

the free people of this Nation and the free people of the world are with you and that we will not sit idly by; that we will stand up; that we will take action; and that your cause for your basic rights, your cause for your basic liberties, is our cause as well.

It is a privilege to stand with you as an American and as a Missourian, and it is a privilege to see this work accomplished today on the floor of the Senate.

I thank my colleagues.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I want to thank the Senator from Missouri for bringing us to the floor last week, for bringing us to the floor this week, and for working with us to make sure that we could make important changes to an important resolution that he brought before us today.

I agree it is a good day for the Senate. Again, I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. TOOMEY, for his bipartisan work on this. Hopefully we get it to the President's desk as soon as possible and send a strong message to the Government of China and send a message to the people of Hong Kong that we stand with them.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, before I get to the motion I am going to make, I am going to take just a few minutes to discuss the importance of why the Senate must pass the Coronavirus Relief Flexibility for Students and Institutions Act, which is S. 3947.

This has to do with an action that we took as bipartisan colleagues—a most important action—in March, passing the CARES Act. The CARES Act included \$13.9 billion for higher education emergency relief for institutions to directly support students facing urgent needs related to this pandemic and also to support the institutions as they cope with the effects of COVID-19.

From this amount, about \$12.5 billion was provided to all institutions of higher ed, and they had to use half their dollars to award emergency aid to students and half the funds to cover the institutional expenses and needs.

Congress was very careful in crafting this bipartisan provision to provide flexibility so that the institutions could make their own decisions about how to use and reward those funds—both for students and how to use them for institutions. Unfortunately, the Department of Education is not following congressional intent and is including additional restrictions and conditions that Congress did not include that are making these funds more difficult to access by students and by the institutions.

On the institution side, colleges had to quickly transition their programs online, many doing so on a widespread scale for the first time, without the technology capacity and staff training to conduct those classes.

Colleges have also had to quickly send students living on campus home, bring students home who were studying abroad, clean and sanitize their facilities, and provide refunds to students for room and board charges. They have had to meet greater financial needs and basic need challenges from their students, including housing, food, and childcare costs.

This has resulted in higher costs for colleges at the same time as COVID-19 has led to a sharp reduction in normal revenue streams: fundraising, housing, dining, event space, athletic, bookstore, conferences, and much more—including State funding that has been hurt. These revenue losses are likely to continue as students drop out and tuition revenue decreases in the fall.

This would come as schools implement costly safety measures for re-opening, like testing and PPE distribution. Many institutions have already cut pay and benefits, laid off full-time staff and student employees, and slashed to reorganize academic and athletic programs. This is all in addition to the potential cuts colleges will likely see from State budgets.

I got a letter from the president of one of my community colleges, Dr. John Downey, president of Blue Ridge Community College in Weyers Cave. Here is what he said: “We anticipate devastating lost revenue and state budget reductions, and we have no way, with the possible exception of the CARES Act institutional funds, to offset those losses. The current CARES Act restrictions mean that community college will likely only be able to offset \$100,000–\$300,000 of [additional PPE expenses while we] open up. . . . Without the ability to offset revenue losses looming for FY21, we are concerned that we will be forced to close vital programs and layoff hard-working personnel.”

Moody's Investors Service has changed their outlook for higher ed to negative, indicating that 5 to 10 percent of institutions—particularly regional public schools and small private colleges—could face significantly intensified financial challenges.

In Virginia, one such institution, Sweet Briar College, a small, rural, private college, says the impact is likely to be \$10 million. VCU, a large, public university, said it is likely to be \$50 million in the next fiscal year.

This is why we acted together as Congress to provide CARES Act funding that could be used for revenue losses experienced by colleges. We didn't specifically exclude using these dollars for revenue losses, as we did in the State and local government aid; we allowed such a use, as we did with the PPP program and the aid to hospitals. But the Department of Education is

using a very narrow interpretation of the law and refusing to allow colleges to use money for revenue losses.

On to the student side of the equation, 50 percent of the money was to be used for student aid. This is even more concerning. The unauthorized guidance that the DOE has issued outlines that the financial aid for students can only be provided to students who qualify for aid under title IV of the Higher Education Act, which would exclude any student who hadn't filled out a FAFSA, who has a minor drug conviction, or who is not meeting academic progress requirements. Again, these were not conditions that Congress put on the aid to students. Nowhere in the CARES Act are these restrictions mentioned.

The financial aid director at the University of Virginia wrote my office as follows:

When the CARES Act was signed into law, we, along with many others in the financial aid community, believed that the funding source would be available to provide assistance to our students using school discretion. Schools have long operated in this manner. Because of COVID-19, the parents of many students who suddenly lost their jobs or have reduced employment realized that their income had changed dramatically and wished to appeal.

In other words, students who never had to fill out a FAFSA or who never did one because their parents were employed are now facing parents who are not employed.

It is not right for the DOE to put new requirements on the students and bar them from receiving aid.

Some students have written. Here is a third-year undergraduate student from Fairfax: I was studying abroad this past semester but had to return home in March. My study-abroad program is unsure whether they are going to be able to refund any of the semester's worth that I paid for fees, including housing, meals, tuition. Due to the travel ban, I had to book a ticket home on 1-day's notice, initially costing me \$1,800, but I was able to receive a partial refund of \$900. My father has been the primary source of income for my family, but he loses his job this month. Since we don't know when he will be reemployed, this has resulted in significant financial challenge to my family.

There are similar stories from other students—graduate students in engineering in Henrico, undergraduates from Halifax.

Again, Congress intended these dollars to be used flexibly. The DOE is getting in our way.

What the act would do that I am about to call up—it would ensure that the Secretary in the Department of Education just follow congressional intent by providing institutions of higher ed and students with the increased flexibility they need during this time. The bill would allow colleges to use their revenue from the CARES Act for lost revenue—the higher ed funds for lost revenue. The bill would ensure that emergency financial aid to students is made available to all students

in need, letting the institutions decide how to make that determination. Finally, it would better target funds designated for colleges hardest hit by COVID-19.

Colleges and universities are major economic drivers. Placing arbitrary restrictions on them is a challenge at any time—especially now. We should be working together to ensure that the institutions and our students get the help that Congress wanted them to get.

Again, the bill I have before you doesn't create a new program, and it doesn't cost a penny. All it does is ask the Secretary of Education to simply follow what Congress intended.

Madam President, with that, I would ask unanimous consent that the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 3947, a bill to amend the provisions relating to the higher education emergency relief fund to clarify the flexibility provided to institutions and for students under the fund, and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

I further 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. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I appreciate my colleague's focus on higher education. We both had the same opportunity as Governors to do what we could to drive the cost of tuition down and help make sure all of our students had the opportunity to get jobs.

My goal as Governor of Florida and now as a U.S. Senator is to keep education affordable and obtainable and make sure students are able to get a job when they graduate.

I know we all are focused on giving our students every opportunity to succeed. My colleague has not shown how giving a blank-check bailout to higher education institutions helps our students—students who are burdened with mountains of debt from these same 4-year colleges and universities.

The solution is not to give more money to support the bloated bureaucracies of our public and private colleges and universities. And these very institutions continue to raise tuition year after year on our students and their families. That is why I am instead offering my STEM Act, which is a real solution to make higher education more affordable and ensure schools are preparing students for jobs. We made similar reforms in Florida, and our students are getting a world-class education at a price they and their families can afford. My goal is to bring this success to our Nation.

The STEM Act does three things:

One, it eliminates all Federal funding for institutions that raise tuition. There is no reason universities should

be raising costs on students even one bit. Businesses have to get more productive every year; so should our colleges and our universities.

Second, my STEM Act holds colleges and universities accountable for a portion of student loans.

By forcing universities to take more responsibility, they will have more of an incentive to actually prepare students for careers, instead of encouraging mountains of debt and degrees that don't lead to jobs after graduation.

Third, the STEM Act creates a metric system for accountability to make sure all higher education institutions are doing their most important job—preparing our students for the opportunity to get a great job, build a career, and become more self-sufficient.

Our higher education system doesn't serve the student, and we need to change that. Our students deserve more than just throwing money at our institutions with no checks and balances.

It is time we get something done to fix the problems in our higher education system and realign incentives. I look forward to working with my colleagues to do this.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator KAINE modify his request and, instead, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 2559, the Student Training and Education Metrics Act, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, 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. Does the Senator from Virginia so modify his request?

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I appreciate my Senate colleague's desire to increase accountability and transparency of student outcomes. As Governor, I was doing the same thing with Virginia institutions. I view his request as a little bit of a non sequitur. It is not really connected to mine.

He mentioned that we shouldn't be throwing more money at colleges. Let me make plain again that my request does not cost a penny. It is not about an additional penny for colleges. It is about implementing the CARES Act, which was passed on an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote by this body on March 26.

Senator SCOTT's bill does not deal with something we have already done. It does not deal with the COVID emergency. It does deal very directly with something that we are in the process of doing. The HELP Committee right now is considering the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Senator SCOTT's proposal, dealing with transparency and accountability, fits squarely within the discussion that the HELP Committee is currently having about reauthorization of HEA, and it is

an appropriate and important topic for the committee to grapple with as we work on the HEA reauthorization. But in that sense, I am a little puzzled because there is a venue for his proposal right now in the HEA reauthorization discussion as we go forward and look at what more accountability we would ask of our colleges.

I don't think we should jump Senator SCOTT's bill ahead of that reauthorization and impose new restrictions on universities in the middle of this pandemic, as we are trying to help them get through COVID. For that and other reasons, while I would certainly pledge to work with the Senator on this matter in the committee on which we both sit, during HEA reauthorization, I do not agree to modify the request that I made regarding S. 3947.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the original request?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Reserving the right to object, I look forward to working with my colleague from Virginia to do what we both tried to do as Governors and we were both focused on. It is hard to keep tuition down and to make sure kids get jobs at the end. It is a very difficult job.

I don't think what we are doing today with Senator KAINE's proposal is going to help our students get the jobs they need and help keep our tuition down. I don't think we ought to be giving a blank check to our institutions that raise tuition on our students. We all know the mountains of debt—over \$1.7 trillion—which is ridiculous. I think my STEM Act is a solution to help make our higher education system affordable and ensure kids have a future. But, unfortunately, we are not able to do that today. I respectfully object. I look forward to working with Senator KAINE to try to do everything we can to get this tuition down and help our kids get jobs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, for a bit of good news, last year we finally provided certainty to American exporters and their workers by enacting a 7-year reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank's charter. This is a big victory after years of obstruction by a handful of our Republican colleagues.

