 30 drugmakers have taken steps to raise the prices of their medicines.

In the last State of the Union, the President promised that “[manufacturing] plants will be opening up all over the country.” I don’t know about you, Mr. President, but I haven’t seen a remanufacturing policy from the White House. Meanwhile, Nissan has announced hundreds of layoffs in Mississippi, and GM has announced the closure of 5 factories and the loss of 15,000 jobs.

In the last State of the Union, the President said: “We will protect American workers and American intellectual property through strong enforcement of our trade rules.” That is something I strongly agree with. Six months after the President said that, he decided to let a Chinese telecom giant, ZTE—a company that violated multiple trade sanctions and put our Nation’s security at risk—off the hook and begin operating in the United States. Now, while some in the administration are pushing him to be tough on China, there are some who just want to sell out for a decrease in the trade deficit. That will not do the job the President always promised he would.

In the last State of the Union, the President said: “No regime has oppressed its own citizens more totally or brutally than the cruel dictatorship in North Korea. . . . We are waging a campaign of maximum pressure to prevent that from happening.” After that, what happened? The President hosted a largely symbolic summit with Kim Jong Un and is already planning a second summit. North Korea has failed to dismantle its nuclear program—some reports say it is growing—and the United States is not engaging in a pressure campaign, maximum or otherwise.

President Trump called for a compromise immigration bill that dealt with Dreamers and border security. Congress produced one along the lines he proposed, and then he threatened to veto it.

In the last State of the Union, the President said “It is time to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure” and called for new legislation to spur investment. He said: “Let’s support working families by supporting paid family leave.” He said: “We will continue our fight until ISIS is defeated.” What are the facts? There has been no infrastructure bill, although he promised one in the previous State of the Union; no paid family leave proposal, although he promised one in the previous State of the Union; and he is withdrawing from Syria even though he promised we would continue the

fight until ISIS is defeated. And by all reports, including our own intelligence, it is not.

I could go on. The list of broken or empty promises is long. The gap between the President’s rhetoric and reality is cavernous. Every President uses the State of the Union to set goals, but few have done it so cheaply and indifferently. Many of those promises were discarded mere weeks after they were uttered.

Forgive me, but if we Democrats and the American people have real doubt about any promise the President makes, real doubt about his following through or really meaning it, how can we not? In previous State of the Union Addresses, he has thrown around promises and not fulfilled them more than any other President I know.

Perhaps even emptier than his policy promises are President Trump’s calls for unity each year. It seems that every year the President wakes up and discovers the desire for unity on the morning of the State of the Union. Then the President spends the other 364 days of the year dividing us and sowing a state of disunion, whether that is using public servants as political pawns, the President’s false equivalence after Charlottesville, his attacks on the Federal judiciary, the free press, and the rule of law, or his near-daily Twitter provocations. The blatant hypocrisy of this President calling for unity is that he is one of the chief reasons Americans feel so divided now.

So it is logical to believe, based on his past speeches, that the President’s speech tonight will ignore the reality of his administration, the reality of our economy, the reality of our world, and instead weave a web of fiction. If past speeches are an indication, the President will be in his own bubble.

Democrats are not focused on the President’s rhetoric; we are focused on fighting for workers in this unequal economy, fighting for American families struggling to afford healthcare, fighting to bring a measure of accountability to this government, and fighting for a foreign policy that reflects both our interests and our values.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

STRENGTHENING AMERICA’S SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST ACT OF 2019—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Risch amendment No. 97, to clarify the deadline for the reporting requirement relating to the establishment of a Jordan Enterprise Fund.

Menendez (for Risch) amendment No. 98 (to amendment No. 97), to provide for a classified annex to be submitted with the report on the cooperation of the United States and Israel with respect to countering unmanned aerial systems.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

S. 130

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, last night, our colleague from Nebraska, Senator BEN SASSE, brought a bill to the floor to protect infants who are born alive during abortions.

The legislation is simple. In the words of the bill, it finds:

If an abortion results in the live birth of an infant, the infant is a legal person for all purposes under the laws of the United States, and entitled to all the protections of such laws. Any infant born alive after an abortion . . . has the same claim to the protection of the law that would arise for any newborn.

