

after the arguments are complete. He keeps making this argument. It doesn't gather any steam because it is such a foolish one. Let me again respond for the benefit of my colleagues.

Witnesses and documents are the most important issue, and we should deal with them first. To hear Leader MCCONNELL say "no witnesses now but maybe some later" is just another indication that he has no argument against witnesses and documents on the merits. He is afraid to address the argument because he knows it is a loser for him, so he says: Let's decide it later.

Why? There is no reason. In fact, it is sort of backward. We are going to have all the arguments—pro and con—then say maybe we will have witnesses and documents? We will have the arguments first and the evidence later? As I have said, Leader MCCONNELL's view of the trial is an "Alice in Wonderland" view—first the trial, then the evidence.

More important than precedent is the fact that his analogy plainly doesn't make sense because you don't have both sides present their arguments first and then afterward ask for the evidence that we know is out there. The evidence should inform the trial, not the other way around.

When Leader MCCONNELL proposes that we follow the 1999 precedent, he is essentially arguing that we should conduct the entire impeachment trial first and then once it is over, decide on whether we need witnesses and documents. Again, MCCONNELL's view is "Alice in Wonderland," where we first have the trial and then the evidence. If the Senate were to agree to Leader MCCONNELL's proposal, the Senate would act as little more than a nationally televised meeting of a mock trial club.

Leader MCCONNELL's proposal on witnesses and documents later is a poorly disguised trap. He has already actually made clear what his goals are. He said it on FOX News radio: "After we've heard the arguments, we ought to vote and move on" with no witnesses and no documents.

Well, at least 47 Democrats and I hope some Republicans won't fall for that kind of specious logic. What MCCONNELL said doesn't sound like someone who will reasonably consider witnesses and documents at a later date; he sounds more like someone who has already made up his mind.

You cannot have a fair trial without the facts and without the testimony from witnesses with knowledge of the events and related documents. A trial without all the facts is a farce.

If the President is acquitted at the end of a partisan sham trial with no witnesses and no documents, then his acquittal will not carry much weight in the minds of the American people or in the judgment of history.

President Trump, if you are hurting about this impeachment and you are wishing for a fair trial and a real acquittal, join us in asking for the wit-

nesses to come forward. Join us in asking for the documents. What are you hiding, President Trump? What are you afraid of, President Trump? If you think that you have done nothing wrong, you wouldn't mind having your own witnesses come here. These are people you appointed.

Most Americans know that President Trump seems to be afraid of the truth. And 64 percent of all Republicans who almost always side with President Trump in the polling data say there should be witnesses and documents—64 percent. A trial without all the facts is a farce. The verdicts of a kangaroo court are empty.

It is time for a bipartisan majority in this Chamber, Democrat and Republican, to support the rules and procedures of a fair trial. A vote to allow witnesses and documents does not presume a vote for conviction in any way. It merely ensures that when the ultimate judgment is rendered, whatever that judgment will be, it will be based on the facts. We don't know what the witnesses will say; it could be exculpatory for President Trump or it could be more condemning. Whatever it will be, we should have the facts come out and let the chips fall where they may. The Senate Democrats believe we must conduct a fair trial. As for the Senate Republicans, we will see.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ERNST). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I have some prepared remarks regarding the Soleimani strike and some other related matters, but I want to take a moment and just respond briefly to my friend, the Democratic leader.

There seems to be a lot of irony involved in this question of the Articles of Impeachment. First of all, of course, Speaker PELOSI, who said this is an urgent fulfilling of a constitutional duty and who wanted the Articles of Impeachment voted on in the House, has been radio silent and appears to be getting cold feet on whether or not she will even send the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate.

I would suggest that the first thing we need to know is if Speaker PELOSI is actually serious about this. If she is not, there is no occasion for us to even begin this conversation about how the Senate trial will proceed. Speaker PELOSI is mistaken if she thinks she can direct or influence the Senate's decision on how the trial will proceed. In fact, one of the things I am pretty sure of is that the Senate will not replicate the circuslike atmosphere of the impeachment inquiry in the House, which was one of the most partisan undertakings I have seen in my time in the Senate.

I think they are really grasping at straws now and are recognizing they did a poor job in developing the case that led to the two Articles of Impeachment. One was because of a disagreement over the manner in which the President exercised his authority

under the Constitution to engage in foreign relations, and the other was based on this bogus idea that by saying: I need to go to court to get some direction on a claim of executive privilege, that somehow, even though Mr. SCHIFF dropped the subpoena or no longer sought that witness's testimony, one has obstructed Congress's investigation. All of this was without even alleging any crime.