We know what happened here in this Congress. In 2015, during the last debate on reauthorizing the Bank, a small group of opponents, supported by far-right special interests, tried to kill the Bank altogether. When that didn't work, they decided to block all nominees to Ex-Im's Board, denying it the quorum needed to approve transactions greater than \$10 million. Their obstruction cost us more than 130,000 jobs a year by 2018.

Unfortunately, a few Republicans continue to undermine American manufacturers and our workers by preventing Ex-Im from having a full Board

of Directors. It is time for the Senate to consider the long delayed nominations of Republican Paul Shmotolokha and Democrat Claudia Slacik.

Today's economic damage from COVID builds, and Senator MCCONNELL, the leader of this body, refuses to let us do our jobs and pass additional help for families and communities of small businesses. Ex-Im will be called on—it is more important than ever—to help ensure the survival of our manufacturing base and thousands of small businesses and their workers.

Ex-Im, during the last crisis, added 515 new small business clients in 2009 alone. The stakes are even higher today. There are more than 100 export credit agencies. I believe President Reed, head of the Ex-Im Bank, who is doing a very good job, said 118 in committee this week. There are more than 100 export credit agencies and credit programs around the world that support foreign manufacturers. But our greatest challenge is China. China's export finance activity is larger than all of the export credit provided by the G-7 countries combined, and we can expect China to continue using export credit as a weapon to end manufacturing business in critical sectors. I asked President Reed about that in committee, and she is certain that China's threat will continue and perhaps grow.

The President and many of my Republican colleagues want to blame China for darn near everything, including the virus that has taken the lives of 120,000 of our brothers and sisters and parents and sons and daughters. That is 30 percent of the world's deaths. We are 5 percent of the world's population, and we are 30 percent of the world's deaths. That is not because we don't have good doctors and medical workers and all of that. It is because of Presidential leadership.

China has not been a model of responsibility, but President Trump needs to stop blaming China for his own failures to do more at home to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

For my Republican colleagues who profess concern about China, I wish they had shown the same concern with standing up to China during our 4-year fight to support American manufacturers. If you say you are concerned about China, then, you should support filling Ex-Im's Board so our manufacturers can better compete with China.

A core role of Ex-Im Board members is educating the business community about how to use the Bank's export financing to expand sales abroad and create more jobs in the United States. Many small businesses are just trying to survive right now. Some of them don't know that Ex-Im is a tool that can help. We need a full Board that can be proactive about offering support.

Mr. Shmotolokha—as I said, a Republican nominee—has been nominated as the First Vice President and was reported out of the Banking Committee more than a year ago, and Ms. Slacik

was first nominated almost 4 years ago. Neither is controversial. Mr. Shmotolokha has decades of experience in the telecom industry. He deeply understands how China competes. Ms. Slacik previously served at Ex-Im and has more than 30 years of commercial banking experience.

Ex-Im has an effective management team under President and Chair Kimberly Reed, but the Bank needs to operate at full capacity during this unprecedented crisis, not missing two of its five members with critical expertise.

Don't just take it from me. This shouldn't be partisan. It is not an ideological question. The Banking Committee chair—my counterpart, the chair of the committee—MIKE CRAPO, supports filling the Ex-Im Board. The U.S. Chamber supports it. The National Association of Manufacturers supports confirming these two particular nominees.

On Tuesday, Ex-Im's President and Chair, Kimberly Reed, nominated by President Trump, testified to the Banking Committee that she wants a full Board because Ex-Im is working to make small business transactions 30 percent of its portfolio, as Congress directed. She said: "That takes a lot of boots on the ground and a lot of work."

I agree with Ex-Im President Reed completely and Senator CRAPO completely. We need a full Board. We need boots on the ground to help small businesses at Ex-Im. We also have a qualified inspector general nominee, Peter Coniglio, who is waiting for confirmation. These nominations are long overdue. I will ask the Senate to consider them immediately. If we want Ex-Im to support more small businesses and help America manufacturers compete against China, there is no excuse for more obstruction.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar No. 128, No. 336, and No. 557; that the nominations be confirmed, en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order on the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I think it is worth reminding my colleagues exactly what the Ex-Im Bank is all about. What this is, then, is a Bank by which taxpayers are required to subsidize big corporations. That is what Ex-Im Bank is.

The precise way that it works, though, is to provide the subsidy directly to foreign entities—often state-owned entities, often Chinese state-owned entities—when they buy an

American product, when they buy an American export. The Ex-Im Bank is in the business of forcing taxpayers to subsidize foreign, often state-owned, entities buying American products. I object to that activity and so do many of my Republican colleagues.

This is a controversial entity. It is a controversial idea that we would expand the population on the Board because doing so diminishes the likelihood that they might be at a point, at some point in the future, where they would not have a quorum.

My own view is that what we ought to be doing is having a mutual negotiation with our trading partners to phase out all of these export subsidy banks all around the world. And, unfortunately, neither this administration nor the previous administration has had any interest in pursuing that.

In the meantime, I have asked for improvements in the operations of the Export-Import Bank—operations such as transparency and controlling taxpayer risk and the extent to which it crowds out private financing and other areas. I will say that I appreciate Ex-Im Bank President Reed's efforts in these areas, but there is a long way to go. It doesn't solve the fundamental problem, which is the mission of the Bank.

The defenders of Ex-Im will sometimes argue that Ex-Im Bank—the subsidy that taxpayers are required to provide to foreign purchasers—is essential for our exports, that we need it and jobs depend on it. It is interesting because we have a controlled experiment that addresses that question directly. From 2015 through the early part of 2019, the Ex-Im Bank didn't have a quorum, so it could not legally engage in large-scale transactions. It couldn't do anything, and they didn't.

You have a period of about 4 years, and during that time, the volume of financing—the volume of transactions that Ex-Im Bank was doing—dropped by about 80 percent. That is huge. The Ex-Im Bank for several years was a shadow of its former self.

What happened to American exports during the time when the Ex-Im Bank was basically out of business? I will tell you what happened. American exports grew and hit an all-time record high in 2018. That is what happened. The fact is, Americans make great products, and we can sell them overseas without having to subsidize the buyer. Buyers and sellers arranged private financing. There are lots of banks and institutions that are in the business of providing this financing. Taxpayers shouldn't have to subsidize it. The proof is in the pudding. When Ex-Im Bank was effectively closed, American exports grew and hit an all-time record high.

It is also a fact that when the Ex-Im Bank gets into the business of subsidizing some, it inevitably does damage to others. There was a case wherein the Ex-Im subsidies created a competitive advantage for Air India that cost

jobs at Delta Air Lines because the two competed directly on routes. The Air India route was subsidized by virtue of the Ex-Im subsidy, of its acquisition of planes, and Delta didn't get that subsidy. According to the CEO, who testified before the House, just that one deal cost 1,000 jobs at Delta.

I have a substantive objection here. I have an objection to this institution's mission, and growing its Board is part of advancing that mission. I have to say that this is in contrast to the obstruction that we are seeing from our Democratic colleagues with respect to nominees about whom they often have no objection at all.

The fact is, there has been a mission on the part of many of my Democratic colleagues to just block President Trump's nominees just because they are President Trump's. In fact, President Trump's nominees have had to undergo the delaying tactic of the cloture vote—a procedural vote that is designed to just chew up time and prevent us from functioning.

In the first year of his Presidency, there were over 300. That is more than the cumulative number of these delaying tactics for the first terms of his four predecessors, and it continues. In fact, earlier this year alone, we had our Democratic colleagues force this delaying tactic—this cloture vote—on judges, and then they voted for them, some of whom were confirmed unanimously. District Judge Silvia Carreno-Coll was forced to go through the delaying tactic and was then confirmed 96 to 0. There was a cloture vote—a delaying vote—on Robert Anthony Molloy to be a U.S. district judge, who was then confirmed 97 to 0.

There were still 68 reported nominees on the Executive Calendar as of yesterday. There are 13 of these nominations that are over 12 months old, and many of them are nominees about whom there is no objection.

With this case, there is an objection. It is a substantive objection to providing a cushion to a quorum of a bank with whose mission I disagree. If people want to go through the process of bringing this to the floor and filing cloture, it can be processed, but this isn't the way to do it.

So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I am disappointed but not surprised that we are not able to confirm the Ex-Im nominees today. There is great bipartisan support for this agency. We did a long reauthorization that was close to unanimous in its support. It is a place in which we have worked together to create American jobs.

I understand Senator TOOMEY's discussion about corporate interests. I am a bit surprised by that when this body passes trade agreement after trade agreement that supports corporate interests and that costs workers their jobs and when this body passed a huge

tax cut for the rich 3 years ago that reduced the corporate tax rate and reduced it even further for companies that shut down production in Shelby or Lima or Akron, OH, and companies moved overseas to get their tax breaks and access to low-wage workers. I am just disappointed that we couldn't actually move forward.

It is the law of the land to have an Ex-Im Bank. There are two out of five slots that are empty. The President and Chairman of the Ex-Im Bank, Kimberly Reed, a Trump appointee, said very strongly that she needs more help, more boots on the ground, because she could create more jobs that way.

Lastly, I was a bit surprised to hear complaints about the Democrats' slow-walking of nominees. I mean, instead of actually doing the people's business here—getting help for unemployed workers and helping people stay in their homes as courts open up and more evictions are on the horizon and as layoffs in local governments and State governments around the country loom—this Senate spends most of its time on confirming judges.

My wife and I watched almost the entire rally in Tulsa. It was the first big Trump campaign rally—not that big—or the first purportedly big Trump campaign rally. We watched numbers of my colleagues with no masks in an arena in which public health officials said: Please, don't do that.

