

contrary, if you are afraid of witnesses and documents, most Americans will believe you have something to hide and that you fear you have done something very, very wrong.

If my Republican colleagues believe the President has done nothing wrong, they should have nothing to fear from witnesses and documents. In fact, they should welcome them. What better way to prove to the American people that we are treating this matter with the gravity it requires. What better way to prove to their constituents that they are not just doing the President's bidding and not just making this a sham trial because of obeisance to the President of the United States.

If every Senate Republican votes to prevent witnesses and documents from coming before the Senate, if every Republican Senator votes for a rigged trial that hides the truth, the American people will see that the Republican Senate is part of a large and awful coverup.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

JAPAN TRADE DEAL

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I have come to the floor today to start this new year by really encouraging my friends on each side of the aisle to approach this coming legislative session with some optimism because there are some good things we can do.

We come to the floor and we hear about Iran and we hear about Soleimani. There are differences of opinion there. I am one of those. I represent a major military post, and I know that so many of our men and women in uniform said: You know what, this should have been done long ago. This is a known terrorist who has conducted terrorist attacks on six continents, even tried it here in the United States. They felt like the President was justified.

We hear about impeachment, and of course we know it has been widely reported that our friends across the aisle and over in the House started 3 years ago trying to find something they could impeach Donald Trump on—just something. It was going to be emoluments, or it was going to be collusion, or it was going to be coercion, or it was going to be Russia, or it was going to be bribery. There had to be something there because, you know what, they just don't like the guy. They don't like him. So they have been at it nonstop. They let that get in the way of some good things that people would like to get done.

For the next few minutes, I would like to encourage us to think beyond subpoenas and trial and negativity and witness statements and instead focus in on three things that are right in front of us: two successfully negotiated trade deals that will benefit farmers, manufacturers, and small business owners and producers not only in my State of Tennessee but across the entire country.

In the Volunteer State alone, we have 967 foreign-based businesses, and they have invested \$37.3 billion in capital improvements, and currently they employ more than 147,000 Tennesseans. That is good for our State. Trade is important to us in Tennessee, insourcing these jobs.

Of particular importance to us is maintaining great trade relations with Japan. Do you know what is so amazing? We have so many people who didn't even know that the Japan trade agreement went into effect on January 1. The mainstream media was so busy focused on impeachment and other things that they didn't even realize this was a deal that will do a good job for us.

Our former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, who is a Tennessean, Ambassador Hagerty, had negotiated this before he left. This recently agreed-to Japan trade deal will support 40,000 jobs that are already provided by Japanese companies. The new deal will also solidify Tennessee's relationships with Japanese partners like Nissan North America, Toyota, Bridgestone, Nidec, and Denso Manufacturing—all with a presence in Tennessee and all employing Tennesseans.

It is going to create greater market access to Tennessee's agriculture products, specifically pork, cheese, and wine. It will eliminate or lower tariffs on 7.2 billion dollars' worth of U.S. exports, including beef, which will put Tennessee and American farmers on a level playing field with their competitors. That is a good thing for our agricultural community. I cannot overstate how big a win this is for Tennesseans and for Americans, and there is more on the horizon.

CHINA TRADE DEAL

Madam President, later this month, President Trump will solidify a trade deal with China that will eliminate or roll back the section 301 tariffs and provide some much needed protection for our patents and trademarks and copyrights that will allow innovators in our creative community, like our Tennessee songwriters, screenwriters, TV producers, and our actors, to enjoy the benefits of a free market. This has been a long time coming. There is a lot more to do.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Madam President, you may recall at the end of 2018—not 2019 but at the end of 2018—President Trump notified Congress that he would soon provide us with implementing legislation for the newly signed United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement. We call it the USMCA.

At that moment, at the end of 2018, our colleagues in the House were put on notice that this highly anticipated and desperately needed legislation was on its way. Get ready. It is coming to you. At that moment, the House majority leadership was presented with the opportunity to prioritize American workers over partisan politicking.