In other words, any living, breathing baby outside of its mother’s body should be protected. That is a pretty basic standard of decency. One would assume that there is no human being alive who would object to such a bill—that even my colleagues across the aisle who don’t think that living, breathing unborn babies should be protected could get behind this bill—but you would be wrong because, last night, Senate Democrats objected to the consideration of this bill. They objected to the consideration of legislation to protect babies who are born alive.

Let’s take a step back and remember why Senator SASSE brought this bill up in the first place.

Last week, the Democratic Governor of Virginia was asked about an extreme proposal from a Virginia Democrat to remove restrictions on late-term abortions. In his comments on the bill, the Virginia Governor had this to say:

If a mother is in labor, I can tell you exactly what would happen. The infant would be delivered. The infant would be kept comfortable. The infant would be resuscitated if that’s what the mother and the family desired, and then a discussion would ensue between the physicians and the mother.

In other words, the Democratic Governor of Virginia not only endorsed

late-term abortions—abortions performed on babies old enough to survive outside of the mothers—he left open the door to infanticide. He left open the possibility of killing a baby born alive.

I would think those would be comments that my Democratic colleagues would be recoiling from in horror. I would think they would be rushing to make it very clear that they absolutely do not support the killing of a baby born alive. Yet, yesterday, my Democratic colleagues objected to a bill that would do nothing more than declare that any infant who is born alive during an abortion is entitled to be protected—to be given the basic medical care that would be afforded any other baby.

Most Americans think there should be, at least, some limits on abortion. Most countries in the world think there should be some limits on abortion. Only China, North Korea, the United States, and two other countries allow elective abortions through all 9 months of pregnancy—not a list we ought to be on. At least some of my Democratic colleagues used to be a little bit more moderate on the issue of abortion. Safe, legal, and rare was their claim, which you always heard them say, but, yesterday, my Democratic colleagues made it very clear that they have decided to dispense with moderation and espouse the most radical and extreme position possible—no restrictions at all on abortion, ever, up to and, apparently, now after the moment of birth.

Chuck Colson, the founder of Prison Fellowship, once noted: “A government cannot be truly just without affirming the intrinsic value of human life.”

I think it is fair to say that pretty much every great injustice in human history sprang from a failure to affirm the intrinsic value of every human life—from a decision that certain individuals’ rights were not equal to those of others or that their life or liberty could be sacrificed for the greater good.

Today, we unfortunately see another great injustice with the failure to affirm the value of the lives of the most vulnerable among us.

I am horrified by my Democratic colleagues’ decision to object to legislation to protect babies born alive, and I will continue to fight to ensure that the right to life of every human being, born and unborn, is protected.

THE ECONOMY

Madam President, here are just some of the news stories we saw at the end of last week. This is from the *Guardian*: “U.S. jobs growth smashes expectations”; from *CNBC*: “Worker wage gains just broke 3% for the first time in more than 10 years”; from *Fox Business*: “U.S. employers added 304,000 jobs in January, soaring past expectations”; from the *Wall Street Journal*: “U.S. Stocks Post Best January in 30 Years”; from *USA Today*: “Employers add booming 304,000 jobs in January,

marking 100th straight month of employment gains”; and from the Associated Press: “A robust job gain in January shows US economy’s durability.” The list goes on. Simply put, the U.S. economy is flourishing.

After years of stagnation under the Obama administration, the economy has come roaring back. Job creation is strong, and unemployment is low. January marked the 11th straight month that unemployment has been at or below 4 percent. That is the strongest streak in nearly five decades.

The economy grew at a robust 3.4 percent in the third quarter of 2018. In 2018, for the first time ever, the number of job openings outnumbered the number of jobseekers. The Department of Labor reports that for 9 straight months there have been more job openings than people looking for work.

Wage growth is accelerating. Wages have now been growing at a rate of 3 percent or greater for 6 straight months. The last time wage growth reached this level was in 2009.

Median household income is at an all-time inflation-adjusted record of \$6,372.

