

standing up to his personal political interests, right or wrong. This is a dangerous pattern that should send a shiver down the spine of anyone who believes in democracy and is particularly relevant to the intelligence community, which must be able to inform the President of difficult truths.

Mr. RATCLIFFE, unfortunately, has not demonstrated the qualities nor the independence that we should expect of the next leader of the intelligence community. I will vote no and encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, for the sake of the independence and strength of our intelligence community, which has served us so well for decades, to join me in voting no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, the minority leader just got up and attacked the Senate for not doing anything and then proceeded to announce that we are going to be voting today on the Director of National Intelligence. It seems like a pretty important position—the person who is in charge of all the intelligence activities that we conduct around the world to make sure that we keep our country safe.

So if the Senate is here and not doing anything, it seems like a real contradiction to suggest that we are actually going to vote today on a position that is important to America's national security interests.

It is just one of many that we are going to be voting on and have been voting on over the past several weeks.

The other thing the Democrat leader forgot to acknowledge is that last week we passed reforms to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, a piece of legislation that is also important to national security, that authorizes and funds all our intelligence activities and also included reforms—reforms that many in this body on both sides of the aisle wanted to see adopted. That was an important piece of legislation and one that I think has tremendous consequences—I would add grave consequences—for the United States of America and our national security interests.

The Senate has also been very involved—I would suspect maybe to the Democratic leader's chagrin—in examining and looking at all the coronavirus legislation that we have already passed and the impact it is having and whether it is being effective and where we need to do more and where we need to fix things or refine or tweak things in a way to make those programs that we funded and authorized work better.

But to suggest that the Senate hasn't done anything on the coronavirus—really? Really? My gosh, we passed four bills—four bills—totaling almost \$3 trillion through the U.S. Senate, through the House of Representatives, on the President's desk, and signed into law—\$3 trillion, four pieces of leg-

islation, and it was done in a bipartisan way. Democrats and Republicans cooperated because it is important to our country to make sure that we are responding to an enormous crisis, an extraordinary crisis that required an extraordinary response, and the response, I would argue, has been extraordinary.

Never in my lifetime or certainly my time in the Senate—or, for that matter, I would argue anybody else's time in the Senate—has the U.S. Senate done anything of that scale, scope, or consequence. And in many of those programs that we authorized and funded, those four pieces of legislation which passed as recently as a couple of months ago, the dollars are still getting out there. They are in the pipeline. They are going out to State and local governments. They are going out to healthcare providers, hospitals, nursing homes. They are going out to small businesses. They are going out to workers, employees, people who have been unemployed through the unemployment insurance program. There are a lot of dollars in the pipeline, a lot of resources that have been expended by the U.S. Senate, the House of Representatives, and signed into law by the President.

So it seems logical, I would think, for us, as stewards of the tax dollars, as representatives of the people of this country, as policymakers, to make sure that the policies we are putting into place are having the desired effect and are actually working.

So what has the Senate been doing for the past 3 weeks? Well, exactly that—taking a look on a committee-by-committee basis at whether some of the things we have already done are being effective.

The Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee had in the head of the CDC, the head of the NIH—two critical agencies when it comes to fighting the health emergency of this country—to determine and to ask them questions about what is working, what is not working, what have we done, what should we be doing differently, what can we do.

That was a hearing the Health Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee had last week, widely participated in by Members on both sides of the aisle.

I sit on the Senate Commerce Committee. We have had several hearings. We had a markup yesterday. We marked up 14 bills yesterday, but we also have been looking at the impact of coronavirus legislation on those constituencies that are under the jurisdiction of the Senate Commerce Committee, one of which is the airline industry. We had a hearing examining the impact of the coronavirus on aviation, the airline industry in this country, and on things that we have done to help assist and support the airline industry in this country. That was another thing that the Commerce Committee did.

Then, more recently than that, we had a hearing on broadband,

connectivity, and the way in which people, through the coronavirus, are able to stay connected, the way business is conducted, and actually, frankly, for that matter, the way government is conducted because, obviously, we are doing a lot of things through connectivity as well.

We looked at what is working, what is not working, and are there areas, in terms of making sure that parts of the country that don't have high-speed internet services and that don't have broadband services could be better connected, and is that something that ought to be a part of any future legislation that we look at.

This week, the Banking Committee had the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board and had the Secretary of the Treasury in front of that committee to ask them questions about what is happening in the financial services industry and what is the effect of all the money that we spent, that we put out the door, how is that working out there, and, again, what can we be doing differently, how can we improve, and how can we do this better as we look to the future.

Those are just three committees, off the top of my head, not to mention the fact that the Banking Committee is also reporting out the nominee to be the inspector general for the pandemic—a very important position, I might add. So they have been very active and very busy doing oversight work with respect to this pandemic.

What the Democratic leader just said is not true. It is not true; it is not accurate; and, frankly, I would think, in the eyes of the American people, it is illogical to say that we have spent \$3 trillion and we wouldn't want to take a look to see how that \$3 trillion is being spent and whether it is being effective and whether it is being efficient and then look at where do we need to do more before we rush headlong in there and just push another \$3 trillion out the door. I think that is a rational way of looking at things. I think most of the American people would accept and believe that these are—this is what we were elected to do. They want to make sure we are taking their tax dollars and spending them as wisely and well as possible and in an efficient and effective way.