What was their choice? Their choice was to choose partisan politicking and leave the American workers on the sideline, leave these auto manufacturing workers on the sideline while they focused in on partisan bickering. We all know what happened.

In 2019, petty revenge schemes took priority and trade relations with our closest allies were shoved aside to accommodate a yearslong campaign. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, for 3 years they have wanted to undo the 2016 election.

In May, instead of prioritizing the creation of nearly 176,000 jobs, House Democrats decided to spend their time drafting subpoenas. In June, instead of focusing on the 12 million jobs already depending on good trade relations with Canada and Mexico, House Democrats held four votes on these subpoenas.

It was the same story in July, in August, and in September. House Democrats pushed forward with their impeachment ambitions at all costs. They had to do it. They had made a promise that they were going to go get him. They neglected the owners of over 120,000 American small businesses that export goods throughout North America. They put themselves and their priorities before the needs of the American people.

Even as late as October, the Speaker of the House continued to stall, inventing excuse after excuse when it came to pushing the USMCA negotiations to the sidelines in favor of partisan attacks. Even Members of her own caucus sought to distance themselves from those attacks.

By the end of the year, the House majority's resolve to ignore their duty, finally began to splinter.

They struck a deal with the White House, but even then, the compromises they pushed for were barely, hardly worth wasting an entire year's worth of potential economic opportunity. There was a lot of opportunity cost to businesses to make way for House Democrats' partisan bickering.

We have brokered successful trade deals with Japan, with China—deals that America's farmers, manufacturers, producers, and small businesses have waited for, for a very long time. Now, after a year's worth of delays, excuses, and outright obstruction on the part of House Democrats, we are forced to ask those farmers and workers to wait just a little bit longer. It isn't fair, and it certainly is not what is best for our Nation's economy and certainly not what is best for Tennessee.

In the coming weeks, I encourage my colleagues to stay focused on policies that may not dominate the headlines but that are dominating the thoughts of Tennesseans from one end of the State to the other and certainly of Americans all across this country who are looking for trade opportunities and opportunities to grow their businesses in this robust and growing economy.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

IRAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, this morning, the Republican majority leader took to the floor and spoke at great length about the execution of General Soleimani. General Soleimani, who was the head of the military forces in Iran, was killed by a drone strike at the authorization of the President of the United States, Donald Trump.

Senator MCCONNELL, this morning, made a lengthy case about the background of General Soleimani. It is hard to argue with the facts he brought to the floor. In fact, I would concede and most would agree that General Soleimani, in his time, was an architect of terrorism and that, in the course of his career, there has been American blood on his hands. That is fact, but it wasn't a fact just discovered in the last few weeks. The Presidents of both political parties have known this about General Soleimani for a long period of time. They have had opportunities to end his life, yet they didn't seize those opportunities. Presidents of both parties decided it was prudent not to do it.

The question that has been raised now is why this President, at this moment, made the decision to execute the general. We know this general and his past activity have had an impact not only on the United States but on the Middle East and many other innocent people. The question that has been raised is, Why at this moment? Why did it make sense at this moment?

But for a few Members of the Senate, most of us have not had extensive briefings or an opportunity to ask questions of this administration about the timing of this critical decision. We will get our chance tomorrow. There is a classified briefing in which representatives at the highest level of this administration will come before us and explain why they believe the President's decision at that moment was the right thing to do for America. So many of those who come to the floor and defend the decision or criticize those who question that decision really have not had the benefit of a classified briefing, which will be offered to Members tomorrow.

I am going to withhold any comments about those elements, as much as I can possibly say publicly, until I get the chance to have more information. But this much I do know: Regardless of that decision on General Soleimani, we know for certain the Constitution of the United States empowers the American people, through their elected Representatives in the Senate and the House, to make the ultimate decision about whether the United States will go to war with Iran or any other country on Earth. We have learned, bitterly, that the ignorance or refusal of Congress to exercise that constitutional right can be disastrous.