I heard the President brag about all of the judges he has gotten confirmed. So when I hear any of my colleagues complain that the Democrats have been obstructionists—have tried to stop Trump nominees—just remember what Senator McCONNELL did with a legitimately chosen Supreme Court nominee and, equally as important, what this body has done in confirming judge after judge, many of them young and many of them far right and out of the political mainstream. The Republicans dutifully vote for them because Senator McCONNELL tells them to. We know how that works around here. We have so much more work to do than that, but this Senate doesn't seem to be interested.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

COMMUNICATIONS DECENCY ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, in the early days of the internet, when we were all just beginning to get online and experience what it was like to have at our fingertips an entree to the entire world—all of the information you could want—everything at that point really felt like a novelty. It had a newness about it. Technology was new, and consumers were able to take their time carving out a comfort zone for what they wanted to do online. They were signing up for Facebook, and they were trying to figure out which of their retail merchants they wanted to visit online, how they wanted to shop online, what transactions they wanted to begin to put into that

search engine, and then conduct those transactions online. At the same time, technology firms were carving out their place in the market.

I don't have to tell you that this dynamic has really changed from those early days and those first experiences with the virtual space. We walk around with computers in our pockets. That level of convenience and connectivity is great, but it has thrown off the balance of power between what is now called Big Tech and consumers. Over the past few years, these companies have treated the American people to a series of scandals that have opened the floodgates to mainstream concerns over issues like data privacy, child exploitation, a national security risk, and blatant, anti-competitive business practices.

Just this week, I sent a letter to the Attorney General about Google's latest attacks on conservative media outlets. As a reminder to everyone, Google threatened to remove the Federalist and ZeroHedge from the Google Ads platform after determining that these outlets' comments sections—did you get that? It was their comments sections, which are the areas you go to participate in public debate—contained content that violated company policy. Well, how about that?

A representative from Google ran to the press and insisted that both outlets had published dangerous, hateful content. It really makes you wonder: What was their real reason for this threat? What was the real reason for the Google representative's breathless accusations to the press?

In my letter, I encouraged Attorney General Barr to meet with representatives from both the Federalist and ZeroHedge so that they could explain firsthand what a permanent ban from the Google Ads platform could lead to in terms of loss of traffic and revenue. Of course, the answer to that inquiry is that a ban would be catastrophic for any outlet, and here is the reason: Guess who dominates online advertising. Google. It is called a monopoly. It is called "they control those ad platforms."

This Friday, State attorneys general are meeting with Justice Department officials to discuss this, and if I were Google, I would be a little bit nervous about that. I think it is fair to say that many of these attorneys general have just about had it with some of these online practices.

This particular scandal is interesting because it implicates both antitrust concerns and the section 230 protections that are laid out in the Communications Decency Act. Lately, we have heard quite a bit about section 230, and we have already discussed at length whether it should be left alone, reformed, or scrapped entirely.

When section 230 was implemented in the early days of the internet, the vision was that it would shield emerging and new technology firms from lawsuits. It would give them the ability to

kind of stand up, if you will. It would, in good faith, allow platforms to remove content that they would find to be obscene, violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable even if the material would be otherwise constitutionally protected speech. At the time, when all of these businesses were in their infancies, when they were new startups, this worked pretty well. Startups were allowed to innovate without having to worry about lawsuits sending their companies into bankruptcy or threatening their ability to raise venture capital, but, as I said earlier, times have changed.

Now, as is the case with most policies involving Big Tech, heavy-handed government intervention will not fix this problem. Still, many of my colleagues here in the Senate believe that using strict legislation and policing speech is the only path to reform. I will tell you, as someone who has been censored by a social media platform, I fully appreciate and understand their points of view. Not only is it frustrating to become a victim of that bias, but it is also so disheartening to watch our country devolve into a place where people would rather be shielded from debate than learn from the people with whom they disagree.

You know, there used to be a time when you would engage your friends who had different opinions than you. You would engage them and participate in some point and counterpoint and have a friendly discussion about your take on the issues. Yet, when it comes to reining in Big Tech, the innovators have to be allowed to innovate. They need some guardrails, but they do not need straightjackets.

This is the same approach I took when drafting the BROWSER Act, which was the data privacy legislation I introduced in the Senate last year but had worked on this since I had been in the House, and it is the approach that we are taking with the bipartisan Tech Task Force. Policies like these take a lot more time and a lot more one-on-one communication to draft and to work through to a resolution, but they are much better for the industry and innovation than something that is purely punitive.

I am working closely with the White House and the Justice Department on a series of changes to section 230 that will allow us to fix the rules we have without having to start from scratch.

First, we can incentivize online platforms to address truly illicit content by implementing three carve-outs that exempt specific categories of speech from immunity. First, facilitating or soliciting third-party activity that violates Federal criminal law—we call this one the “bad Samaritan carve-out”; second, content involving child exploitation and abuse, terrorism, and cyber stalking; and third and last, we will revoke that immunity if a platform is caught failing to act when it has actual knowledge of or was provided with a court judgment regarding unlawful content.

We also need to clarify once and for all that section 230 immunity does not apply to actions brought by the Federal Government. But what about those startups, those up-and-coming tech companies that are looking for the next great idea? How will reform treat them differently from the Facebooks and the Googles of the world?

What we can do is limit liability based on minimum platform user thresholds. We would limit those section 230 protections to platforms with fewer than 50 million American users. Just for reference, Google has 259 million American users, Facebook has 221 million, and Twitter has 64 million American users. Under this standard, a user alleging harm would be able to move forward with a lawsuit against a platform only if that platform’s user threshold were above 50 million U.S. users and a court has reasonable grounds to believe that the platform contributed to the offending post or refused to act on it once notified.

These are all simple changes that will rebalance the relationship between online platforms and their customers, and we shouldn’t delay in our implementing them because the internet is more than just a place where we post our status updates or photos of what we had for dinner; the digital revolution fundamentally changed the way we live our lives, consume the news, and interact with corporations, media outlets, and our local governments.

We can’t afford to let these platforms leverage their own biases to arbitrarily decide who is allowed to speak or what information we are allowed to consume, but we also can’t afford to implement heavy-handed policies that will inevitably collapse the entire industry.

I look forward to the Senate’s continuing its work on this on both the Commerce and Judiciary Committees.

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.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE JUSTICE ACT

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, it is a shame the Senate has been prevented the opportunity to discuss meaningful legislation to strengthen and improve our law enforcement system.

The Senate had an opportunity to implement public safety measures the American people believe are needed and the American people want. Most importantly, the Senate was blocked from working toward helping bind the Nation together.

Sadly, this was due to partisan politics by our Democratic colleagues. It is disappointing that, when given the chance to back up a lot of big talk

about reform and change, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle simply walked away. I was under the impression we were all in agreement that the matters addressed in this legislation were, at the very least, worth debating. By refusing to even consider a debate, Senate Democrats leave the American people with irresponsible demands to defund the police and destruction of public property.

My friend and colleague, the junior Senator from South Carolina, worked tirelessly to produce very good legislation. He and the leadership offered to work with our Democratic colleagues and assure them there would be an open amendment process.

Had we had a chance to proceed, I was prepared to file an amendment that would have gotten the top Federal and State law enforcement officials together from rural and urban areas and developed a best practices curriculum for training incoming law enforcement officers. The amendment would have provided the resources to train the trainers.

This simply illustrated that Members on both sides of the aisle wanted an opportunity to offer meaningful changes to the bill, but only one side of the aisle thought that opportunity was worthwhile. I am ready to debate on that and any other amendment should we do the right thing and have an open, purposeful conversation on a very critical issue.

The tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis last month exposed an erosion of public confidence in the rule of law and law enforcement practices. There is no doubt in my mind that the vast majority of law enforcement officers, who are very good friends of mine—many of them across the country—do their jobs fairly and justly. However, the bad actions of a few are enough to cause us as elected leaders to consider responsible changes to improve police practices and rebuild public confidence in those we trust with ensuring our public safety.

I encourage my colleagues to reconsider and engage in this debate. It would be a real tragedy not to use this national moment in our history to improve law enforcement through more accountability, transparency, and better training.

Let’s stop looking for ways to divide the American public. Let’s bring people together and work together toward meaningful reform that improves law enforcement, public safety, and the confidence Americans deserve in the rule of law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The Senator from Colorado.

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KOREAN WAR

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the Republic of Korea on this June 25, the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean war.

The Republic of Korea is a longtime ally and partner that resides in one of the most prosperous and one of the

most dangerous parts of the world. When most of us hear about Korea, we instinctively focus on the threat emanating from the bizarre failed state in the north, and we often forget about the incredible successes and stories of success in the south that was made possible largely by the United States-South Korea Alliance.

When I visited the Korean War Memorial in Seoul in July of 2017, I read the names of Americans and Coloradans that died answering the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met. I think that, today, we owe it to our fallen soldiers to recognize what the world has gained from their sacrifice.

On June 25, 1950, Kim Il-sung's army crossed the 38th parallel to invade South Korea. In response, the United States mobilized the international community under the U.N. flag and sent hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops to defend Korea. To this day, thousands of U.S. soldiers remain unaccounted for. Over 1 million Korean civilians perished. Most survivors have never seen or spoken with their families across the border.

The U.S. decision to intervene in that war transformed the future of Asia. South Korea has blossomed from a war-torn state to an economic powerhouse, a thriving democracy, and, in recent months, a global leader in response to a public health crisis.

South Korea boasts the 12th largest economy in the world and has become a leader in critical future technologies such as telecommunications, electronics, and semiconductors. They managed to do this despite having a population of only 50 million people, few natural resources, and effectively operating as an island restricted to maritime trade.

South Korea's hard-fought transition from authoritarian governments to vibrant democracy took time, it took perseverance, and it took grit, but they did it. It is now a democracy with a highly educated and active civil society that embraces the rule of law and human rights and stands in stark contrast to its authoritarian neighbors in North Korea and China.

As our South Korean ally has grown more prosperous and more capable, it has also taken on an outsized global responsibility. Since the Korean war, South Korea has fought alongside the United States in all four of our major conflicts.

Once a recipient of foreign aid, Seoul is now a worldwide donor of aid. It has become a critical pillar in upholding the postwar order, playing a valuable role in the global nonproliferation regime, global emissions reduction, peacekeeping, cybersecurity, counterterrorism, and postconflict stabilization.

South Korea has also become a key stakeholder in various international organizations, including the United Nations, World Trade Organization, G-20, the Organization for Economic Co-

operation and Development, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperative forum, just to name a few.

The alliance has proven to not only be crucial for U.S. economic and national security interests but for our health as well. This was most evident as South Korea led a pivotal response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I worked closely with our South Korean allies and the Colorado Governor Jared Polis to obtain hundreds of thousands of COVID-19 testing kits for Colorado, which will continue to be vital as we get through this ongoing pandemic.