Small business optimism hit record highs in 2018. The year 2018 saw the most impressive job growth in the manufacturing industry since 1997.

The list goes on and on and on. My point, very simply, is that Republican economic policies are working.

When Republicans took office 2 years ago, the economy had been underperforming for years, and American families had been feeling the effects. We were determined to remove the obstacles that were holding the economy back, like burdensome regulations and an outdated Tax Code that was acting as a drag on economic growth. So, along with the President, we got right to work, lifting excessive regulations.

In December 2017, we passed a historic, comprehensive reform of our Tax Code. We cut taxes for American families, doubled the child tax credit, and nearly doubled the standard deduction. We lowered tax rates across the board for owners of small and medium-sized businesses, farms, and ranches. We lowered our Nation’s massive corporate tax rate, which previously was the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. We expanded business owners’ ability to recover the cost of investments they make in their businesses, which frees up cash that they can invest in their operations and in their workers. And we brought the U.S. international tax system into the 21st century so that American businesses are not operating at a competitive disadvantage next to their foreign counterparts.

Now we are seeing the effects: a thriving economy, good jobs, higher wages, and low unemployment.

So what is the Democratic response to all of this good economic news and economic growth? Is it to continue the policies that are creating prosperity for American families and look for

ways for grow these policies to expand the economic benefits even further? No.

Democrats want to reverse the policies that are producing economic growth. They want to undo the tax cuts that are creating jobs and opportunities for American workers, and they want to increase—increase—the tax burden of American families.

That is right. Democrats are currently advocating various proposals that would not only reverse the gains the economy has made but would severely damage economic growth for the long term. For example, there are the proposals to impose a government-run healthcare system, like the so-called Medicare for All plan, whose price tag is so staggeringly large—by one estimate, more than \$32 trillion—that no one has even come close to figuring out how to pay for it. Doubling the amount of individual and corporate income tax collected would still not be enough to pay for the mammoth cost of this plan.

Think about that. All of the revenue collected—income tax on the individual side and on the corporate side, double it—double it—and you still wouldn’t be able to pay for this massive plan.

The Democrats’ promise that if you like your healthcare plan, you can keep it will be broken again. More than 175 million Americans get their health insurance through their jobs. That will be no more under this proposal. The Vermont Senator’s government-run Medicare for All plan, which many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have cosponsored, would eliminate private sector insurance for millions of families who like the coverage they currently have.

Then there is the so-called Green New Deal, which could raise families’ energy bills by more than \$3,000 each year. When I travel in my State of South Dakota, I hear a lot about the high cost of living and how it is still difficult for families to make ends meet. The last thing my constituents in South Dakota or any hard-working family needs is to have their energy costs go up by more than \$3,000 a year.

Then there are the plain old tax bills that some of the Democrats are proposing to raise the top marginal tax rate to 70 percent or higher. House Democrats are also proposing to substantially increase business tax rates.

Prior to the passage of the tax reform, America’s global companies faced the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. That put American businesses at a serious disadvantage on the global stage, which, in turn, put American workers at a disadvantage.

Part of the economic growth that we are experiencing now and all of the benefits for workers that come along with it are direct results of the lower corporate tax rate that we passed as part of the tax reform.

It is staggering—staggering—that Democrats can look at all of the benefits that come from lowering the corporate rate and all of the positive effects it is having on the economy and workers and then turn around and propose a tax rate hike.

In short, here is what our country would look like if the Democrats' far-left agenda is forced upon the American people: Government-run Medicare for All would eliminate employer-sponsored insurance for 175 million people, increase government spending by \$32 trillion, jeopardize Medicare for today's seniors, and raise taxes on just about everyone under the sun. The Green New Deal would increase energy costs by up to \$3,000 or more per year for our families, and Democrats' new taxes would slow economic growth, destroy jobs, and reduce economic opportunity for hard-working Americans.