By the way, just as a reminder to my colleagues, every dollar—every dollar that we spend is borrowed from our children and grandchildren. This doesn't just magically appear out of thin air. We are borrowing money. Now, granted, it is money we needed to borrow, particularly with what we have already done. Everybody acknowledges we had a crisis. We had to put out the fire, and we have been doing that.

Every dollar, prospectively, every dollar we have already spent is a borrowed dollar, borrowed from future generations of Americans, and they are dollars that someday we are going to have to repay. Wouldn't it be prudent, wouldn't it be logical, and wouldn't it

be rational for this body, the custodians, the stewards of the American people's tax dollars, to take a hard look at what is working and what is not working before rushing headlong into spending another \$3 trillion—which the Democratic leader got up here and lauded and applauded the House of Representatives for blowing into town for 24 hours last Friday, cobbling together an ideological wish list.

Now, granted, there are some things in there that are probably good ideas, and may be things that, in the end, could end up in a piece of legislation, but it didn't get a single Republican vote, and it didn't have a single consultation with Republicans in the House of Representatives about how to put it together. Do you know what? In the end, they couldn't keep all the Democrats. There were 14 Democrats who voted against that in the House of Representatives. There was not a single Republican, which makes sense, if you are Republican. You never get asked. You are never at the table. You have no input whatsoever.

They come in and put this thing together—1,800 pages, \$3 trillion—and what does it have in it? Crazy stuff. Crazy stuff like studies—studies as to whether there is diversity and inclusion in the marketing of marijuana. There are 68 references in the House bill to cannabis. There are 68 references. There are only 52 references to jobs, which is what I would think the American people are a lot more concerned about. The House of Representatives, evidently, waited, and, in the balance, thought: Well, my gosh, studies on the diversity and inclusiveness of the marketing of cannabis was more important and weighed more heavily on the scale than the jobs that have been lost to the American people. That is what it looks like.

I mean, they threw everything in there. They threw in a tax cut for millionaires and billionaires. These guys get up here every single day and talk about Republicans, you know, helping out millionaires and billionaires, and what did the House bill have in it? A tax cut for millionaires and billionaires. Now, 56 percent of the tax cut proceeds will go to the 1 percent top wage earners in America. Just think about that. Does that make sense? Does that make sense when you are fighting a pandemic? Probably not. They actually have tax increases on small businesses. No big surprise there. Tax increases are always something they are quick to do.

I just had to take issue with what the Democratic leader was down here saying and his characterization of what is going on here. This place, when you are responding to a crisis, needs to act in a bipartisan and a constructive way, not in a partisan, ideological way, and I would also think in a thoughtful way, giving a lot of consideration to what we are doing here with those borrowed dollars, borrowed from our kids and grandkids, and are we making the best use of them.

That, to me, seems like maybe the great divide here and the great debate that we have, not only in this but a lot of other issues. It just seems like the natural, instinctive solution, from my friends on the other side of the aisle, is we can just solve this by throwing a lot of money out there. I have to tell you, I don't think that is the way the American people view it because they are sitting down and making hard decisions right now about how to take care of their families and how to get through this economic crisis. I would think the decisions they are making are along the same lines of the decisions we ought to be making; that is, how are we going to spend our dollars wisely and well? How are we going to be efficient and effective? This isn't our money. This is the American people's money. This is a crisis that needs a response. We have responded in a massive way relative to anything that has happened probably in history, for sure in history—\$2 trillion, \$3 trillion. I mean, I can't think of a single time—when we pass annual appropriations bills, they never get up to that level. We are talking about dollars on a scale like nothing we have ever seen before because that is what was required.

This institution demonstrated that notwithstanding our differences, we could work together in a constructive way and a bipartisan way to do what was necessary to deliver for the American people, and we will do what is necessary to get the American people through this crisis. Please, please, can we do that in a thoughtful, constructive, and bipartisan way? Can we do that in a way that says: Wow. Let's actually sit down and think about what makes the most sense here. Let's see what is out there and what has actually worked.

The Paycheck Protection Program, arguably, has worked really well. We put \$660 billion into that particular program, and I think it has gotten pretty big dividends and pretty big results. A lot of businesses are still functioning and still operating and a lot of workers are still working. That was what that was all about, which was to keep those jobs and keep those workers working.

Now, there have been some hiccups, and there have been some things that need to be fixed. We ought to look at what we can do to refine it and make it work better and make it work more efficiently. The same thing is true for the dollars that go out to State and local governments. We have \$150 billion in the pipeline that have gone out to State and local governments, many of which, I might add, are probably going to need help, particularly with revenue replacement. There are a lot of dollars in the pipeline out already, in addition to the \$150 billion that we have done for State and local governments that went out in previous versions, in previous legislation. Of the four bills that we passed, the total sum of dollars that have gone to State governments is

about \$500 billion, or half a trillion dollars.

It is not just \$150 billion that we put out. A lot of that is still in the pipeline. A lot of it—before we put more out there and before we say, oh, let's put another trillion out there, which is what the House is proposing, maybe we ought to look at what the need is. Maybe we ought to find out what the revenue loss actually is because those numbers are just coming in.