I suggest that the Senate is an institution that follows the rules and that we follow our precedents. The most obvious precedent for this impeachment trial is the Clinton impeachment trial. There, we saw 100 Senators agree to a procedure which allowed both sides to present their cases, after which there was a vote to see whether additional testimony would be required. Indeed, there was an agreement to provide three additional witnesses, not live, in a circuslike atmosphere here on the floor of the Senate, but through depositions taken out of court that could then be out of the Chamber, whereby excerpts of those depositions could be offered as additional evidence. That was the procedure that was supported by the Democratic leader, the Senator from New York. I suggest that what was fair for President Clinton is fair for President Trump. It is not much more complicated than that, and that, indeed, is the most relevant precedent.

With regard to this claim that some Senators aren't demonstrating impartiality, I recall reading that the Senator from New York, when he was running against incumbent Senator D'Amato, said a vote for him for the Senate would be a guaranteed vote of acquittal of President Clinton. That was hardly impartial. Now he protests too much and, I think, demonstrates his hypocrisy when it comes to the standard by which he holds himself and others.

I am sorry. I just can't believe that Senator WARREN and Senator SANDERS would qualify under anybody's definition of an impartial juror. Yet that is our constitutional system. I think what has happened is that they realize their case is falling short of any standard by which a President would be convicted and impeached, and they are simply grasping at straws.

IRAN

Madam President, on another matter, last Friday, Americans woke up to the news that one of the most brutal terrorist leaders in the world had been killed. Qasem Soleimani was killed in an airstrike by America's military, finally bringing an end to his decades-long reign of terror.

You could legitimately call General Soleimani a master of disaster because that defined his entire professional life as the leader of Iran's military. Actually, he was the head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force, which is a U.S.-designated terrorist organization. General Soleimani was the most consequential military leader in Iran, which has been designated by the U.S. State Department

as a state sponsor of international terrorism since 1984. General Soleimani orchestrated Iran's efforts to squash democracy movements both at home and abroad by any means necessary. He and his army of terrorists exported violence around the region and engaged in gross human rights violations against the Iranian people.

If you are curious how the Iranian Government treats its own citizens, just look at the recent protests that started as complaints over increased gas prices. When the Iranian citizens took to the streets in peaceful protest, the Ayatollah, the Supreme Leader, called them enemy agents and thugs, and the government attacked. As many as 450 Iranians were killed in those peaceful protests, with some 2,000 injured and 7,000 detained. This is not a government that is protecting its people; it is a network of criminals that masquerades as a government. One of the Ayatollah's most loyal henchmen was Soleimani.

In addition to leading attacks on the Iranian people and fueling terrorist operations throughout the Middle East, he also played a crucial role in fomenting Syria's civil war. Soleimani helped to finance and aid the butcher, known as Bashar al-Assad, in the slaughter of the Syrian people. The death toll of the Syrian civil war is estimated to be as high as a half a million Syrians, and the number of refugees and internally displaced persons goes into the millions.

While the greatest death and destruction orchestrated by Soleimani was concentrated in the Middle East, the United States was one of his and Iran's biggest targets. From the Iranian hostage crisis back in 1979, to the Khobar Towers bombing, to the recent shooting down of a U.S. drone, to the death of an American contractor in Iraq, Iran's actions at every turn have demonstrated a desire to make the chant "Death to America" a reality.

Soleimani was known to be responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American soldiers. He and the Iranian regime supplied explosively formed penetrators that cut through American armor like a hot knife through butter and left hundreds of American soldiers—indeed, maybe 1,000 or more—disabled as a result of this deadly instrument of war. Since 2003, at least 600 U.S. soldiers have been killed by Iranian proxies in Iraq, and as I have said, many more have been injured.

I and others in this Chamber have seen their activities firsthand at Brooke Army Medical Center, the Center for the Intrepid in San Antonio, and at other places where they have received treatment, like at Walter Reed Army Medical Center here in Washington, DC. It is where the victims of these Iranian improvised explosive devices were treated for amputation, for burns, or functional limb loss if they survived those injuries in the first place. These soldiers are a reminder of the selfless commitment our men and

women in uniform make each day as well as the perilous threat posed by Iran under Soleimani's leadership.

For decades, since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Tehran has waged war against the United States and our allies, and recent reports indicate that Soleimani was in the process of plotting even more acts of aggression against the United States and U.S. interests, which is hardly surprising, though, since he had been doing that for many years. That is precisely why he was targeted.

Just as quickly as the news of this attack spread, so did anti-Trump rhetoric. Instead of celebrating the fact that Iran's chief terrorist was dead and could kill no more, a number of our Democratic colleagues chose to bash the President instead. They claimed his action was unauthorized, even illegal, or that he should have sought congressional approval beforehand. None of that is true. The President not only has the authority under the Constitution but the responsibility to defend the United States from terrorist organizations like the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and its leaders like General Soleimani.