Our economy is thriving, and that is bringing real benefits to American families and to American workers. We want to continue heading in the right direction with more policies to grow the economy, to reduce the cost of living, and to help Americans save for retirement. We will strongly oppose Democrats' attempts and proposals to undo the progress that our economy has made and to burden Americans with higher taxes, fewer jobs, and fewer opportunities.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as the world knows by now, tonight President Trump will deliver his delayed State of the Union Message.

This is a tradition that, of course, dates back to the Constitution, but the Constitution is ambiguous or unclear or actually doesn't say exactly how that annual message should be delivered. We know that George Washington, for example, delivered his annual message in 1790 at the Federal Hall of New York City, which was the temporary seat of the Federal Government at the time. Although John Adams delivered an in-person address, the tradition didn't last very long. Our third President, Thomas Jefferson, chose to deliver the message in writing, a practice that lasted for nearly a century—that is, until President Woodrow Wilson chose to speak to the Congress in 1913.

According to the Washington Post, people were outraged at this breach of tradition, which maybe speaks to how hard change is in Washington, DC.

The paper wrote "All official Washington was agape last night over the

decision of the President to go back to the long-abandoned custom."

Coming face-to-face with Members of Congress was President Wilson's attempt to bring about a closer intimacy between the Congress and the Chief Executive, and I am glad this time the tradition has stuck. I know there are those who disagree, and perhaps that has to do with the endless wave of standing ovations that Congress gives that punctuates the modern speech, which I could do with less of.

The State of the Union Message also serves another important purpose, and that is the President's ability to speak not only to the Members of Congress but over the heads of Congress and directly to the American people. This address is carried live on every network and streamed across social media platforms.

We are all waiting to hear what the President has to say, particularly during these polarized and unusual times. This is a time to reflect on the great work that has been done in the last couple of years to help move our country in a positive direction. Unfortunately, given the propensity of the media to focus on conflict and not on accomplishment that is credited to bipartisan efforts, most of the American people probably aren't aware or need to be reminded of what has actually happened the last 2 years, and I hope the President will reflect on that.

President Trump took office in January 2017, and Congress has passed legislation since that time to improve nearly every aspect of society. No one stands out greater than the economy.

I remember that during the Barack Obama administration, particularly after the great recession of 2008, we were told that 2 percent growth was the new normal, even though for the last previous 25 years that was definitely subnormal. Annual growth rates were more often in the 3.5 to 4 percent range.

Now we know that the American economy has gotten its groove back and people are optimistic and confident. They reacted in large part to the increase in take-home pay they see in their paychecks and the fact that many businesses, large and small, have chosen to reinvest in their people by raising wages, improving benefits, or providing a bonus.

I hope that we hear from President Trump more about this tonight because this has been nothing less than a miracle. You can undoubtedly trace it back to the landmark tax reform bill we passed over a year ago.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act sought to solve a problem that had befuddled Congress for many years, whether they be Republicans or Democrats. The question was, How do we fix this outdated, archaic, and overly complicated Tax Code?

When President Trump signed this bill into law, it marked the first major overhaul of our Tax Code in 31 years. Our reforms lowered rates all across

the board, doubled the child tax credit, and incentivized U.S. businesses with earnings abroad to bring that money back home and work here in America for the American people. We quickly saw a steady stream of headlines about businesses, big and small, announcing, as I indicated earlier, bonuses, pay raises, new jobs, and other investments in their employees.

In the months that followed the law's enactment, I have met with a number of employers throughout Texas to see how the new tax law has changed their way of doing business.

In Corpus Christi, for example, I visited with a seafood distributorship company called Groomers Seafood. They gave their employees a bonus and increased their wages after the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act became law.

In Houston, at Southland Hardware, a quaint neighborhood hardware store whose tagline is "the store that has 'almost' everything," they were able to provide bonuses and raises for their staff, as well as hire a new employee and do improvements to their store.

In Austin, I visited with the owner of Wally's Burger Express. He told me he is using the savings from tax reform to expand his business and create new jobs.

It is clear to me that businesses across the country have felt the same way as these owners of small businesses did in Texas, and it didn't take long for Americans to begin to feel the benefit.