Weeks ago, President Trump invited President Moon of South Korea to the upcoming G7 meeting. I fully endorse this decision, and at the current juncture, I believe it is time to explore new avenues to broaden cooperation with South Korea on the global stage, including in global health, the environment, energy security, and emerging technologies.

South Korea is situated in one of most precarious neighborhoods in the world. Koreans have historically explained their geography of being a "shrimp among whales." Indeed, northeast Asia holds a number of nuclear-capable states, economic mammoths, and the largest standing armies in the world.

In our alliance, we vow to defend one another from attack, but it often goes unstated that South Korea bears the frontline burden of this defense. While North Korea has only recently tested an ICBM capable of reaching the continental United States, Seoul has been under the threat of artillery, short-range missiles, an armed invasion for decades. In the shadow of this threat, South Korea has invested considerably in defense, over 2.5 percent of its GDP. It also funded over 90 percent of the costs of Camp Humphreys, what is now the largest overseas U.S. military base in the world. These are just a few of the ways in which South Korea remains a model alliance partner.

Against the backdrop of rising tensions in recent weeks, we should swiftly conclude negotiations on the Special Measures burden-sharing agreement, which would provide strategic stability on the Korean Peninsula and strengthen the U.S.-South Korea alliance.

The United States and South Korea maintain a tightly-integrated combined forces command that is unique to the world. This demonstrates the immense trust and combined capability between our two militaries. This unique structure makes credible our ability and commitment to meet those threats at a moment's notice. It also allows us to stand shoulder to shoulder as allies and say "kachi kapshida" or "we go together."

But the alliance faces greater threats today than at any time in the past. Chinese coercion in the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea, as well as militarization of the South China Sea, have all increased in recent years. As China has grown, it has also become more ag-

gressive. We must come together with regional partners to resist this coercive behavior.

Only with a concerted voice can we preserve global norms and international law, and South Korea plays a growing role in upholding this regional order. Our North Korea policy has for decades failed to achieve denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. However, the U.S.-South Korea alliance has succeeded in deterring Pyongyang, retaining regional stability, and maintaining conditions for the growth and prosperity of every country in the region, except for Pyongyang.

We stand ready to welcome the people of North Korea into the international community, but this requires Pyongyang to commit to economic reform, to treat its people with dignity, and to refrain from menacing others with weapons of mass destruction.

I believe U.S. policy toward North Korea should be straightforward. Until we achieve the denuclearization of North Korea, the United States will deploy every economic, diplomatic, and, if necessary, military tool at our disposal to deter Pyongyang and to protect our allies.

Pyongyang recently exploded the inter-Korean liaison office in Kaesong and began rolling back its commitments under the April 2018 Panmunjom Declaration. Since February 2019, since that summit in Hanoi, Pyongyang has rebuffed working-level negotiations with the U.S.

In March of this year, Kim launched a record number of missiles in a single month and continues to unveil new missile systems that impose novel threats to our allies South Korea and Japan.

Kim Jong Un is showing that he simply doesn't want diplomatic and economic engagement on the terms offered by the United States and the international community but wants only to deepen his country's self-isolation and build his weapons programs.

The United States must respond with our allies. We must consider restoring military exercises with our partners in Seoul and Tokyo, enhance missile defense, and remain in close consultation to reassure our allies of our commitment to defend them from any aggression or coercion. Kim Jong Un must not underestimate the resolve of the United States to defend our allies.

The peaceful resolution of the North Korean problem also requires the international community to finally join together in fully implementing United Nations sanctions. In this effort, we require greater cooperation from Beijing. China accounts for 90 percent of North Korea's trade, including virtually all of North Korea's exports. The most recent U.N. Panel of Experts report to the North Korean Sanctions Committee provided clear evidence of illicit ship-to-ship transfers between North Korean and Chinese ships just off the Chinese coast. These blatant violations of sanctions must end now.

In 2016, I led the North Korean Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act, which passed the Senate by a vote of 96 to 0. The Trump administration has the opportunity to use these authorities to build maximum leverage not only with Pyongyang but also with Beijing. If China will not act to ensure its entities comply with international law, then perhaps pressure from the U.S. Treasury and the Department of Justice will make it a priority for Beijing.

I was initially encouraged by the administration's decision in June of 2017 to sanction the Chinese Bank of Dandong. This conveyed an unprecedented statement that we were serious about the maximum pressure campaign, and it got results. However, even as we saw Chinese sanctions enforcement wane after summits in 2018, the pace of designations and indictments has slowed tremendously.

The administration, with congressional support, should now make clear to any entity doing business with North Korea that they will not be able to do business with the United States or have access to the U.S. financial system.

Last month, the U.S. Department of Justice charged 28 North Koreans and 5 Chinese citizens with using a web of more than 250 shell companies to launder over \$2.5 billion in assets through the international banking system. This is a good sign, but individual indictments have not effectively deterred further sanctions violations. We need to pressure Chinese banks that serve as the illicit conduit between North Korea and the outside world.

As for any prospect of engagement, we must continue to make it clear to Beijing and Pyongyang that the United States will not negotiate with Pyongyang at the expense of the security of our allies. Maintaining robust U.S. alliances in the Asia-Pacific, in fact, should be our No. 1 priority. That is why last Congress I authored and passed the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act. ARIA outlines a long-term strategic framework to double down on engagement in the Indo-Pacific, to protect U.S. interests, and to uphold the post-war order that has benefited the United States, its allies, and much of the world over the past 70 years.

Maintaining peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and throughout the Indo-Pacific is an effort that can no longer be and never could be accomplished without our allies, without our friends. That is what makes America so strong.

Today I hope my colleagues in the Chamber will aid me in passing this resolution commemorating those Koreans and Americans who fell in defense of freedom on the Korean Peninsula 70 years ago. There is no greater way to honor their sacrifice than to look back on all that our two peoples have accomplished over the past 70 years and to continue to nurture the steadfast alliance between the United States and

South Korea. I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote scheduled for 1:30 p.m. begin now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 483, S. 4049, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Marsha Blackburn, Joni Ernst, John Boozman, Steve Daines, Cory Gardner, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Mike Crapo, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Lamar Alexander, Shelley Moore Capito, Rob Portman, Roy Blunt, John Barrasso, John Thune.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 4049, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 90, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 127 Leg.]

YEAS—90

Alexander	Cassidy	Gillibrand
Baldwin	Collins	Graham
Barrasso	Coons	Grassley
Bennet	Cornyn	Hassan
Blackburn	Cortez Masto	Hawley
Blumenthal	Cotton	Heinrich
Blunt	Cramer	Hirono
Booker	Crapo	Hoeben
Boozman	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Braun	Daines	Inhofe
Brown	Duckworth	Johnson
Cantwell	Durbin	Jones
Capito	Ernst	Kaine
Cardin	Feinstein	Kennedy
Carper	Fischer	King
Casey	Gardner	Klobuchar

Lankford	Reed	Sinema
Leahy	Risch	Smith
Lee	Roberts	Stabenow
Loeffler	Romney	Sullivan
Manchin	Rosen	Tester
McConnell	Rounds	Thune
McSally	Rubio	Tillis
Menendez	Sasse	Toomey
Murkowski	Schatz	Udall
Murray	Schumer	Van Hollen
Paul	Scott (FL)	Warner
Perdue	Scott (SC)	Whitehouse
Peters	Shaheen	Wicker
Portman	Shelby	Young

NAYS—7

Harris	Murphy	Wyden
Markey	Sanders	
Merkley	Warren	

NOT VOTING—3

Burr	Enzi	Moran
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 90, the nays are 7.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

WASHINGTON DC ADMISSION ACT

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, our country faces real challenges today. For example, anti-American mobs are roaming the streets in many cities, tearing down statues of our greatest statesmen, men like Abraham Lincoln, U.S. Grant, and George Washington, after whom this Capital City is named.

But the Democrats aren't doing anything about that problem. Oh, no, on the contrary, the mob is, in many ways, the youth movement of the Democratic Party. So they are perfectly content to look the other way—or even cheer it on. I mean, have you heard Joe Biden, CHUCK SCHUMER, or NANCY PELOSI denounce the mob violence we see on our streets? Me neither.

Instead, the Democrats have found another pressing issue. The House is voting tomorrow on a bill to make Washington, DC, a State. If that sounds insane, you are not alone. More than two-thirds of the American people oppose DC statehood, according to a Gallup poll last summer.

By some estimates, DC statehood is less popular even than defunding the police. So why are the Democrats pushing for it? The answer is simple—power. The Democrats want to make Washington a State because they want two new Democratic Senators in perpetuity.

The Democrats are angry at the American people for refusing to give them total control of the government, for going on a decade now. So they want to give the swamp as many Senators as your State has. They want to make Washington a State to rig the rules of our democracy and try to give the Democratic Party permanent power.

In doing so, the Democrats are committing an act of historical vandalism as grotesque as those committed by Jacobin mobs roaming our streets. In their rush to make Washington a State, they disregard the clear warnings of our Founding Fathers.

If the Democrats succeed in forcing through DC statehood, they will do so only as a narrow faction that scorns the history of our country and seizes power against the will of the people who want Washington to remain what it has been for more than 200 years—a Federal city, our Nation's Capital.

The District of Columbia is unusual, though not unique, among capitals of the world, in that it didn't grow naturally over the centuries but was purpose-built as the Capital of our Nation. The Founders created Washington as a Federal city so that the operations of government would be safe and free from domination by the States around it.

James Madison wrote in *Federalist 43* that "the indispensable necessity of complete authority at the seat of government, carries its own evidence with it."

It is so obvious as to be self-evident. Without complete control over its territory, Madison wrote, the government "might be insulted and its proceedings interrupted with impunity."

Hostile magistrates or an angry mob might interfere with the people's elected representatives or even usurp the government.

Now, this was no abstract concern for the Founders. Just 5 years before Madison wrote those words, several hundred mutinous soldiers assailed the Congress in Philadelphia, where it met at the time. They issued demands to Congress for money and wantonly pointed their muskets at Independence Hall.

Pennsylvania's Governor rejected Congress's pleas for help, saying he would wait until the mob committed some actual outrages on persons or property before sending in the State militia. Congress ultimately had to adjourn and flee to New Jersey while Washington sent in troops to put down the mutiny.