This thing really hit us hard a couple of months ago, so the real impact of this is going to be felt April, May, and into the summer. But as things start to open up again, hopefully, we will gradually climb out of this, and those numbers will start to improve. May those horrible unemployment numbers and those horrible revenue numbers on the State level, may those start to come—may we start to see the economy get going back in a more normal direction.

Before we rush out there with another several trillion—and who knows at what point you hit the wall when it comes to borrowing? I mean, we think that the Federal Reserve thinks it has lots of levers and they can leverage their balance sheet and they can still do things, and they think that, fiscally, we have some headroom that we can maneuver within, but if you think about this, before this all started, our debt-to-GDP ratio was 79 percent—79 percent. You know what, for 2020, our debt-to-GDP ratio is going to be? And that doesn't include anything that we do from here on. It just captures what has already been done. Our debt-to-GDP ratio will be 101—1 to 1. That was always the level when we saw the Greeces of the world and all these countries that were just completely in this downward spiral, this quagmire of debt. That was always the metric, 1 to 1, 100 percent debt to GDP. That is the breakpoint. That is when you start entering into that really dangerous territory.

Well, imagine if we add another \$3 trillion on top of that. The \$3 trillion that we have already done, taken the debt to GDP from 79 percent to 101 percent, is the biggest increase—the biggest increase in debt to GDP that we have seen since 1943 when we were powering up for World War II.

Now, granted, this is like a war. This is a fight that we have to win, and we need to do whatever it takes to win it, but let's do it in a smart way, in a thoughtful way, and in a way that gives consideration to the future generations whose liability everything that we spend today will become, because everything that we do is borrowed money, and we have to remember that.

I came down here to talk about the internet, and I guess it is a speech I can save for another day. I was going to talk about China and the things that we need to be doing with China when it comes to protecting our cyber security, but I see my colleague from Illinois

here is waiting to speak. I just thought it was important that we take a moment and pause and think about where we are and what we have done, and as we think about what we are going to do next, make sure we are doing it in a thoughtful, smart, conscientious, right way and efficient and effective way on behalf of the American people and the American taxpayer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, we will adjourn today and be gone next week for the Memorial Day recess and then return the following week. The Senate, at the request and call of the Senate Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL from Kentucky, has been in session for 3 weeks. Senator MCCONNELL has said that we are here because we need to be at our "duty stations." He has used that term over and over again—a military responsibility to stay where you are assigned and to be prepared to fight.

Well, those that take a look at what we have done over the last 3 weeks have to ask: Where is the battle? Where is the fight when it comes to COVID-19? The simple fact is this: The United States Senate, in the last 3 weeks, has not considered one piece of legislation on this floor relative to COVID-19, not one. It has reached the point where the press told me this morning that two Republican Senators are now complaining publicly that we have done nothing on COVID-19 and shouldn't leave for the Memorial Day recess until we do.

Well, I think they ought to take their appeal not to the American public but to their Republican leader because he decides what comes to the floor of the Senate, and he has decided, over the last 3 weeks, that nothing will come to the floor of the Senate relative to the biggest issue in the modern history of America: the national emergency, the public health crisis over COVID-19.

I listened to my friend from South Dakota talk about the amount of money that has been spent. It is an amazing amount—I will be the first to concede it—almost \$3 trillion so far. It is the largest ever I can remember—well, I will just flatout say ever when it comes to a rescue package or a relief package. Of course, it comes at a time when we are facing the worst economic crisis in America for almost 100 years, going back to the Great Depression. There are 38 million uninsured Americans. There are 1.5 million Americans so far infected by this virus. The United States, sadly, leads the world—leads the world—when it comes to these infections. I would say, when the President calls that a badge of honor, I do not. We could have done much better. We should do much better in the future.

Now, in just a matter of days—no sure when—we will reach the tragic milestone of 100,000 Americans who

have died from the coronavirus—100,000 Americans will have died. I join with the Democratic leader in saying that we should mark that tragic milestone with grief for the families and their loss and standing as Americans in honor of the sacrifice they have made.

More than that, we need to do what needs to be done, and to argue that we have done enough now and let's sit back and see what happens is to ignore the obvious. Jerome Powell is the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and he went on "60 Minutes" last Sunday and said to Congress, to the Senate, to the House, and to the President: Don't stop doing your part. The Federal Reserve is trying to loan money to create opportunities to rebuild this economy, but we need to do our part. He didn't say the \$3 trillion is all in. He basically said we need to do more.

We had a briefing from Mark Zandi, an economist, in the last day or two. He is well respected. He has been an economist advising both Democrats and Republicans, and he said the same. If we don't move and move quickly and decisively and boldly to restore this economy, what is now a recession, could be much, much worse. That means, of course, helping those families who have already been hurt.

Last Friday, the House of Representatives did pass another measure for relief, another effort to deal with the COVID virus. So while we have been here for 3 weeks and haven't brought one single bill to the floor on the COVID virus—not one—they moved forward last Friday and passed, without the cooperation of any Republicans—they passed a measure to deal with the continuing crisis in America.

Let me say at the outset, I don't agree with every provision in that bill. I know that negotiations are likely to follow, and the compromise is likely to produce a work product that is somewhat different, but let's look at what that bill did.

The Senator from South Dakota came to the floor and said that bill did crazy stuff. He repeated it—crazy stuff. Well, let's talk about what the bill did.