I have heard from countless of my constituents about the impact this legislation has had on their daily lives, and it is all for the better. One of them was a gentleman from Arlington, TX, named David. David wrote to me to say that the company where he is employed increased the hours people were able to work. Christmas bonuses increased, too, and the company hired more people, bought new machines, and made long-overdue repairs to their building. Now with these changes in place, David says the guys down on the shop floor are taking home a little bit more money each week in their paychecks. He said: "All of this adds up and makes a huge difference in the lives of the guys on the shop floor."

The impact also extends to retirees across the country. One of my constituents from Midland, TX, named Glenda reached out to me about how the tax reform bill changed her life. She wrote to me to say that she has been retired since 2013, which, she reminded me, means that she has a fixed income with no possibility of pay raises or year-end bonuses, but that doesn't mean she is not grateful. She said that the reduction in income taxes to her feels like a raise.

Because of this legislation, middle-class Americans are living more comfortably and the economy is booming. If you don't believe me, just look at the numbers. Since this legislation was passed, 3 million new jobs have been added in our country, wages are on the

rise, and unemployment has hit a 50-year low. I read the other day that because of tight labor conditions, people with disabilities are reentering the workforce, and we have seen the lowest level of Hispanic and African-American unemployment ever.

This revitalization of the economy has led to big benefits on Main Street and in the homes of average Americans. America has regained its status as an economic powerhouse once again, and we are going to keep these successes going.

So looking back on the last 2 years, there are countless accomplishments I am proud of, but certainly reforming the Tax Code for the first time in 31 years stands out near the top of the list.

I should also mention that we confirmed 85 Federal judges, including two incredibly qualified Supreme Court Justices. This all comes despite the unprecedented obstruction we have seen from Senate Democrats to slow down or block the process. We still have a number of judicial vacancies to fill in this Congress, many of them in Texas and many of whom were just renominated. I hope we can move quickly to vote on these nominations—these good men and women who offered to serve the public as Federal judges.

Under this administration we have taken some positive bipartisan efforts, such as combatting the opioid epidemic, which plagues nearly every community in the America. We supported pay raises for our military and authorized additional resources for their equipment and training. We promoted public safety with the passage of bills to stop or deter school violence. We have given farmers and ranchers the certainty they need when we passed the critical farm bill. We supported better career training and education for American workers. And that is just the beginning.

This administration, in working with the Congress, has delivered real changes for the American people. I am ready to keep those changes and improvements moving forward, so I am eager to hear what the President has to say tonight on everything we have accomplished together and for him to outline his priorities for the coming year.

With the Democrats' gaining control of the House, though, I expect the President to ask about the importance of working on a bipartisan basis. Speaker PELOSI has a fundamental choice: Is she going to work with the Republicans in the Senate and the President to do good things for the American people or is she simply going to oppose anything and everything President Trump proposes—given the fact that the 35-day shutdown represents not an effort to find middle ground and negotiate a sensible outcome but rather one of political point-scoring, of trying to determine who is the winner and loser in any particular battle no matter what the collateral damage may be?

I hope our colleagues in the House and, I hope, all of our colleagues in the Senate will look at trying to continue this record of accomplishment for the American people and will commit to working in good faith to keep that progress moving.

Under this administration, our government has taken major steps to strengthen our economy and to make changes that benefit the American people. I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish. I am not focused on the frustrations that plague us every day; I am focused on the positives we have been able to do, and I hope we can keep it going.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my remarks in the unlikely event I don't finish them by 12:30.

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

S. 1

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to talk again for a few minutes about S. 1, which is sponsored by Senator RUBIO.

As I have cautioned the last few times I spoke on the subject, nothing I say is meant to be construed as a criticism of Senator RUBIO. There are some really good things in this bill, as the Presiding Officer knows.

I forgot the title of it. I think Senator RUBIO is calling it the Strengthening America's Security in the Middle East Act. I like the fact that S. 1 reaffirms our commitment to protecting Israel. I think that is important. I think Israel is certainly our best friend in the Middle East and one of our best friends in the world. Some days I think Israel is our only friend in the world.