This mutiny was an insult, an interruption of the sort Madison refers to in *Federalist 43*. The Founders made Washington, DC, independent so that the Federal Government would never again be at the mercy of a mob or a hostile State.

The wisdom of this decision was on display just days ago when violent riots erupted near the White House, setting fire to a historic church and committing other acts of vandalism and destruction across the city. Those riots were contained thanks to an impressive show of force by Federal law enforcement officers under Federal control.

One can only imagine how much worse the destruction would have been if those Federal officers hadn't been there, if most of Washington were under the control not of the Federal Government but of a leftwing politician like Muriel Bowser, who frequently takes the side of rioters against law enforcement.

Would you trust Mayor Bowser to keep Washington safe if she were given the powers of a Governor? Would you

trust Marion Berry? More importantly, should we risk the safety of our Capital on such a gamble?

Now, of course, the Democrats will argue that the statehood bill doesn't entirely eliminate Federal control of Washington because it preserves a small Federal district that encompasses the White House, the Capitol, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, the National Mall, and a few other government buildings. What a humbling demotion from the grand Federal city that President Washington and Pierre L'Enfant envisioned more than 200 years ago, which they hoped would rival Paris in size and ambition.

By contrast, look at this ridiculous map. Look at it. The Democrats propose to turn Washington into little more than a gerrymandered government theme park, surrounded on all sides by a new State controlled, of course, by the Democrats.

The Federal Government's safety and independence cannot be assured by such a laughable district. Again, look at it. It has 90 sides. A mere city block, less than 200 yards, separates the White House from the proposed boundaries of a new State, governed at present by a politician who hates the President. The Supreme Court and several congressional office buildings are right at the edge of the map, separated from the new Democratic State by the width of a single city street. In the event of emergency, like the Philadelphia mutiny of 1783, those narrow boundaries could jeopardize the operations of the Federal Government.

Consider also what is not included in this ridiculous new map of a new Washington, DC. The headquarters of the Department of Homeland Security would be outside the Federal Government's control, as would be the headquarters of the FBI and the FCC, which governs all communications in the country.

The seat of government would be separated for the first time from its military bases—Fort McNair in Southwest Washington, the marine barracks in Southeast Washington, and Bolling Air Force Base, across the river.

Washington's roughly 200 foreign embassies would no longer be in the Federal district but in the Democrats' new State, giving it unusual prominence in foreign affairs—precisely the kind of treatment the Founders hoped to avoid by creating a Federal city.

While the proposed Federal District would have access to a single powerplant, undoubtedly it would rely on the Democrats' new State for many basic utilities—not just power but water, sewage, and telecommunications. It would also rely on the new State, as well as Virginia, for access by land.

The civil servants and officers of the Federal Government would have no choice but to reside in a different State on which they would wholly depend for access to the Federal zone.

These may seem like minor or obscure problems, and, at peaceful times,

maybe they are. But recognize the truth: The government of the most powerful Nation in the world wouldn't have control of critical infrastructure necessary for its own safety, functioning, and independence in a crisis. Maybe that seems like a remote danger, although one should think better after the riots earlier this month, to say nothing of the Civil War itself, when our seat of government faced imminent danger in encirclement by hostile forces. In fact, the danger was so severe that President Lincoln wanted Washington to be enlarged, not diminished, and to include the area south of the Potomac that was retroceded to Virginia in 1846. He said:

The present insurrection shows, I think, that the extension of this District across the Potomac at the time of establishing the capital here was eminently wise, and consequently that the relinquishment of that portion of it which lies within the state of Virginia was unwise and dangerous.

How much more unwise and dangerous would it be to shrink the Federal District even further to just a few buildings in a 90-sided map? But that is exactly what the Democrats propose to do.

Those are just the practical and prudential problems. DC statehood also presents a grave constitutional conundrum. Attorneys General as diverse as Bobby Kennedy and Ed Meese understood that the 23rd amendment to our Constitution forecloses the Democrats' statehood proposals. The 23rd amendment, ratified in 1961, gave Washington residents a meaningful vote in Presidential elections. The amendment grants three electoral votes to, in its own words, "the district constituting the seat of government of the United States."

But of course, the Democrats' new State would also be entitled to its own three electoral votes. Yet, if the 23rd amendment isn't repealed, the rump Federal district will retain its three electoral votes. The practical effect, of course, would be to increase the swamp's electoral power in Presidential elections.

Even the radical Democrats can't ignore this thorny problem. Their bill calls for the swift repeal of the 23rd amendment, but they would allow Washington to become a State before the amendment is repealed. But there is no assurance that the amendment would actually be repealed. The Constitution has only been amended on 18 occasions in our Nation's history. It is not a walk in the park in the best of times. Yet the Democrats want you to think they can pull off an amendment to alter the electoral college in the midst of a Presidential election.

In the meantime, DC statehood, along with the 23rd amendment, will lead to absurd consequences. This small Federal district, with three electoral votes, would have virtually no residents. In fact, as far as I can tell, the only residents in the district are right here, in the White House.

If the House passes this bill tomorrow and the Senate were to approve it for the President's signature, then Donald and Melania Trump need only change their voter registration from Florida to Washington to get their own—their very own—three electoral votes. I can't help but think this isn't what NANCY PELOSI had in mind.

Even putting aside these practical and constitutional problems with DC statehood, though, we return to a basic truth: Washington is a city with all the characteristics of a city, not a State. Washington doesn't have the size or diversity of interest of even the smallest of the 50 States.

Consider Washington's size. At just shy of 70 square miles, DC is 18 times smaller than the smallest State in the union—Rhode Island. But, of course, the Democrats say size doesn't matter. What matters is population. Washington has just over 700,000 residents—more than Wyoming and Vermont and about as many as Alaska. Doesn't this qualify Washington as a State? If it did, we would need a lot more States because Washington is just the 20th largest city in the country. If Washington deserves to be a State at 700,000 residents, how much more does New York City deserve to be its own State at 8 million residents? Perhaps Bill de Blasio should trade out his title of mayor for Governor, all the better to battle his nemesis Andrew Cuomo on equal terms. But let's not give the Democrats any bright ideas.

What about Jacksonville, FL, at more than 900,000 residents, shouldn't we have a State of Jackson to accompany the new State of Washington? We all know that will not do. Jacksonville is governed by a Republican, and the Democrats have canceled Andrew Jackson.

Washington also doesn't have the diversity of interest and financial independence that Madison explained were necessary for a well-functioning State. Yes, Wyoming is smaller than Washington by population, but it has 3 times as many workers in mining, logging, and construction, and 10 times as many workers in manufacturing. In other words, Wyoming is a well-rounded, working-class State. A new State of Washington would not be.

What about Alaska? It provides more than 60 percent the Nation's seafood, and its vital geography protects the entire Nation with missile defense systems and enables us to check Russian and Chinese ambitions in the Arctic.

But what vital industries would the new State of Washington represent—lobbying, bureaucracy? Give me a break. By far, the largest group of workers in the city are bureaucrats and other white collar professionals. This State would be nothing more than an appendage of the Federal Government, not separate from the government, as the State ought to be.

Faced with these insuperable facts, the Democrats will retreat to the claim that it is not fair for Washington to

pay taxes but not be represented in Congress. Washington residents, they say, get a raw deal. "No taxation without representation," as their license plates proclaim.

But, of course, this is backward. As our Nation's Capital, the District of Columbia is represented by the very fact of its privileged position, and it reaps the benefits of that privilege. For every \$1 that District residents pay in taxes, they get \$4 back in Federal spending. That is more than any of the 50 States.

Nor is Washington unique in its relationship to Congress. Just like other Territories—Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands—Washington has a nonvoting member of Congress who is empowered to introduce legislation, advocate for it on the House floor, and sit on committees. In fact, Washington's Delegate introduced the very bill that Democrats plan to vote on tomorrow to create this ridiculous Federal district.

If it is a special indignity for Washington residents not to have a voting Member of Congress, is it also an indignity for the 55,000 American Samoans? Should they get two Senators as well? Once again, though, let's not give the Democrats any bright ideas. They already want to make Puerto Rico a State.

But all of my observations about the practical effects and constitutional obstacles in the end give too much credit to what the Democrats are really up to—a naked power grab. Democrats in Congress are advocating DC statehood against the will of the American people—including the will of democratic voters, a majority of whom oppose DC statehood. Democratic politicians are pushing for this radically unpopular idea not because it is a sound idea but because they are angry that they don't win every election under the current rules, and so they want to change the rules.

If you doubt this whole endeavor is about power, consider that the Democrats could just as easily call for retroceding the District of Columbia to Maryland. This would give Washington residents the voting power in Congress that is supposedly at the heart of this matter—a voting Member in the House, probably of its own, and representation in the Senate. There is even historical precedent for retrocession, unlike turning the Federal District into a State. But retrocession wouldn't give the Democrats their real aim—two Democratic Senators in perpetuity to rubberstamp the swamp's agenda. So you will not hear them talk about that.

Also consider the Democrats' other big idea as of late. You will see that startling them. Earlier this week, the junior Senator from Delaware expressed his openness to ending the legislative filibuster in the Senate, even though he wrote the letter demanding that we preserve the filibuster. Having

two more Democratic Senators would be awfully handy to that goal. The Democrats also have a scheme to abolish the electoral college so that a handful of massive, liberal cities can pick the President. They want to pack the Supreme Court so liberal activists never lose again at the highest Court in our land.

These proposals have practical and constitutional problems as glaring as DC statehood, but the Democratic Party pushes forward nevertheless because their goal is to accumulate as much power as possible and never relinquish it.

This week, the mob comes for Washington—his statue, his history, and now his city. We must oppose this destructive campaign in the Senate, just as it is opposed by the majority of American people across the country.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

REMEMBERING THE CAPITAL GAZETTE
JOURNALISTS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this Sunday, we will mark a grim anniversary. On June 28, 2018, a 38-year-old man who held a longtime grudge against the Capital Gazette newspaper in Annapolis, MD, for reporting about him, made good on his sworn threats. He entered the newspaper's office, headed to the newsroom, and deliberately shot and killed five employees of this community newspaper.

