

last 20 years and several Congresses, we have done a lot to be well prepared for this pandemic, and we are moving more rapidly than we ever have to create new diagnostic tests, new treatments, and new vaccines. Some of the challenges that remain are how to distribute them, to whom they should go first, and how to persuade Americans they are safe to take.

But while we are in the midst of dealing with all of this, it would be wise to remember that any legislation that we pass in Congress this year dealing with this pandemic should also take steps to make sure that our stockpiles are filled, that our manufacturing plants can stay functioning, and that public health State by State is well funded, because, as Jared Diamond said, the reason to do that now, while our eye is on the ball, is because the next pandemic could be next year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

(The remarks of Mr. HAWLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 4543 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HAWLEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Democratic leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 685

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am proud to support the resolution by the Senator from Illinois, and we will hear from her shortly. I very much appreciate her work.

Now, in his famous letter to Lydia Bixby, mother of five sons who all died in the Civil War, President Lincoln prayed that our Heavenly Father would assuage her grief, noting the "solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of Freedom."

According to a recent report in the Atlantic, President Trump complained about visiting a World War I military cemetery in France because Americans who died there were "suckers" and "losers."

Over the past 4 years, President Trump has achieved some remarkable lows in the annals of Presidential conduct and character, but every so often we are jolted by the sheer depravity of his comments. This President's insults about our fallen servicemembers and the nature of military service in general fall into that category—the lowest of the low.

There is no greater sacrifice an American can make than to lay down their life for our country, no greater sorrow than the sorrow felt by parents who bury their children wrapped in the American flag. Everyone who has the privilege of working in public office knows this deep truth in their bones but not the current President of the United States; not President Trump; not this man who dodged the Vietnam war with bone spurs; not this man who insulted Gold Star families, who looked at our former colleague John

McCain, a man who was tortured in a POW camp for 5 years, and said, "I prefer people who weren't captured"; not this President, who doesn't understand one iota of the word "sacrifice" and cannot even comprehend why someone might give themselves for a larger cause.

According to these reports, when President Trump went to Arlington National Cemetery, which included a visit to the grave of General Kelly's son, he turned to him and said: I don't get it. What was in it for them?

Everyone—everyone—ought to be appalled. What the Commander in Chief says about our servicemembers and our veterans matters a great deal. It affects the morale of our military, our standing on the world stage, and it reveals the character of the man who has to make life-and-death decisions involving our Armed Forces.

We have heard the President and his team try to deny that the President ever made those comments. I mean, come on. The President is on video saying nearly the same thing, out loud, on several occasions—about one of our former colleagues, no less.

In a short time, Senator DUCKWORTH will ask this Chamber to condemn the President's remarks and reaffirm our Nation's steadfast and unwavering commitment to the individuals serving in the U.S. armed services. I want to thank the Senator from Illinois for leading this resolution. More importantly, I want to thank her for her service, both to the people of Illinois and to our country, as an Army aviation officer.

I hope, I pray, I plead with our Republican friends not to block this resolution. I am already disappointed at how few of them have spoken out to criticize President Trump for his remarks. Are they really so afraid to say anything against this President that they would give him a pass when he disparages our own military? Will they really block a resolution condemning the unequivocally disgusting comments, a resolution that reaffirms our support for the military?

I certainly hope not. If you can't stand up and say the President was wrong to say these things, then what can you criticize this President or any President for? When comments like this are made about the sacrifices of our Armed Forces, every single elected official should understand instinctively that they are wrong, especially—especially—when they come from the Commander in Chief. Let's have the entire Senate—Democrats and Republicans—stand together and say so with this resolution.

I yield to my colleague from Illinois. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I come to the floor today as a Senator, a veteran, and apparently, according to Donald Trump, a "sucker" and a "loser." Perhaps my presence here is uncomfortable for him. After all, ac-

cording to a number of reports, he thinks nobody wants to see wounded warriors like me who have lost limbs fighting to keep other Americans safe.

Unfortunately for him, I am here, and I am here because the ethos of the U.S. military is the exact opposite of the selfish, craven, "me first" mentality that Trump has shown every hour of every day of his life.

In the Army, part of our soldiers' creed was to never leave a fallen comrade behind, and the only reason I am speaking today, the only reason I am breathing today—alive today—is that, on November 12, 2004, after Iraqi insurgents fired an RPG through the Black Hawk I was copiloting, my buddies embodied that creed.

They thought I was dead, yet they risked their own safety to bring my body back home to my family, only realizing I was still breathing when they got me to the rescue aircraft. Then these heroes, wounded themselves, refused care until the medic attended to me first.