S. 1 is going to strengthen America's bonds with Jordan, and I think that is very important. Jordan has been a key ally in fighting terrorism and, frankly, a key ally in helping us deal with the humanitarian catastrophe as a result of Assad and his butchering of his own people in Syria.

S. 1 is going to combat a radical economic warfare campaign against our friend Israel. That is long overdue. S. 1 is also going to create new sanctions on the Government of Syria. I support all of those. I intend to vote for S. 1, despite the fact that, in my opinion, there is a great deficiency with S. 1.

I know Senator McCONNELL offered an amendment to reflect the will of the Senate with respect to whether America ought to get out of Syria. In his

amendment, he suggested that we should not. I voted against Senator McCONNELL's amendment not because I think he is wrong but because I just don't know if he is right. I don't think most Members of Congress know.

We have received such conflicting information, and I have asked Senator McCONNELL to hold a briefing for us—a classified briefing in which we bring over people who think we should get out and people who think we shouldn't get out, and let us hear the facts and the informed opinions of people who know better than we do. Frankly, I would like to see us do the same thing with respect to Afghanistan.

I share the President's concern about nation-building. We have spent \$6 trillion since 2001 in the Middle East. I share the President's concern about mission creep. But, once again, just as I am not saying that Senator McCONNELL is wrong; I just don't know that he is right, and, quite frankly, I am saying the same thing with respect to President Trump. I am not saying he is wrong about withdrawing from Syria; I am just saying I don't know if he is right.

I do know this: President Trump is going to do what he thinks is best for America. The Senate can pass all of the bills and resolutions about the will of the Senate that it wants to, but if the President of the United States thinks it is best for the American people and the world to withdraw all troops from Syria, then my experience is, by God, he is going to do it.

If he does it, one of my biggest concerns, which could have been addressed in this bill, is if we would have been allowed to offer amendments, supposedly as the world's greatest deliberative body, we could have fixed this problem. The problem I am talking about is the Syrian Kurds.

Let's just call it like it is. I mentioned that Israel has been a great ally, as well as Jordan. This bill is being sold as, well, this is to protect our allies in the Middle East, in part. What about the Syrian Kurds?

I think there are 50 or 60 million Kurds throughout the world. They are mostly in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Why aren't the Kurds allowed to self-determine?

Even if the Kurds didn't believe in democracy—and I think they do; they want sovereignty like we have, and they want to be able to self-determine—the truth is, we wouldn't have beaten back ISIS without the help of the Syrian Kurds.

I don't want to get off into this discussion about whether or not ISIS is defeated. If you look at just the statistics, a couple of years ago, there were 100,000 ISIS jihadists. There are not 100,000 now. There are less than 5,000. A couple of years ago, ISIS had its own caliphate. They just went in there and carved out their own country. They don't have it anymore.

So you can debate whether we defeated them. I am not sure we will ever

completely defeat the jihadists, whether they call themselves ISIS or al-Qaida or what. But I know this much: We could not have beaten back ISIS without the help of the Syrian Kurds.

A lot of our other friends said: Yeah, you go get them. You go fight. We will be glad to hold your coat while you fight. That was not the Syrian Kurds. They got in there with us.

The Syrian Kurds have enemies in this world. I am not making any accusations or disparaging comments about our friends in Turkey, but President Erdogan has been very vocal about how he feels about the Kurds, including, but not limited to, the Syrian Kurds. I worry about them if we leave.

I had an amendment that didn't require—it didn't require—anybody to do anything. It just said: Mr. President, if we leave Syria, this will give you the authority to keep our friends, our allies, the Syrian Kurds, from being butchered, from being opened up like a soft peanut.

America's foreign policy has never been just about interests; it has been about values. America's foreign policy has always had a moral component. Part of the moral component in our foreign policy is that we don't leave our friends behind. That is what we are potentially doing with this bill.

It could have been easily fixed. It could have been fixed if the Senate had been allowed to be the U.S. Senate.

I don't hate anyone. I love and respect all of my colleagues, and I mean that—even the jurists and everybody in their own way, especially in this body, and I have gotten to know all of them, and I am so proud to be a Member. But it does bother me sometimes; it seems we are kind of like—it is almost Orwellian. We are all equal, but some of us are more equal than others, and I think that irks the American people. I think had we been able to offer amendments, we could have fixed that problem with the Syrian Kurds.