This was neither an assassination—a particularly loathsome allegation that has been made on social media—nor an unprovoked attack. This was the President of the United States exercising his lawful authority to protect the United States, our allies, and our national interests just as Presidents before have done. Perhaps the most stark comparison is when Barack Obama directed the killing of Osama bin Laden. Where were the people who now claim that Soleimani's death is an abuse of power? I don't recall anyone calling the killing of Osama bin Laden an assassination. When he was killed, they were not on cable TV, criticizing the move; we were all celebrating.

Some of our Democratic friends will simply never pass on an opportunity to criticize the President—no matter how unfair. Thank goodness there are Democrats like former Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson and former U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman.

Senator Joe Lieberman said:

President Trump's order to take out Qasem Soleimani was morally, constitutionally and strategically correct. It deserves more bipartisan support than the begrudging or negative reactions it has received thus far from my fellow Democrats.

I am also grateful for the informed comments by luminaries like former CENTCOM Commander and former CIA Director General Petraeus as well as Ambassador Ryan Crocker, who have both rightly said that this action was authorized and necessary.

It is unquestionable that the death of Soleimani was a major blow to the Iranian regime and a strong message of deterrence to all state sponsors of terrorism. The blood of hundreds of American soldiers and countless civilians is on Soleimani's hands, and because of

the decisive action taken by President Trump, he is gone.

I fully support this move by the President, and I commend the President's willingness to send a strong message of deterrence to the terrorist threat in the Middle East, particularly against the United States, our citizens, and our interests.

Finally, I join my fellow Senators in thanking the brave men and women in uniform who fought and continue to fight terrorist acts brought about by people like General Soleimani and the Quds Force as part of the IRGC. I especially thank those who are fighting and who are prepared to defend our interests in the Middle East today.

America must never back down in the face of this evil. Our world is safer today because Qasem Soleimani is dead. It would not have been possible without the actions that President Trump has undertaken or without the resolve of our military leaders and our courageous servicemembers who put their lives on the line each day.

116TH CONGRESS

Madam President, on another matter, briefly, we have now crossed the halfway point of the 116th Congress, and it is safe to say that 2019 was an unconventional and a somewhat bumpy year.

After 2 years with Republicans controlling both Chambers of Congress and the White House, we were all prepared for the challenges that would come with a Democratically controlled House. Despite the unnecessary foot-dragging and political gaming and obsession with foiling the President, we were still able to accomplish a lot of good for the country and the people of my State of Texas.

Last month alone, we made major moves to strengthen our military and support our troops. We passed a funding bill that increased the funding by nearly \$20 billion—necessary to restore our readiness—and gave our troops the largest pay raise they had received in a decade.

This complemented the National Defense Authorization Act, which authorized \$400 million for military construction projects in Texas and 90 new F-35 Joint Strike Fighters that will be built in Fort Worth.

It also included a number of provisions that I introduced to support our servicemembers and veterans. In 2016, only 46 percent of Active-Duty military voted by absentee ballot, and one-third of those who didn't vote said that the absentee voting process was simply too complicated.

To make that better, I introduced the Military Voter Protection Act, which became law last month. It makes the absentee voter registration process easier for servicemembers stationed overseas so that a complicated trail of paperwork doesn't prevent them from casting their well-deserved ballots.

I have also heard from my Texas constituents who are veterans, who have

fallen on hard times and had to fight for their VA and Department of Defense disability benefits in bankruptcy proceedings. That should never be the case. Another bill I introduced called the HAVEN Act, which is now law, shields those benefits in the same way that Social Security disability is exempted. No veteran should be penalized for receiving the disability compensation that they are rightly due.

Of course, perhaps the biggest headline news is our continued work on judicial nominations. Under this administration, we have confirmed more than 180 Federal judges, including 20 in Texas, plus 2 Supreme Court Justices. Although we are still 1 year shy of the end of President Trump's first term, we have already confirmed more circuit court judges than in any other President's first term in the past four decades. Having these impressive judges on the Federal bench will be a tremendous benefit to the entire country for generations to come, and we will keep working to confirm even more.

Over the last year, we have also built on our work to support victims of Hurricane Harvey, including the release of \$4.6 billion in additional funding from a bill to support communities across the country, including those in Texas, recovering from natural disasters.

More than 2 years after the storm, many Texans are still rebuilding and, sadly, have had the added struggle of fighting to get their hands on Federal funds already approved by Congress. In February 2018, Congress passed a funding package that included more than \$4 billion in disaster mitigation for Texas, but more than a year later, folks at home still hadn't seen a dime of that money.