What the bill did was to restore the President's cash payment to families. You remember that well, I am sure, supported by both political parties. It was \$1,200 for each adult and \$500 for each child. It was absolutely necessary for families who are struggling to get by.

In the House version that passed last Friday, there was a renewed cash payment of \$1,200 for adults and \$1,200 for children. The amount of money we initially allocated for this has been all but spent at this point, so this is an area where we believe, as Democrats, families still need a helping hand. Why do the Republicans in the Senate insist on not bringing this measure to the floor of the U.S. Senate or at least into meaningful negotiation? Do they believe that families across America have received all the money they need to receive to get through this crisis? I don't. If they do, they are out of touch.

The second thing this bill did was to extend the unemployment compensation. Remember, there are 38 million and counting unemployed Americans. We created, in the CARES Act, a Federal boost for unemployment benefits. So if you qualified for unemployment benefits from your State, you would receive an additional \$600 a week. I think that was necessary and good for the economy, and for the families affected, it was a lifeline they desperately needed. But that program, the \$600 a week, expires on July 31—expires. Is there anyone who believes we will be through this economic crisis by July 31 when everyone will be back to work? Of course not. We need to continue to help those families.

The bill that passed the House of Representatives, which the Republican Senator calls crazy stuff—what the bill did was to extend that Federal unemployment benefit of \$600 a week until the end of this year. I think that is sensible and reasonable.

I might tell you that we expanded the categories of those eligible for employment too. Many independent contractors finally get the chance to get some help at this point in time. So to call that crazy stuff and to not even consider it on the floor of the Senate makes no sense at all.

What about the Payroll Protection Program? That was one for small business loans that could be forgiven if the money was loaned and spent for specific purposes. There is a reason we had to revisit that. The money had to be spent by the businesses by the end of June—June 30. I can tell you, having spoken to many small businesses across the State of Illinois, that some of them will not even be open for business by June 30. Requiring them to spend money before they can open their doors doesn't give them an opportunity to use this money to really get back in business.

There were revisions made in the measure the House passed last Friday, revisions in terms of the period of time that the business had to spend the money. Under the current setup, it is 8 weeks. We think that should be extended to a longer period of time. Is that crazy stuff? I think, from where I am standing, it just makes common sense that we would do something that basic. Yet the Senate Republican leader has refused to bring that matter to the floor of the Senate in the weeks since it was passed, and there is obviously no meaningful negotiation underway, and we are leaving to be gone for another week.

But the largest measure in the bill that passed the House of Representatives included a provision to help State and local governments. My friend and colleague from South Dakota talked about the \$150 billion that has been given to State and local governments, which, in the end, could be even larger. I would say to him: Don't listen to me. Listen to the National Governors Association. Ask Governor Hogan, a Republican from Maryland, if we are all in

and have done enough for State and local governments? We are not even close. We are not even close, and we know it.

Lost revenue by my State and many others is dramatic. So what happens if these States don't have the money to pay their bills? Well, Senator MCCONNELL, in an interview, said: Bankruptcy—bankruptcy is an option. Really? Does he believe we are going to restore this economy by watching State and local governments go bankrupt?

What will be the net result of the MCCONNELL's suggestion of bankruptcy for these State and local governments? It will mean laying off, perhaps firing, policemen, firefighters, EMTs, paramedics, and teachers. At a time when we need to restore our educational calendar, bring students back to school, the Senator from Kentucky suggested bankruptcy, laying off teachers, and firing teachers. It makes no sense whatsoever.

The bill that passed the House of Representatives has roughly \$1 trillion for State and local governments. So I can tell you, across my State and I am sure across this Nation, Governors and mayors will step forward and tell you that is exactly what they need now to get back in business.

Remember, as Senator MURRAY said in response to another suggestion, building a bridge halfway across a river is not of much value. We need to build a bridge in this economy from where we are today to where we want to be, with small businesses opening and people back at work, and the notion that we can shortchange parts of this economy and survive is just wrong.

There is a provision in that bill in the House, too, that I introduced in the Senate. It is not an original idea, but others have thought of it too. A third of the people who lose their jobs lose their health insurance because that is where their health insurance came from. Their employer used to pay a share, and they paid a share, and they were covered with good policies. But when they lost their job, the next day, they lost their insurance. What were their options? Sign up for the Affordable Care Act, which covers about 20 million Americans; perhaps qualifying for Medicaid if their family income is low enough; or using what is known as the COBRA Program? The COBRA Program says you can keep that policy you had at your place of employment; however, you now are personally responsible for both ends of the premium payment, the employer and the employee. Well, that comes out to about \$1,700 a month. Imagine that for an unemployed person—\$1,700 a month in premium. They can't do it. So what I proposed, and what was included in the bill that passed the House of Representatives, was 100-percent coverage for that premium payment under COBRA so that these families would have the peace of mind that they would continue to have health insurance during the course of this crisis.

I have given you some highlights of what this bill did. I would just suggest and challenge those who call this crazy stuff to come to the floor and be more specific. What part of what I just described is crazy stuff—extended COBRA protection for more health insurance for those who are unemployed, extending unemployment benefits for the remainder of the year, extending the period of payback for small business loans, making sure, as well, that there is more money for hospitals?