The Capital Gazette is the local paper of record in Annapolis. It is one of the oldest continuously published newspapers in the United States. It traces its roots back to the Maryland Gazette, which began publishing in 1727, and the Capital, which was founded in 1884.

Two years later, the senseless loss of life remains so personal to so many people in Annapolis and around the State. You need to understand that the Capital Gazette is as much a part of the fabric of Annapolis as the State government that it covers better than anyone in the business. Today, it still carries out that mission better than anyone else, with an added priority of covering the gun violence that continues to plague this country and efforts to reduce gun violence and increase public safety.

As I did 2 years ago, I want to take a moment to mourn those we lost and to thank the first responders who appeared on the scene literally 60 seconds after the 9-1-1 call. On this day 2 years ago, Anne Arundel County police officers happened to be down the street from the offices when the shooting started. Their location and fast response most definitely saved lives.

According to Anne Arundel Police Chief Timothy Altomare, within 2 minutes, the Anne Arundel County Police Department, the Annapolis Police Department, and the Anne Arundel Sheriff's Office rushed into the offices and into the newsroom and apprehended the gunman.

State and Federal law enforcement personnel from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms, and Explosives and many other agencies quickly arrived to support local officials in their efforts to clear the building and meticulously investigate the scene.

I want to thank, again, Chief Altomare and every one of those law enforcement officers who did their job and contributed to the emergency response. I want to acknowledge, again, the victims.

Gerald Fischman, 61, was an editor with more than 25 years of service with the Capital Gazette, well known at the newspaper and throughout the community for his brilliant mind and writing. Most often, it was his voice and his insightfulness that came through on the editorial pages of the Capital Gazette.

Rick Hutzell, the Capital Gazette's editor, described Fischman as "someone whose life was committed to protecting our community by telling hard truths."

Rob Hiaasen, 59, was a columnist, editor, teacher, and storyteller who brought compassion and humor to his community-focused reporting. Rob was a coach and a mentor to many. According to the former Baltimore Sun columnist Susan Reimer, he was "so happy working with young journalists. . . . He wanted to create a newsroom where everyone was growing."

John McNamara, age 56, was a skilled writer and avid sports fan. He combined these passions in his 24-year career as a sports reporter at the Capital Gazette. Former Capital Gazette sports editor Gerry Jackson, when remembering "Mac," said:

He could write. He could edit. He could design pages. He was just a jack of all trades and a fantastic person.

Rebecca Smith, age 34, was a newly hired sales assistant known for her kindness, compassion, and love for her family. A friend of her fiance described "Becca" as "the absolute most beautiful person" with the "biggest heart" and called her death "a great loss to this world."

Wendi Winters, age 65, was a talented writer, who built her career as a public relations professional and journalist, well known for her profound reporting on the lives and achievements of people within the community. She was a "proud Navy Mom" and Navy daughter. Wendi saved lives during the attack. She confronted and distracted the gunman, throwing whatever she could find around her at him.

As the newspaper noted:

Wendi died protecting her friends, but also in defense of her newsroom from a murderous assault. Wendi died protecting freedom of the press.

My heartfelt condolences and prayers go out to the families of these five wonderful people.

The surviving staff members also deserve our continued prayers and praise for their resilience and dedication to

their mission as journalists. During and after the attack, staff continued to report by tweet, sharing information to those outside, taking photos and documenting information as they would any other crime scene. Despite their grief, shock, anger, and mourning, the surviving staff—with the help of their sister publication the Baltimore Sun, Capital Gazette alum, and other reporters who wanted to lend a hand to fellow journalists—put out a paper the next morning, as they have done every day since.

The staff fittingly left the editorial page blank the day after the shooting, but for these few words:

Today, we are speechless. This page is intentionally left blank to commemorate the victims of Thursday's shootings at our office.

The staff promised that on Saturday, the page would "return to its steady purpose of offering our readers informed opinion about the world around them, that they may be better citizens." And they carried that out.

Our Constitution, which establishes the rule of law in this country, grants us certain rights and responsibilities. Freedom of the press, central to the very First Amendment of the Constitution, has often been under attack, figuratively speaking, since our Nation's founding. Today, those attacks have become more frequent, and they are not just figurative anymore. They are physical. These attacks are spurred on by dangerous rhetoric that has created an open season on the media for doing its job—asking questions that need to be asked, investigating stories that need to be investigated, and bringing needy transparency to the halls of power, whether they are in Annapolis, Washington, DC, or anywhere in this country.

In 2018, after the shooting at the Capital Gazette, the United States was, for the first time, added to the list of "the most deadly countries for journalists" in an annual report by the group Reporters Without Borders.

President Trump's rhetoric—calling the media "a stain on America" and the "enemy of the American people"—certainly has been harmful. I have said this before and I will keep saying it: The President's language is dangerous. It has gone beyond the pale, and he needs to stop it.

As Jason Rezaian wrote in the Washington Post after the Capital Gazette shooting, Donald Trump "didn't create the problem of hostility to journalists, but he exploits and exacerbates it."

He went on to say:

That's true, too, of the leaders in other countries who routinely call reporters enemies of the state, terrorists and national security threats. And we must be vigilant to standing up to these empty accusations.

In the United States, physical attacks on media have grown so troublesome that the Committee to Protect Journalists, an independent nonprofit that promotes freedoms globally, actually started a U.S. freedom tracker to

show the scope of the problem. So far, in 2020, there have been 107 journalists attacked and 36 arrested in the United States.

Instead of attacking the free press, we need to be honoring it. Toward that end, I have introduced a bill, S. 1969, to establish the fallen journalists memorial here in Washington, DC. I am pleased that the Natural Resources Committee ordered the bill to be reported favorably by voice vote. The changes the committee made reflected input from stakeholders, including the National Park Service, which supports the bill.

The legislation is bipartisan, non-controversial, and does not impose any additional costs on taxpayers. The memorial will serve as a fitting tribute to the Capital Gazette staff and to all journalists who have died in the line of duty and to our Nation's commitment to the free press.

My hope is that we will all agree that building a new memorial to honor the fallen victims is appropriate and should be done and should be passed.

As Walter Cronkite remarked, "Freedom of the press is not just important to democracy, it is democracy."

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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE JUSTICE ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the Senate was prepared yesterday to answer the call of millions of Americans to take action on police reform. The senseless and tragic death of Houston native George Floyd galvanized people of all races and ethnicities to speak out against the injustices that persist in our criminal justice system and to demand action. We tried to take that responsibility seriously.

Senator TIM SCOTT, our colleague from South Carolina, led the effort to draft a bill that would improve policing practices around the country. That bill, the JUSTICE Act, addressed choke holds and no-knock warrants—two practices which have, for good reason, been brought into question by recent events. This legislation would have ensured that the best trained officers on our police forces would be using body cameras—reporting critical data—and being held accountable for crossing redlines.

We thought our colleagues across the aisle would have taken this matter seriously as well. They drafted their own version of a reform bill. While there were differences between the two proposals, there was a lot of overlap. In fact, there was more these two bills had in common than was different. Both bills, for example, focused on training, transparency, and accountability.

I had hoped that would have meant that we would have been in a good place when it came to trying to reconcile the remaining differences. After all, the Democratic leader had been urging the majority leader to put a police reform bill on the floor by July 4, and that is exactly what we did. Leader MCCONNELL made clear that this would be an open debate and that there would be amendments and an opportunity for our Democratic colleagues to work with us in order to make the bill better. Ultimately, if they had decided to get on the bill, as the Presiding Officer knows, there would have been 60-vote thresholds on the back end that would have given them leverage to have made sure that the debate would have been fulsome and fair. But that simply wasn't enough for our friends across the aisle.

When it came time to take a purely procedural vote to begin debate, they blocked it. They refused to engage in any meaningful or productive way.

So after promising the American people that they were going to act to reform America's police departments, they were given the opportunity, but they broke their promise.

As Senator SCOTT said yesterday, it wasn't what was being offered but who offered it. Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle find themselves too politically conflicted to work on a bipartisan basis to enact meaningful reforms, so they have chosen to take the low road of obstruction. They have shown they can't be bothered to pass a bill that would help families like the Floyds who have lost their loved ones in a senseless and completely preventable way. They proved yesterday that this was a purely political calculation—very sad.

Both Democrats and Republicans have said repeatedly over the last few weeks that the status quo was not sustainable and that it is time to change. As I said, both parties drafted bills, but it is pretty clear there was only one party interested in making a law.

Unless you can get enough votes to pass a Republican-led Senate, a Democratic-led House, and get the signature of a President, those reforms won't change the behavior of a single officer. If those solutions only live on the page of a bill or within the borders of a press release, they are not going to accomplish anything.

So I understand that our Democratic colleagues weren't happy starting with the JUSTICE Act, but the temper tantrum we witnessed yesterday isn't moving us one step closer to achieving the results they claim they want, which is change.

The majority leader has indicated that this body will have another opportunity to vote on whether to begin debating this legislation. Again, this wasn't about the final bill; this was about beginning the process of determining what that bill would look like. So I hope our colleagues across the aisle will reconsider. I hope they will

listen to the millions of Americans who want to see us working together. They want to see action, not cynical political gestures.

S. 4049

Mr. President, turning to another matter, I am glad the Senate has now moved to consider another critical piece of legislation—the National Defense Authorization Act.

The NDAA, as it is called, represents one of the most basic duties of the Federal Government, and that is to provide for the common defense. The National Defense Authorization Act is how we ensure that critical Department of Defense programs are continued, that American servicemembers are paid, and that our national defense is modernized to keep pace with the rapidly evolving threat landscape.

All of us have understood the importance of passing the NDAA each year, which is why, for the last 59 years, we have done it without delay.

I hope Members of this body are committed to continuing that tradition because as our Nation battles on so many different fronts, we cannot afford to let military readiness lapse.

One of my top priorities is to make sure our men and women in uniform have the support they need and the training they need on and off the battlefield.

The defense authorization bill builds on the progress we have made to implement the national defense strategy and ensure that our military is prepared to counter the threats we face today and those that will inevitably come tomorrow. It goes a long way to maintain our technological advantage, to modernize our weapons, to build resilience, and to strengthen our alliances.

America's 2.1 million servicemembers have made a commitment that few are willing to make and joined the ranks of America's heroes who have defended our country throughout our history. Roughly 225,000 of them call Texas home, in places like Fort Hood, Fort Bliss, Lackland Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, and Ellington Field, just to name a few. Those Texans—those Americans—carry out missions that are crucial to our national security, protecting us from increasingly complex threats.