If it had been Donald Trump in that dusty field with me, or in any other battlefield, our wounded like me would have never made it home at all. But he never would have been in Iraq that day because Trump fundamentally cannot understand the notion of sacrificing for your Nation. He can't comprehend the true meaning of courage, the idea of fighting for something greater than yourself, greater than your bank account or your poll numbers.

He doesn't understand service, so he doesn't understand America's servicemembers, the heroes—most of them anonymous to all but those who love them, who have allowed him to sleep soundly in his gold-plated Fifth Avenue Tower throughout his privileged, gilded life. Instead, Trump has reportedly called those who have died or have been wounded in battle "suckers" and "losers," while just today it was reported that he used the most demeaning of terms to refer to the military leaders he thinks of as his generals, echoing comments he has made publicly time after time when he slandered war heroes like John McCain and Gold Star families like the Khans, acting, yet again, as if bleeding to defend your Nation is something to be ashamed of rather than a badge of honor, too ignorant to understand that he is the one who should be ashamed.

I spent this weekend reflecting on the words of another Republican President, who in the midst of crisis reminded those sitting before him at Gettysburg the duty our Nation has to those killed serving our country. In that address we all know so well, he declared that it is for us, the living, to dedicate ourselves to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced; that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion.

That cause was a new birth of freedom in this Nation, the bettering of our democracy, bringing our Union

closer to perfection, even though we know we can never achieve it.

What Lincoln understood—and what Trump never will—is that to be contemptuous of American warriors is to be disrespectful to the whole of the American people. When those lucky enough to serve in Congress—or in the White House—raise our right hands and swear to faithfully serve this Nation in these ornate hallowed halls, it is on us to keep faith with those who have raised their right hands and sworn to serve this Nation in the most dangerous war zones imaginable.

There is an implicit contract between our country's leaders and our warriors: They and their families have entrusted us with their care, their training, and the decision to send them to war. That responsibility is a grave one. They will march to do our bidding on command. They will cross the line of departure and begin killing the enemy at our behest, with no regard for their personal safety or the toll on their mental health.

If our leaders regard our heroes as “suckers” and “losers,” what damage will be done to America's sons and daughters who comprise the terrible swift sword? I can tell you right now, it endangers every single one of them, and it endangers our Nation's safety.

If you care about nothing else, if you care nothing about basic decency or troop morale, it is bad for troop readiness as well. When a warrior goes into combat, they need to know that their buddies to their left and their right will follow that creed to never leave a fallen comrade behind; that no matter what, no matter how, their buddies, their Nation, will get them out of there, even if it is just bringing their body home to rest at Arlington.

It is because our servicemembers uphold the values of the military—in the Army, those are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, integrity and personal courage—that they are willing to sacrifice everything for this country and that we have the greatest fighting force on the face of the Earth.

Donald Trump, by contrast, has shown active disdain for each of those values in his 4 years in office. He has shown the exact opposite of every one of those traits, displaying no sense of duty, a laughable sense of loyalty, integrity and courage—no, not to be seen. He has no respect for those in uniform, and selfishness is his trademark rather than the selflessness of our troops.

But if Trump's toxicity starts to break down those values within the military, if we start to question why we care about those who have been wounded or killed for us, if we start leaving folks behind, then people will begin to think twice about signing up to serve. Families will reconsider supporting their loved ones' decisions to enlist.

Those few, few Americans who were ready to take on that mission—that burden—will start to hesitate because

they will not know if their own crew will risk their lives like mine did to carry their limp body back to safety, but this coward-in-chief in the White House today is too ignorant in matters of both common decency and national security to get that. He doesn't deserve to be Commander in Chief of this military for another 4 minutes, let alone another 4 years.

So, yes, I am disappointed that my Republican colleagues will be objecting to passing my Senate resolution honoring our troops, veterans, and Gold Star families and that they will not be condemning Trump's disgraceful behavior that denigrates military service that has dishonored the office of the Presidency.

Does any Senator actually oppose affirming the part of what makes America not only great but good is the service of Americans who have always placed the mission first, never asking what is in it for them? Does any Member actually object to the Senate resolving to always respect the sacrifices and bravery of those who became prisoners of war or went missing in action?

I am confident that no one here actually opposes the Senate declaring that we will always care for service-disabled veterans who have borne the battle in defense of our Nation, recognizing that wounds of war are earned by patriots who put America's interests before their own.