I will just state that I have been on the telephone for the last several weeks with the administrators of hospitals all over the State of Illinois, large and small, and I have joined them with my Republican Members of the House and Democratic Members. We have called and opened the lines and said: What are you finding? Many of these hospitals in the inner cities, as well as those in rural and smalltown areas in States across the Midwest are struggling to survive.

Yesterday I read a list of six hospitals in Kentucky that were furloughing hundreds of employees. In most of the communities downstate where we have hospitals in Illinois, they are the major employer, and these hospitals are hanging on by a thread. What is wrong? A lot of COVID virus cases? No, just a fear of COVID virus.

One hospital administrator said: We have four elective surgeries scheduled for money, and, Senator, that is where our revenue comes in to keep this hospital going. Three of the four patients canceled at the last minute. They were afraid of the COVID virus.

The bill that passed the House of Representatives last week had another \$100 million for hospitals. I will tell you flatout that there is a sense of urgency there because if you lose—if you lose that community hospital, it is a grievous loss in many parts of our State, in the rural areas and small towns in particular. Yet we have not even brought that issue up on the floor of the Senate over the last 3 weeks.

We have a lot of work that needs to be done. We didn't do it in the last 3 weeks. We considered two circuit court nominees before the Senate Judiciary Committee. One from the State of Kentucky is a fellow who has 6 months' experience on the Federal bench. He is being proposed by Senator MCCONNELL for a lifetime appointment in the second highest court in the land. Really? That is the best Republican nominee for the second highest court in the land, a man with 6 months' experience as a trial judge? He does have one thing in his favor, from Senator MCCONNELL's point of view: He is completely opposed to the Affordable Care Act.

They came up with another nominee from Mississippi yesterday with the same thing. So they have two nominees in the midst of a public health crisis in America who are asking for lifetime appointments to the court who are opposed to the Affordable Care Act, a measure that extended health insur-

ance coverage to 20 million Americans and provides protections for over 100 million Americans in terms of their own personal policies, really making sure that those with preexisting conditions have coverage they can afford. At this moment in time, the Republican Party came up with two lifetime nominees who are opposed to the extension of health insurance in America. The timing is perfect.

If you look up the whole question of relevance, and you ask: What is the most irrelevant thing that has occurred in the midst of this crisis? It is the last 3 weeks of the U.S. Senate. We have been here and put at risk 10,000 employees, which is the scale of our workforce in the U.S. Capitol. We have put them at risk. To come here and never mention the words "COVID virus" or "coronavirus" or "pandemic" in legislation on the floor of the Senate is disgraceful.

We were elected to serve. We were elected to respond to America's needs. For the last 3 weeks on the floor the Senate, we have not. The random committee hearing—good. That is what we are supposed to do. That is normal. But you would think that Senator MCCONNELL would have decided, as the House decided last week, that this is still the No. 1 priority in America. It should be. Perhaps after we return from the Memorial Day recess, there will be a sense of urgency, which, sadly, does not exist on the Republican side of the aisle of the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in 50 minutes we are voting to confirm the nominee as Director of National Intelligence. Today, I want to discuss Congressman RATCLIFFE's confirmation as Director of National Intelligence.

I want to congratulate that Congressman on a job well done. With this new position comes great responsibility. Congressman RATCLIFFE will have tremendous power to do good and to be transparent.

I would like to remind Congressman RATCLIFFE, as I have reminded many heads of departments before, transparency brings accountability, and the public's business ought to be public.

By its very nature, the intelligence community is a secretive bunch. They often operate in the shadows and have to in order to do the job that we ask them to do to protect our national security.

However, that doesn't mean when Congress asks them questions, the intelligence community has a license to withhold information.

When Congress comes knocking, the intelligence community must answer. After all, the intelligence community does not appear anywhere in the Constitution. The intelligence community is a creation of Congress; Congress isn't a creation of the intelligence

community. The intelligence community answers to us and, in turn, to the American people.

Acting Director Grenell, now in that position as acting, understood that. He is perhaps one of the most transparent government officials in my time serving the great people of Iowa.

Ambassador Grenell is a breath of fresh air. Mr. RATCLIFFE has some big shoes to fill; that is for sure. Luckily, he has Acting Director Grenell's example to guide him.

Mr. Grenell's short time as Acting Director has resulted in a number of very important items being declassified. For example, he and Attorney General Barr declassified dozens of footnotes from the Justice Department's inspector general's report that show how the Department of Justice and the FBI mishandled the Russian investigation.

To give some highlights of what those previously classified footnotes show, let me go through six or seven of them.

One, the Russian intelligence was aware of Steele's anti-Trump research in early July 2016, before the FBI opened Crossfire Hurricane. That means the Russians knew they could possibly use the Steele dossier as a vehicle to plant disinformation and sow chaos to undermine the American Government.

Two, the FBI had an open counter-intelligence case on Steele's key source, but they failed to give that information to the FISA Court.

The FBI had intelligence that some of Steele's sources had connections to Russian intelligence. That is point three.

Point four, Steele had sources connected to the Presidential administration, and some supported Clinton, not Trump.

Five, the Crossfire Hurricane team was aware in late January 2017 that Russian intelligence may have targeted Orbis. Orbis is Steele's company.

Six, Steele's primary subsource viewed his or her contacts not as a network of sources but, rather, as simply friends that discussed current events.