We have a responsibility to provide our troops with the training, equipment, and resources they need so they can complete their critical missions and hopefully return home safely. After all, these men and women are much more than dedicated and talented servicemembers; they are our sons and daughters, our parents, our spouses, and our family members.

While we are providing them the resources they need to succeed, we need to support those military families. This legislation includes a 3-percent pay raise for our troops, additional support for the family members, such as military spouse employment opportunities, and childcare.

Earlier this month, the Senate Armed Services Committee completed

its markup and voted overwhelmingly to send this bill to the Senate floor.

As we begin consideration of the defense authorization bill, I want to thank all of the men and women who serve in our U.S. military and ensure them that we will do everything we can to support them and ensure they are empowered and mission-ready.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, if there was ever a moment in American history to fundamentally alter our national priorities, now is the time.

Whether it is fighting against systemic racism and police brutality, transforming our energy system away from fossil fuel, ending a cruel and dysfunctional healthcare system, or addressing the grotesque levels of income and wealth inequality in our country, now is the time for change—real change.

When we talk about real change, it is incredible to me the degree to which Congress continues to ignore our bloated \$740 billion defense budget, which has gone up by over \$100 billion since Trump has been in office.

Year after year, Democrats and Republicans—who disagree on almost everything—come together with minimal debate to support an exploding Pentagon budget, which is now higher than the next 11 countries combined—now higher than the next 11 countries combined—and which represents more than half of our discretionary spending.

Incredibly, after adjusting for inflation, we are now spending more on the military than we did during the height of the Cold War, when we faced a major adversary in the Soviet Union, or during the wars in Vietnam and Korea.

This extraordinary level of military spending comes at a time when the Department of Defense is the only agency of our Federal Government that has not been able to pass an independent audit, when defense contractors are making enormous profits, while paying their CEOs exorbitant compensation packages, and when the so-called War on Terror will end up costing us some \$6 trillion.

I believe this is a moment in history where it would be a very good idea for all of my colleagues and the American people to remember what former Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower said in 1953. As we all recall, Eisenhower was a four-star general who led the Allied Forces to victory in Europe during World War II. He knew something about war and defense spending. Eisenhower said, and I quote—and this is a profound statement we should never forget—Eisenhower said:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

This world in arms is not spending money alone, it is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

Dwight D. Eisenhower.

What Eisenhower said was profoundly true 67 years ago, and it is profoundly true today.

If the horrific pandemic we are now experiencing has taught us anything, it is that national security is not just building bombs, missiles, jet fighters, tanks, submarines, nuclear warheads, and other weapons of mass destruction; national security also means doing everything we can to improve the lives of our people, many of whom have been abandoned by our government decade after decade.

In order to begin the process of transforming our national priorities, I have filed an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act with Senator MARKEY of Massachusetts to reduce the military budget by 10 percent and to use the \$74 billion in savings to invest in distressed communities all across our country—communities that have been ravaged by extreme poverty, mass incarceration, deindustrialization, and decades of neglect.

At a time when more Americans have died from the coronavirus than were killed fighting in World War I; when over 30 million Americans have lost their jobs in recent months—30 million; when tens of millions of Americans are in danger of being evicted from their apartments or their homes because they no longer have adequate income; when education in America—from childcare to graduate school—is in desperate need of reform; when half a million Americans are homeless tonight; and when close to 100 million of our people are either uninsured or underinsured, now is the time to invest in our people—in jobs, education, housing, healthcare here at home—not more military spending for an already bloated military budget. Now is the time to get our priorities right.

Under this amendment, distressed communities in every State in our country would be able to use this \$74 billion in funding to create jobs by building affordable housing desperately needed in our country, by investing in schools when school budgets all over America are in desperate shape, investing in childcare facilities, community health centers, public hospitals, libraries, sustainable energy projects, and clean drinking water facilities.

These communities will also receive Federal funding to hire more public school teachers, provide nutritious meals to our children, and offer free tuition at public colleges, universities, or trade schools.

Mr. President, at this pivotal moment in American history, we have to rethink our Nation's priorities, and we have to make a fundamental decision about who we are as a people.

Do we really want to spend billions more on endless wars in the Middle East, or do we want to provide good-paying jobs to millions of unemployed Americans at home as we rebuild our communities? Do we want to spend more money on nuclear weapons, or do

we want to invest in childcare and healthcare for the American people who need it the most?

When we take a close look at the Defense Department budget—I am sorry to say that I don't think we are doing that here in the Senate—it is interesting to note that Congress has appropriated so much money for the Defense Department that the Pentagon literally does not know what to do with it. Children go hungry in America, people sleep out on the streets, young people can't afford to go to college, but the Defense Department literally does not know what to do with all of the money Congress throws at it.

According to the Government Accountability Office—the GAO—between 2013 and 2018, the Pentagon returned more than \$80 billion in funding back to the Treasury. They couldn't spend the money that they had.

In my view, the time is long overdue for us to take a hard look not only at the size of the Pentagon budget but at the enormous amount of waste, cost overruns, fraud, and at the financial mismanagement that has plagued the Department of Defense for decades.

Let's be clear. About half of the Pentagon's budget goes directly into the hands of private contractors, not our troops. And I think I share the view with every Member of the Senate that we must protect our troops. I don't want troops and their families on food stamps. I don't want to see our military living in inadequate housing or lacking childcare for their kids. We must make sure that our men and women in the Armed Forces have as good a quality of life as we can provide. But let's again not forget that about half of the Pentagon's budget goes directly into the hands of private contractors, not the troops.

Over the past two decades, virtually every major defense contractor in the United States has paid millions of dollars in fines and settlements for misconduct and fraud, all while making huge profits on those government contracts.

Since 1995, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and United Technology—some of the major defense contractors in America—have paid over \$3 billion in fines or related settlements for fraud or misconduct—over \$3 billion in fines or related settlements for fraud or misconduct. Yet those three companies received around \$1 trillion in defense contracts over the past two decades alone.

I find it interesting that the very same defense contractors that have been found guilty or reached settlements for fraud are also paying their CEOs excessive compensation packages. Last year, the CEOs of Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman both made over \$20 million in total compensation, while 90 percent of the company's revenue came from defense contracts. In other words, these companies—and it is important to note, and we don't talk about this often—for all

intents and purposes, these companies are governmental agencies. They are receiving over 90 percent of their revenue from the Federal Government. Yes, they are private corporations, but they are essentially subsidiaries of the Federal Government. Yet, despite receiving over 90 percent of their funding from the taxpayers of this country, they are paying their CEOs over 100 times more than the Secretary of Defense makes. And the Secretary of Defense does just fine, but the CEOs, on government revenue of the major defense companies, earn 100 times more than the Secretary of Defense. It is not, therefore, very surprising to learn that we have a revolving door where our generals and admirals and other officials in the military leave government service and then end up on the boards of directors of these major defense companies.

Moreover, as the GAO has told us, there are massive, massive cost overruns in the Defense Department's acquisition budget that the U.S. Congress must address. According to the GAO, the Pentagon's \$1.8 trillion acquisition portfolio currently suffers from more than \$628 billion in cost overruns, with much of the costs taking place after production.

In other words, they tell the government—they tell the DOD that they will produce a weapons system for X dollars. It doesn't mean much because the total amount ends up being Y after they get the contract.

The GAO tells us also that “many DOD programs fall short of costs, schedule and performance expectations, meaning the DOD pays more than anticipated, can buy less than expected, and in some cases delivers less capability to the warfighter.”

The Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan concluded in 2011, and \$31 to \$60 billion in Iraq and Afghanistan has been lost to fraud and waste—\$31 to \$60 billion. Separately, in 2015, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction reported that the Pentagon could not account for \$45 billion in funding for reconstruction projects. It just got lost. A few bucks here, a few bucks there? No, \$45 billion of taxpayer money was lost and cannot be accounted for. More recently, an audit conducted by Ernst & Young for the Defense Logistics Agency found that the DOD could not properly account for some \$800 million in construction projects. That is what happens when you have a huge agency that is truly unaccountable.

I believe in a strong military, but we cannot keep giving more money to the Pentagon than it needs when millions of children in our country are food insecure, when 140 million Americans cannot afford the basic necessities of life without going into debt, throwing billions after billions into the Pentagon and a few blocks away from here, in the Nation's Capital, people are sleeping out in the streets, children

can't find a decent education, and young people can't afford to go to college.

In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., warned us that "a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

Let me repeat that.

Dr. King said that "a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

The time is long overdue for the U.S. Senate to listen to what Dr. King said. At a time when, in the richest country in the history of the world, half of our people are struggling paycheck-to-paycheck; when over 40 million Americans are living in poverty; and when over 500,000 Americans are homeless, to quote Dr. King, we are approaching spiritual death.

At a time when we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of almost every major country on Earth and when millions of Americans are in danger of going hungry, we are approaching spiritual death.

At a time when over 60,000 Americans die unnecessarily every year because they can't afford to go to a doctor when they need to go to a doctor and when one out of five Americans cannot afford the prescription drugs their doctors prescribe, yes, we are approaching spiritual death.

Now, at this moment of unprecedented national crisis, it is time to rethink what we value as a society and to fundamentally transform our national priorities. The status quo is no longer good enough. Now, at this moment of national crises, a growing pandemic and economic meltdown, the demand to end systemic racism and police brutality, and an unstable President, it is time for us to truly focus on what we value as a society and to fundamentally transform our national priorities. Cutting the military budget by 10 percent and investing that money in human needs is a modest way to begin that process.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO DANIEL WELBORN

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is Thursday, and it is that time of the week that I like to come down to the Senate floor and talk about somebody who is doing something great in my State, someone I get to brag about, a special Alaskan, somebody we refer to as our Alaskan of the Week.

Sometimes this person has made big headlines back home, maybe even across the country, and throughout the State, people know them. But oftentimes—and one of the reasons we started this whole series many years ago—this is a person who has worked more behind the scenes day in, day out, year in, year out, doing the kind of public service that is so vital to the health

and well-being of our communities throughout Alaska, throughout America, but is not always recognized and certainly not recognized enough.