This summer, I introduced a bill that would require the Office of Management and Budget to send those and any future funds approved by Congress within 90 days of their appropriation by Congress. Government bureaucrats should not be allowed to stand in the way between communities in need and funds already approved by Congress, and I am happy that those funds are finally going out the door to these Texas communities.

Another challenge we have faced over the last year is the ongoing crisis at the border, which hit its peak in May. Local communities in Texas helped carry the weight of this humanitarian crisis, which has placed serious strain on their ability to deliver basic services at the municipal and State levels. They diverted taxpayer dollars from things like public safety, power, and clean drinking water to do a job that should have been done by the Federal Government in the first place to secure our border.

To right this wrong, we passed a funding agreement, at my request, which provided \$30 million in reimbursements for local governments, States, and charitable organizations that have spent millions of dollars in response to this crisis, which seems to

be ignored too often here in Washington, DC. Nearly 40 percent of this initial funding went to Texas to meet immediate needs, and I expect another round to come soon to cover additional expenses.

Another big victory came in the form of international trade. Through my role as chairman of the Senate Finance Trade Subcommittee, I worked with the administration on three trade agreements with Japan, the USMCA—the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement—and China, all of which, I think, will inure to the benefit of all Americans, including Texans. I commend President Trump and Ambassador Lighthizer for their courage in confronting unfair trade practices, opening new markets, and providing economic certainty as we move into this election year.

On top of all of this, we passed the bipartisan Taxpayer First Act, which includes some of the most significant reforms to the Internal Revenue Service in two decades. We stood with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault by finally passing the Debbie Smith Reauthorization Act, which strengthens our fight to end the rape kit backlog. We helped provide additional resources to secure America's elections against foreign interference, and the list goes on and on and on.

It is safe to say, though, that there are a number of items that could have been added to this list of accomplishments, had they not been pulled into the political fray and this obsessive impeachment mania by the House of Representatives. Two things we could have done that were not accomplished as a result of this obsession were bills to reduce prescription drug pricing and to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, for which the Presiding Officer has played such an important leadership role.

In both cases, there is broad bipartisan support for action, and in both cases, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle decided that political point scoring was more important than actually getting the job done; thus, we found ourselves at an impasse. As we gear up for a new year, those will be two of the top items on my priority list, and I hope our Democratic colleagues will work with us this time around to get them done.

We are kicking off 2020 with a big, looming question mark hanging over this Chamber in the form of this impeachment trial, which was an urgent constitutional imperative until it wasn't. We are anxious to see what Speaker PELOSI will finally decide, and we are waiting for the House to transmit the Articles of Impeachment, but we are not going to let the grass grow under our feet in the interim. We are going to keep working to notch more wins for the American people, confirm more Federal judges, and pass the USMCA trade agreement, hopefully, before further delay.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

(The remarks of Mr. HAWLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. Res. 463 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HAWLEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

IRAN

Mr. Kaine. Madam President, I am glad to be joined today by my colleague from Illinois, who is a personal mentor of mine. We are here to talk about the threat of war with Iran and about the Constitution.

I have been worried about this threat for some time, ever since President Trump chose to ignore the advice of his key national security professionals and allies by abandoning America's commitment to a diplomatic deal to limit Iran's nuclear program. The President's action since that tragic decision and the easily predictable responses of Iran to his actions have resulted in an escalating set of hostilities between the United States and Iran and its proxies.

I will state at the outset my conclusion. I believe that the United States should not be at war in Iran and that, indeed, another war in the Middle East now would be catastrophic.

But I recognize that some of my colleagues may have a different point of view. So I speak in the hopes of forging a consensus on at least one issue, and that issue is this: If there is to be a war with Iran, it should not be initiated by this President or any President acting on his or her own. It should only be initiated by a vote of Congress following an open and public debate in full view of the American people.

Every Member of Congress should vote and then be accountable for the question of whether another war in the Middle East is a good idea. The demand for congressional accountability is constitutionally required in the unique constitutional framework that we have. We pledge to support and defend the principle that it is up to Congress to declare war, not the President.

If we engage in a war, the odds are high that young American men and women will be killed or injured. Some will see their friends killed and injured. Some will have the remainder of their lives affected by physical and emotional injuries, post-traumatic stress, the pain of losing friends, and their families and friends will bear those scars as well. If we are to order our troops and their families to run that risk, then, it should be based on a public consensus as reflected in an open congressional debate and vote that war is in the national interest.

If Congress debates the matter in full view of the public and reaches the conclusion that war is necessary, so be it. Even if I were to vote no, if the majority of my colleagues voted yes, I would agree that the decision to go to war was a legitimate basis to order our best and brightest into harm's way.

But by what right do we consign our troops to possible injury and death if