Seven, two intelligence reports—one from January 12, 2017, the other from February 27, 2017—indicated that information contained within the Steele dossier was a product of Russian disinformation. This information was withheld from the FISA Court, and the FBI continued to use the Steele dossier to justify surveillance on Carter Page.

I also want to note a very interesting fact about the January 12, 2017, date. Not only did the FBI learn that the dossier, their "central and essential" document, was most likely filled with this Russian disinformation, they then failed to inform the FISA Court about it on the very same day that the FBI got the FISA renewal on Carter Page. Do you know what? It was renewed two more times.

My fellow Americans, what the FBI did is a complete travesty. You have to

ask yourselves: Why did they do it? Well, the text messages from Strzok and Page that I made public help us better understand that question. Their animus toward Trump helped to explain why the FBI employees cut corners and didn't follow regular protocol in running their inquiry.

As I have mentioned before, Strzok's text to Page about how he will "stop" Trump from becoming President is very telling. But thanks to Acting Director Grenell and Attorney General Barr, these texts can now be read in a greater context.

For example, on August 15, 2016, Strzok texts Page:

I want to believe the path that you threw out for consideration in Andy's office—

And that was referring to Andrew McCabe—

that there's no way Trump gets elected—but I'm afraid we can't take that risk. It's like an insurance policy in the unlikely event you die before you're 40.

The next day, on August 16, 2016, the FBI opened the Flynn probe, code-named Crossfire Razor.

On August 17, 2016, the FBI used a briefing for Trump, who was now the Republican nominee, and Flynn to surveil Flynn for his "mannerisms"—what is said about it, I don't know—and whether he mentioned anything about Russia.

Let's also not forget about the text from November 2016 that Senator JOHN-SON and I made public. Those texts between Strzok and Page show that the FBI used a November 2016 briefing for Presidential transition staff as a counterintelligence operation.

For example, Strzok told Page:

He can assess if there are any new questions or different demeanor. If Katie's husband is there, he can see if there are people we can develop for potential relationships.

That is an astounding finding. Imagine if that had been done by the Democratic nominee. You wouldn't hear the end of it. In fact, they would probably call for another special counsel. Yet because it is Trump and Flynn, the media has gone largely quiet.

On January 4, 2017, the FBI wrote a closing memorandum on Flynn that said the intelligence community could find no derogatory information on him. That should have been the end of it.

Yet on the very same day that the FBI was ready to close the Flynn case, Strzok asked another FBI agent: "Hey, if you haven't closed Razor don't do it yet." The case was still open at that moment and Strzok asked that it be kept open "for now."

Strzok then messaged Lisa Page, saying that Razor still happened to be open because of some oversight and said: "Yeah, our utter incompetence actually helps us. 20 percent of the time."

Then the next day, on January 5, 2017, President Obama met with Director Comey, Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, Vice President Biden, and National Security Advisor Susan Rice. In that meeting, they briefed Obama on the Russia investigation.

On January 5, 2017, the very same day as the Oval Office briefing with Obama and Biden, an Obama administration official leaked the existence of the December 29, 2016, Flynn call with the Russian Ambassador. However, that leak hadn't yet been publicly reported.

Also on January 5, Obama's Chief of Staff requested to unmask Flynn. According to Deputy Attorney General Yates, when she met with Obama on that day, Obama already knew about Flynn's call with the Russian Ambassador. She was surprised that Obama knew about it already.

On January 11, 2017, U.N. Ambassador Samantha Power requested to unmask Flynn. She requested this be done seven times after the election. She ought to explain why she did that.

Then on January 12, 2017, Vice President Biden requested to unmask Flynn. That same day, the existence of Flynn's call with the Russian Ambassador was leaked and ran in the Washington Post.

Then, in February 2017, the alleged contents of the call were leaked. Those leaks are a criminal action. They are some of the many criminal leaks that occurred during the transition period and, also, the early days of the Trump administration, which were obviously designed to undermine the new administration. I assume U.S. Attorney Durham is investigating all of those leaks.

With respect to the unmasking, what I would like to know is, Why did so many Obama administration officials who were not within the intelligence field request to unmask Flynn? The sheer volume of unmasking and the timing cause me to question whether it was politically motivated.

Based on the facts that we now know, it appears that the Obama administration's top law enforcement agency, as well as the intelligence community, engaged in a coordinated effort to cut the legs from under the Trump administration before they could even get their footing. The American people have had to suffer through years of criminal leaks, innuendos, false news reports, and flatout lies—all designed to destroy the Trump administration. The Russian investigation should have closed shop early on, especially when the people they surveilled from the Trump campaign offered exculpatory evidence—evidence which showed that the Trump campaign wasn't involved in the Democratic National Committee hack and didn't have the Russian connections the FBI thought they had. By the way, that evidence was hidden from the FISA Court by the FBI.

Obama has said DOJ and FBI must be kept independent of White House interference. Yet, based on information that we have at this point, it appears that he and Biden were much more involved in aspects of the Russia investigation than they would like to have us believe.

Ultimately, Obama and Biden will have to answer for what they knew and when they knew it. That shouldn't be a

problem for the so-called most transparent administration in history, as they used to tell us all the time.

Simply said, heads need to roll over this. If they don't, the intelligence community, the Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation may never get the people's trust.