I hope I don't have to come back and say told you so. I hope after we leave Syria—and I think the President is going to leave Syria—I hope the Syrian Kurds are just fine. I hope they are just fine. But if they are not, I hope we will not look back and say that we had a chance to protect our friends and do the right thing, but we didn't do it.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:33 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

DESIGNATING THE OUTSTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN NORTH OGDEN, UTAH, AS THE MAJOR BRENT TAYLOR VET CENTER OUTSTATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, on November 3, 2018, this country lost a true American hero: MAJ Brent Taylor of Ogden, UT, who gave the ultimate sacrifice while deployed in Afghanistan.

As North Ogden's mayor, Major Taylor died as he lived: going above and beyond the call of duty to his country, to his State, and his family.

Major Taylor, who is pictured here with his family, began his military service in 2003, following the attacks of September 11. He joined the Army National Guard just 3 days after becoming engaged to his wife Jennie.

During his time in the National Guard, Major Taylor distinguished himself in multiple specialties, including intelligence and military police. In 2006, he received a commission as a second lieutenant from the Brigham Young University ROTC, while graduating as a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Major Taylor was continuously ready to take up the call to arms and deployed four times on missions to Iraq and to Afghanistan. He held a variety of roles in those deployments, including platoon leader, combat adviser, and chief of staff to the Special Operations Advisory Group.

Throughout his distinguished tours of service, he also received several awards for courage and for leadership, including a Bronze Star in honor of his ability to calmly and safely lead those he was assigned to lead through multiple miles of treacherous territory and a Purple Heart for the wounds he received during an explosives attack on his vehicle.

His love of his country and his State was also very evident, perhaps most evident beyond the circumstance in which he wore the uniform. Major Taylor gave his time and his energy to his community, serving tirelessly as a member of the North Ogden City Council, from 2010 to 2013, and then as the mayor of North Ogden, after being elected to that post in 2013. He was known for being a hands-on leader and someone who was attentive to and constantly beloved by every member of his community.

After being reelected as the mayor of North Ogden in 2017, Major Taylor took a leave of absence from the mayor's office and headed back to the battlefield, deploying once again to Afghanistan. When he announced his leave of absence to the people of North Ogden, he told them he felt called to serve his country and that "service is what leadership is all about."

Major Taylor faithfully served his church and his family too. He had a deep love of God and of his church. He was a devoted husband to Jennie and a

loving father to their seven children, pictured here: Megan, Lincoln, Alex, Jacob, Ellie, Jonathan, and Caroline.

Following his tragic passing, in an attack on November 3 of this last year, Major Abdul Rahmani, an Afghani pilot with whom Major Taylor worked, sent a letter to Major Taylor's wife Jennie, describing the great impact Major Taylor had on his life. He said: "Your husband taught me to love my wife [Hamida] as an equal and treat my children as treasured gifts, to be a better father, to be a better husband, and to be a better man."

Further, he said: Major Taylor "died on our soil, but he died for the success of freedom and democracy in both our countries."

In every aspect of his life, Major Taylor was a shining example of patriotism, of sacrifice, and of service. It is only right that we honor his extraordinary life. To that end, it would only be a fitting tribute to rename the Ogden Veterans Center in Utah as the Major Brent Taylor Vet Center Outstation.

Today Jennie Taylor is joining Congressman ROB BISHOP as his honored guest for the State of the Union Address tonight, to honor Major Taylor's life and to honor his great legacy—the legacy he leaves behind to his family, to his community, and to all who knew him and served with him. I urge my colleagues to pass legislation commemorating that.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 49 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 49) to designate the outstation of the Department of Veterans Affairs in North Ogden, Utah, as the Major Brent Taylor Vet Center Outstation.

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

Thereupon, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 49) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 49

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Major Brent Taylor began his military service following the attacks of September 11, 2001. He joined the Army National Guard in 2003, three days after his engagement to