Many of us have memories of the war in Vietnam, where 58,000 American lives were lost, 2 million Vietnamese

were killed, and \$170 billion—now, in today's terms, \$1 trillion—was spent on a conflict that divided America and cost so many American lives. Congress did not exercise the authority given to it under the Constitution to make the initial decision about that war in Vietnam. Many times thereafter, people said: Why didn't you step up and make the decision before this costly mistake was made?

If there is to be a war with Iran, I join with Senator KAINE of Virginia in saying that the American people, once again, need to make this decision under the Constitution through Congress, article I, section 8, which provides, in clause 11, that only Congress has the power to declare war.

If we are going to proceed down a path to war with Iran, the American people have the right to know and the right to hear the fulsome debate. In the time I have served in the Senate, I have seen Presidents in the past who have come before the American people with flimsy evidence or even misleading evidence to justify military action. I know the bitter consequences of war. Even the best American troops are going to suffer casualties and deaths in the execution of a war.

Let us make certain that if we are going to move forward with hostilities against Iran, we do it under our constitutional requirement to have a fulsome debate before the American people and have an official declaration of war before we move forward. We owe the American people nothing less.

IMPEACHMENT

Madam President, secondly, I would like to address the issue of the impeachment trial, which the Senate majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, raised this morning.

Before I was elected to Congress, I made a living as a lawyer. I took many cases to trial. Few, if any, ever moved to a final decision without the introduction of evidence. The evidence, of course, consists of documentation, sometimes physical evidence, but often the testimony of people who were witnesses to events critical to a jury's final decision.

This impeachment trial should be nothing less. This is an opportunity for us—a rare opportunity in American history—to come forward and to demonstrate that we are going to handle a trial in the U.S. Senate in a professional manner. For the Senate majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, to announce that there will be no witnesses, there will be no evidence, there will be no documents in advance is to deny the very basis of a trial, as I understand it and as most Americans understand it.

If this President believes, as he has said so often, the charges in the impeachment articles do not rise to any serious or credible level, then, certainly, there is evidence that could prove his case. He will have his managers on the floor of the Senate when the articles are presented to us. They can certainly call witnesses. They can

bring evidence before us. But so far, the record is not very strong for that to happen.

One of the Articles of Impeachment, the second one, relates to the President's refusal to cooperate with the investigation in the House, refusal to provide documentation and witnesses. For a President who is arguing that there is really nothing to these charges, he has refused to provide even the most basic evidence to prove his point, if it exists.

What we are saying on the Democratic side is that if there is to be a trial for impeachment in the U.S. Senate, common sense and the Constitution require that it be a fair trial with evidence for not only the Senators but the American people themselves to see. What we have asked for so far is limited in terms of what we are looking for: four witnesses and documents that can be clearly identified. Those are things I think should be part of this trial record so that regardless of the outcome of the trial, the American people will believe it was handled fairly, in a dispassionate and nonpartisan way.

FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Madam President, I have come to the floor many times to speak to the American people about an industry, the most heavily federally subsidized industry in America today. No, it is not a defense contractor. It has nothing to do with American agriculture. What I am speaking of are the for-profit colleges and universities of the United States. These colleges and universities, sadly, have written a notorious record when it comes to the treatment of their students. They have often cheated their students, luring them into signing up for expensive, often worthless college courses with false promises and inflated outcomes if they graduate.

At the end, the students are left with massive student debts, a diploma that is worthless, credits that can't be transferred to any other reputable college or university, and the prospects of a job that is almost impossible to find. In many cases, these sham operations actually go out of business in the middle of the student's education.

As an industry, for-profit colleges need to be remembered for two numbers—two numbers that tell the story of this industry. Nine percent of all postsecondary students go to for-profit colleges and universities in the United States. The University of Phoenix, DeVry—you have heard their names. They advertise quite widely. Nine percent of students are attracted to these for-profit colleges and universities. But 33 percent of all of the federal student loan defaults in the United States are by the students who chose to attend those colleges and universities.

What is going on here, with 9 percent of the students and 33 percent of the student loan defaults? The answer is obvious. The cost of education at for-profit colleges and universities is too