Where do we go from here? On May 12, 2020, I wrote a letter to Acting Director Grenell that requested a broad range of information relating to unmasking by the Obama administration. On May 19, I expanded that request with Senator JOHNSON. Prior to that, I wrote to the Justice Department and Mr. Grenell, requesting that the transcripts of Flynn's calls with the Russian Ambassador and Susan Rice's infamous January 20, 2017, email to herself be declassified, among other things. That email has now been declassified and casts further doubts on the FBI's actions.

I have also requested, along with Senator JOHNSON, underlying intelligence reports from the Russia investigation. Moreover, reports suggest that the Obama administration unmasked a lot more U.S. persons related to the Trump campaign than just General Flynn.

The responsibility to respond to these requests will now fall on Congressman RATCLIFFE. Hopefully, he is as helpful to congressional oversight and public accountability as Ambassador Grenell. Let's see it all. The American public has waited long enough.

Finally, I want to remind Congressman RATCLIFFE and the intelligence community of the hold I placed on William Evanina. I did that 2 years ago. I placed that hold in my capacity as chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

I have explained in detail many times before why I placed a hold on him, and I am not going to bother explaining it again, other than to mention that Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein agreed to give me the documents, and he never did. In turn, General Rosenstein blamed Director Coats, who then blamed Rosenstein.

You have heard it before—all of my colleagues have. Whether you have a Republican or Democratic administration, it is your typical bureaucratic blame game. Thanks to Acting Director Grenell and Attorney General Barr, the blame game has ended.

But, importantly, especially for future administrations and for Congressman RATCLIFFE, I want to make very clear that the Judiciary Committee's jurisdiction extends to the intelligence community. Since the authorization resolution that created the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Senate explicitly reserved for other standing committees, such as the Senate Judiciary Committee, independent authority to "study and review any intelligence activity" and "to obtain full and prompt access to the product of the intelligence activities of any de-

partment or agency" when such activity "directly affects a matter otherwise within the jurisdiction of such committee."

The Senate Judiciary Committee has jurisdiction over all Federal courts, including the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, where a lot of intelligence activity takes place. Of course, all of Congress, not just any one committee or any one Senator, has the constitutional authority over the intelligence community.

In conclusion, please, Congressman RATCLIFFE and, please, the greater intelligence community, remember you were created by statute, but Congress was created by the Constitution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, in a few minutes, the Senate is going to vote on the nomination of JOHN RATCLIFFE to be Director of National Intelligence. I have come to the floor to discuss this important nomination.

Senators often come to this floor to talk about the importance of speaking truth to power. JOHN RATCLIFFE, in his statement before the Intelligence Committee and in his written responses, revealed he would not speak truth to power; he would surrender to it. He demonstrated that he is so eager to serve power, he will twist the truth, and he showed this again and again.

For example, in the name of helping power, we saw him dance around direct questions about whether he would respect or even understood the law. JOHN RATCLIFFE made a number of extremely disturbing statements that make it clear that he has and will misrepresent and politicize intelligence without a moment's hesitation.

I asked the Congressman at his hearing about a law that requires a public, unclassified report on who was responsible for the murder of the Washington Post journalist and U.S. resident, Jamal Khashoggi. This was a law passed by the Congress and signed by the President of the United States. This law required the Director of National Intelligence to produce that unclassified report on who killed Jamal Khashoggi and what the circumstances were in February. That has never happened.

At his nomination hearing, I simply asked the Congressman whether the government was bound by the law. In his response, the Congressman called the law a request for unclassified information. That is how he referred to this law. Then the Congressman promised to take a look at it. In his own words, JOHN RATCLIFFE wouldn't commit to following that important law without knowing the circumstances of who killed Jamal Khashoggi. I believe it is open season on journalists.

How JOHN RATCLIFFE danced around that question of whether he would comply with the law is a disqualification by itself to be the head of national intelligence.

This was a pattern throughout the hearing. JOHN RATCLIFFE had his talking points down, but the moment he was asked anything specific, he danced away. I am just going to take a few minutes to give some examples. Obviously, it is critically important to know a nominee's views for this position on the question of spying on Americans.

I asked JOHN RATCLIFFE three times in prehearing questions, at the hearing, and again after the hearing, whether the statute that prohibits warrantless wiretapping on Americans was binding. Each time, JOHN RATCLIFFE left himself lots of wiggle room to suggest that whatever this law said, the President might have ways to go around it. He also said he would work with the Attorney General, who we know has explicitly said that he doesn't believe the foreign intelligence surveillance law is binding on the President.

This is really where JOHN RATCLIFFE could be dangerous. With Donald Trump as President and William Barr as Attorney General, the leadership of the intelligence community is one of democracy's last lines of defense. That is why the American people need a Director of National Intelligence who understands how the law protects their rights and won't start conducting warrantless wiretapping on Americans just because the Attorney General wrongly claims that it is legal.

Nothing that JOHN RATCLIFFE has said during his confirmation process or throughout his career provides a glimmer of hope that he is a person who would speak truth to power and stand up for the rights of Americans.