Our Alaskan of the week, Fairbanks police officer Daniel Welborn, is one of those people. He recently retired from the Fairbanks Police Force after 26 years—more than a quarter of a century—and is one of those everyday heroes who we think are important to highlight as an Alaskan of the Week and as an American helping his fellow Americans and Alaskans.

Before I get into Officer Welborn's story, let me tell you a little bit about what is going on in Alaska right now. The weather has been glorious in many areas—sunny in a lot of places, rainy in others. We have a very big State. The summer solstice is just a few days behind us. That is the longest day of the year and a huge day in Alaska—midnight Sun, energy. It is great being in Alaska right now.

Most of the State has opened up with precautions, of course, in place, given the pandemic. More and more people are getting out. The salmon are certainly running, beginning to run up our rivers. The bears are fully woke—maybe not woke in that sense, but they are awake.

I was home last week in Fairbanks celebrating the amazing life of my mother-in-law, Mary Jane Fate, whom our family put to rest. She was one of the most revered Alaskan leaders and elders who recently passed away, and we had a beautiful, moving ceremony, talking about this trailblazing woman.

I can't wait to get back home—get back home to Fairbanks in particular, the Golden Heart City, where Officer Welborn has spent his entire career protecting and defending.

As you know, much attention has been spent on our Nation's police forces in recent weeks, but there hasn't been nearly enough attention, in my view, drawn to what it actually means to be a police officer—not an easy job—and to be a good police officer—a critically important job—which the vast majority of police officers—certainly in Alaska but I would say across America—are, good police officers who put their lives on the line every day for us, and Alaskans and Americans should be grateful that they do that.

As I have said many times before at police memorial ceremonies back home, every job in our country, every job in my State is important, but there is something special, noble, even sacred about a job that entails protecting others and being willing to put your life on the line to keep your fellow citizens safe.

So let me talk about a good police officer, one of many in my State. Dan Welborn and his large Catholic family of seven brothers and sisters moved to Fairbanks in 1988. Dan's father was in the Army, which, of course, draws a lot of people to the Golden Heart City of Fairbanks and to the great State of Alaska. We have more veterans per

capita than any State in the country. By his father and mother and probably, I am sure, a bunch of his siblings, he was taught discipline and respect and the importance of giving back to his community.

Dan graduated from West Valley High in Fairbanks and then went on to the University of Alaska at Fairbanks—UAF, as we call it. As a student, he began working with the campus police, which piqued his interest in law enforcement as a career and led him—he put himself through the law enforcement academy in Alaska.

Eventually, newly married and considering starting a family, Dan got a job at the Fairbanks Police Department, and that is the job he has kept for 26 years, and he has done it very well. He has done nearly every job there is to do on the force. Traffic duty, patrol, oversight of investigations, homicides, sexual assaults, fraud, forgery, computer and internet crimes—you name it, Dan's done it. He helped build a property crimes unit in Fairbanks.

He wrote dozens and dozens of grants to help the department get the equipment it needed so they can keep up with the times.

His awards are extensive. I was looking at his record. It is very impressive—Officer of the Year, numerous service awards and ribbons.

His community service is also extensive beyond just being a police officer—serving on the board of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, starting a project called Operation Glow in Fairbanks, which helps keep kids safe on Halloween when they are out trick-or-treating.

In 2016, Officer Welborn was promoted to deputy chief of police where, again, he excelled. He is known throughout the State for his solid decisionmaking, his even temperament, and for the good way that he has with people. He is judicious and stern when needed, but always kind, considerate, and respectful, which is what we want in our police force.

Service also runs in Dan's family. I love this part of his life. His brother Doug is also a Fairbanks police officer, and his son Brett was sworn in as a Fairbanks police officer on May 20, a month ago. Wow. That is a family of service.

What he tells his son Brett is this:

It's important that you understand defensive tactics. [This is not always easy work.] But the most important thing is your people skills. You need to be able to sympathize [empathize] with people, and take charge if you need to. And if you need to take charge and you get someone under control, you must treat them with professionalism and respect. It's a hard thing to remember [sometimes], but it's the most critical thing to remember.

That is Officer Welborn. That is sage wisdom.

Now, I hear that Dan will be moving to St. Louis to be close to his beloved baseball team, the Cardinals. He will miss the community, his job, and his

family. By the way, his sister Patty wrote this great letter to me, which I read all about his community service.

Boy, Dan, your sister thinks you are amazing. We hope that you will come back. Actually, we are pretty confident you are going to come back to Alaska because we want you to come back. You are not done serving our community.

We know this: Officer Welborn will certainly be missed, and he will miss being a patrol officer. He loved working the traffic beat because of all the people he got to meet and all the times he got to help people on the road. Of course, there are things about the job he won't miss. I am not sure this is talked about enough, images that will likely stick with him and images that, unfortunately, haunt many police officers across the country because the fact of the matter is, people can be difficult. People can be brutal to each other, domestic violence and child abuse. The police see it all. It is not easy, and he has witnessed way too much of that brutality, and he has protected Fairbanks' citizens from a lot of it.

Here is what he also knows: Mostly, the vast majority of people are good, and that is so important to remember. Alaskans are good people. Americans are good people. He has witnessed that, too, and he has contributed to that goodness.

He recently told a story about a time at the department that will stay with him. He talked about attending a wedding at a hotel. There was a man there setting tables and working at the hotel. He looked at Officer Welborn and said, "Officer, can I talk to you for a minute?" He said, "Sure." This man went up to Officer Welborn and said:

Officer, you probably don't remember me, but you arrested me years ago for a DUI. [I was having problems then, and] I've turned my life around since then. All these years later, Officer Welborn, I still remember how well you treated me.

Think about that. Those are the kind of good memories that will stay with Dan too. So, thank you, Officer Welborn, for all you have done for our community and the great city of Fairbanks. Thanks for your service to Alaska and to America. Thanks for protecting us and for setting the example with respect.

We wish you all the happiness in retirement. We really want you to come back to Alaska, so don't stay in St. Louis too long. The Cardinals aren't even that good of a baseball team.

Congratulations on being our Alaskan of the Week.

I yield the floor.

(Mr. SULLIVAN assumed the Chair.)
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate proceed to executive session and the Committee on Commerce be discharged from further consideration of PN1674; that the Senate proceed to its consideration; that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and that the Senate then resume legislative session.

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

PN1674—COAST GUARD

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Coast Guard to the grade indicated under Title 14 U.S.C., sec. 2121(e):

To be captain

ERIN N. ADLER
BRADFORD E. APITZ
WILLIAM L. ARRITT
MATTHEW J. BAER
JONATHAN BATES
KRISTI L. BERNSTEIN
MARC BRANDT
VERONICA A. BRECHT
JASON A. BRENNELL
RANDALL E. BROWN
JONATHAN A. CARTER
MICHAEL A. CILENTI
DANIEL H. COST
CHRISTOPHER F. COUTU
THOMAS D. CRANE
PATRICK A. CULVER
THOMAS C. DARCY
CARMEN S. DEGEORGE
KELLY K. DENNING
JOSE E. DIAZ
KEITH M. DONOHUE
ERIC D. DREY
DAVID M. DUBAY
JEFFREY T. ELDRIDGE
BRIAN C. ERICKSON
SEAN C. FAHEY
JOSHUA W. FANT
AMY E. FLORENTINO
BENJAMIN M. GOLIGHTLY
JEFFREY R. GRAHAM
JASON B. GUNNING
MATTHEW W. HAMMOND
SEAN P. HANNIGAN
JOHN HENRY
EDWARD J. HERNAEZ
WESLEY H. HESTER
TEDD B. HUTLEY
MICHAEL S. JACKSON
ANDREW S. JOCA
ERIC J. JONES
WARREN D. JUDGE
DANIEL P. KEANE
BRAD W. KELLY
DIRK L. KRAUSE
BRIAN C. KRAUTLER
MARK I. KUPERMAN
MICHAEL R. LACHOWICZ
TAYLOR Q. LAM
LEANNE M. LUSK
BENJAMIN J. MAULE
LEON MCCLAIN JR.
EUGENE D. MCGUINNESS
ZEITA MERCHANT
JOSEPH E. MEUSE
JOSHUA P. MILLER
MATTHEW J. MOORLAG
STEPHANIE A. MORRISON
MAURICE D. MURPHY
BRYAN C. PAPE
JOSE PEREZ
SHANNON M. PITTS
ROBERT H. POTTER JR.
SCOTT B. POWERS
CLINTON J. PRINDLE
ARTHUR L. RAY

RYAN S. RHODES
LUIS J. RODRIGUEZ
RICHARD M. SCOTT
MICHAEL R. SINCLAIR
JENNIFER A. STOCKWELL
JOHN M. STONE
TODD C. TROUP
DANIEL R. URSINO
DANIEL R. WARREN
CHARLES E. WEBB
MOLLY A. WIKE
ERIN E. WILLIAMS
WILLIAM C. WOITYRA
CHRISTOPHER G. WOLFFE
MARC A. ZLOMEK

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we are now several months into a global pandemic that has caused terrible human and economic suffering.

Here in the United States alone, more than 2.3 million Americans have been infected, and more than 120,000 have died.

That is more Americans killed in the Korean, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq wars combined and more than those killed in one of our most deadly wars, World War I.

I recently spoke with Melinda Gates about the foundation she and her husband Bill established and its efforts regarding the coronavirus pandemic.

Bill warned years ago to prepare for just this kind of pandemic, including directly with Donald Trump just before taking office.

Not surprisingly, their foundation has provided millions to global efforts to find a vaccine and treatment for the coronavirus.

One such event was an EU-hosted virtual conference in May with many of our key allies that raised more than \$8 billion to be spent over 2 years to further promising vaccine and treatment efforts.

The EU and Norway each gave \$1 billion; the French, Germans, and Brits combined also gave nearly \$1 billion; the Canadians pledged \$850 million; the Swiss \$400 million, and the Dutch, \$200 million. Japan and others also made sizeable pledges.

The Gates Foundation gave \$125 million, with Melinda wisely telling the gathering, "This virus doesn't care what nationality you are . . . As long as the virus is somewhere, it's everywhere."

And what was the contribution of the United States? Nothing.

The U.S. Government under President Trump didn't participate in this shared effort that could help save American lives.

But that is not all. On this 40th anniversary of the World Health Organization's historic achievement to eradicate smallpox, President Trump also