There are plenty more reasons to oppose this nomination, but in the interest of time, I am going to focus on just one more, and that is JOHN RATCLIFFE's blatant misrepresentation and politicizing of intelligence. This was obvious in how he talked about the intelligence community's assessment that the Russians interfered in the 2016 election to help Donald Trump. This is a view undisputed within the intelligence community. The Senate Intelligence Committee looked at it up and down, and it was the unanimous judgment of the Intelligence Committee that it was true.

Yet for JOHN RATCLIFFE, the intelligence really doesn't matter. All that matters is that he makes Donald Trump happy. If Donald Trump doesn't want to acknowledge that the Russians helped him, then those are JOHN RATCLIFFE's marching orders.

It is the exact opposite of speaking truth to power and that is why, at the beginning of my remarks, I described his views with respect to power as not speaking truth but totally surrendering to power.

He is also perfectly happy to misrepresent the intelligence even when it is public and we can read it with our own eyes. Three times during his hearing, he said that the Russians did not succeed in changing the outcome of the 2016 election. This position of JOHN

RATCLIFFE directly contradicts what the Intelligence community had written in plain English. It said: "We did not make an assessment of the impact that Russian activities had on the outcome of the 2016 election." So I asked JOHN RATCLIFFE where he got his information. He referred back to the Intelligence community's assessment and the committee's report, neither of which supported JOHN RATCLIFFE's statements.

You have to ask yourself, Why would JOHN RATCLIFFE say something that is obviously not true? That is because Donald Trump wants us to believe that he didn't benefit from Russian interference, and that, first and foremost, is what matters to JOHN RATCLIFFE. If JOHN RATCLIFFE is willing to misrepresent intelligence assessments that are already public that anybody can read for themselves, my take is there is no telling how he would misrepresent intelligence that is still classified.

There is every reason to believe his public statements would be designed for one purpose and one purpose only, and that is to make sure that Donald Trump is pleased. Neither the Congress nor the American people have any reason to trust that JOHN RATCLIFFE's testimony or his other public statements are accurate.

My view is this kind of approach taken by the Director of National Intelligence is a real threat to democracy. When the Director of National Intelligence demonstrates that he is willing to bury the actual intelligence and say whatever makes Donald Trump happy at any particular moment, the American people are going to lose confidence and lose confidence quickly.

It is not just about foreign interference in our democracy. That is plenty serious as it is. It is about other threats from countries like Iran, North Korea, and China. It is about weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. It is about whether the government is secretly spying on Americans without a warrant or committing torture. Ultimately, it is about the issue of war and peace and whether Americans will be asked to die for our country.

The American people look to intelligence leaders for the facts—the facts, the unvarnished truth on these and other issues, which is why it is so important this position must have a foundation of credibility.

Time and again, JOHN RATCLIFFE has demonstrated that he does not clear that lowest bar; that bar that means you have to have credibility in this position, and I urge my colleagues, when we vote in a few minutes, to reject JOHN RATCLIFFE's nomination to be Director of National Intelligence.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOTE ON RATCLIFFE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Ratcliffe nomination?

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 44, as follows:

(Rollcall Vote No. 101 Ex.)

YEAS—49

Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blackburn	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Collins	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Loeffler	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	McSally	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Perdue	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Harris	Rosen
Bennet	Hassan	Schatz
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schumer
Booker	Hirono	Shaheen
Brown	Jones	Sinema
Cantwell	Kaine	Smith
Cardin	King	Stabenow
Carper	Klobuchar	Tester
Casey	Leahy	Udall
Coons	Manchin	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	

NOT VOTING—7

Alexander	Murkowski	Sanders
Burr	Murray	
Markey	Rounds	

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of John Leonard Badalamenti, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, with respect to the Ratcliffe nomination, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Maryland.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I know that we are all looking forward to trying to finish our legislative work this week. The majority leader has announced that next week the Senate will be in recess for the traditional Memorial Day recess.

Let me just urge our colleagues that before we leave for the recess, we need to act on the challenges that COVID-19 is imposing on our State and local governments. To me, it would be irresponsible for us to leave and go into recess recognizing that our State and local governments are so much impacted by COVID-19.

They are making decisions now. They have to put their budgets together. They have to adjust this year's budget and plan for next year's budget. What is in the balance? Well, it is our municipalities, it is law enforcement, it is police, it is fire, it is emergency rescue. For our counties, it is our schools and funding of our schools. It also deals with public health for our State. It is public health and so many other different issues that are dependent upon the State having the resources in order to respond to the needs of their citizens—our constituents—as well as to deal with the challenges of COVID-19.

I will give you one example on that. This week, by teleconference with representatives of our higher education, University of Maryland—they depend very much on the revenues they get from the State and the revenues they get from their students. Both are very much in jeopardy today. The least we can do is to make sure that the States have the resources to continue these critical missions. They just don't have it.

Let me give you some of the numbers so that my colleagues are aware of it. For the State of Maryland, in the revenue projections for the current fiscal year that ends June 30, the revenues will be off by as much as \$925 million to \$1.25 billion. Those are revenue losses. On top of that, their fiscal year 2022 revenue projection is another loss of \$2.1 to \$2.4 billion. That is for the State of Maryland. Those are not our subdivisions.

Baltimore City is projecting a reduction in revenues by \$141 million this year. That is going to require layoffs. They have already talked about layoffs and not hiring additional police officers. Those police officers are needed in order to keep Baltimore safe. We know the challenges we have in our municipal centers, and Baltimore City is