So what is the problem? If Senate Republicans actually agree with everything I just listed, why would they oppose my resolution stating the same? I know some may dismiss the resolution out of hand, claiming it is nothing more than just a partisan jab at Donald Trump. To those people, I would simply ask that they not rewrite recent history and stop pretending that outrage over Trump's disrespect of the military is something new or one that just originated with the Democrat Party. After all, some of the very first public officials to speak out against it were Republican Senators who continue to serve in this very Chamber today.

When then-Candidate Trump claimed the late Senator John McCain was not a war hero because Trump “like[s] people who weren't captured,” it was the Senator's friend from South Carolina who wrote: “If there was ever any doubt that [Trump] should not be our commander in chief, [this] should end all doubt.” Again, it was the senior Senator from Florida who said much of the same.

I can only say that it is shameful that no one on the other side of the aisle has stood up to condemn this President for the comments he has made, for the fact that he did not make his way to that cemetery to honor those veterans of Belleau Wood laying at rest in that foreign soil, who were there not just for us but for our allies, for everyone that they may never even know.

Today, I am here to ask, as if in legislative session, unanimous consent

that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 685, which was submitted earlier today. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. LOEFFLER. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mrs. LOEFFLER. Thank you, Senator DUCKWORTH, for your service and your sacrifice. We share the goal of supporting our military and our veterans. However, the left's latest outrage against President Trump is, as usual, baseless. Here is the truth: The Atlantic article is just one in a long line of lies and political attacks against President Trump by unaccountable, fake news outlets and the so-called anonymous sources.

Here is another truth, one that will not be covered by the fake news: No one has done more to support our men and women in uniform, including our veterans, and more to restore peace and prosperity for all Americans than President Donald J. Trump.

Let me share the facts with some of my colleagues and the media, which they refuse to acknowledge. This President has championed a historic investment of \$2.2 trillion into our military, a 3 percent pay raise for troops—the largest in a decade. He has personally thanked our troops on the ground in Iraq, Afghanistan, South Korea, and Germany. He has spent countless hours honoring our wounded warriors at Walter Reed Medical Center and honoring our fallen servicemembers killed in action at Dover Air Force Base.

He confirmed plans to withdraw troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, honoring his commitment to end endless wars. Finally, today, he was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership in facilitating the Israel-UAE peace deal, a historic step toward a safer world for all. I am proud to defend President Trump against another desperate political attack. I proudly stand with him in support of our military and our veterans.

This Atlantic hit piece is the antithesis of honest journalism. More than two dozen former and current administration officials have rebutted these false claims on the record. In fact, the liberal activist author, who has a history of using sources that are shaky at best, admitted that his reliance on anonymous sources was not good enough. What is not good enough is the media's treatment of this President and his clear track record of support of our military and their families.

Last week, I was at Fort Gordon and Fort Stewart in Georgia, visiting our Active-Duty members. I saw firsthand the opportunities our military leaders

now have to grow our safety and security on all fronts, from combating terrorism to making sure our cyber domain is safer. There was a renewed sense of optimism that should bring all Americans comfort. This is a direct result of the President's work that he is doing every single day for our men and women in uniform. They are fighting every single day to protect us, and he is fighting every single day to have their back.

Here is the truth: President Trump has delivered on his promises to rebuild our military, to respect our veterans, and to keep our country safe. It is time to stop playing politics with our national security and those who provide it.

For these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois has the floor.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, all I can do is to implore my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to reassert their independence, actually put principle before party and support this resolution, which simply recognizes a basic reality. Trump's denigration of military service is even more disgraceful today than it was 5 years ago, as he is now at least supposed to be our troops' Commander in Chief.

Former chief of staff of the Army General Weyand once wrote that the American Army really is the people's Army in the sense that it belongs to the American people. When the Army is committed, the American people are committed.

The Army is not so much an arm of the executive branch as it is an arm of the American people. He may have been talking about the Army, but the sentiment holds true for every military branch, every one of which belongs to the American people. It is made up of their sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, all of whom have dedicated their lives to serve in the Nation they love on behalf of the people they love. When Donald Trump mocks our troops, he is mocking every American in every part of this country. When he derides wounded warriors, he is just providing further proof that to him the word "sacrifice" is so foreign it might as well be in another language.

When he makes fun of those who have fallen in battle, he reveals not only his ignorance of national security but his own personal cowardice and insecurities as well. To him, service will never mean anything other than someone else serving him.

Trump may not want to see me here today. He may not like to see visible proof of my war wounds, but he will keep seeing me here because it is my duty to honor the heroes who saved me by using my second chance, using every extra minute, every extra moment that I have to look out for our troops and veterans from here in the Capitol.

I will take advantage of every extra breath I get to breathe because, unlike Donald Trump, our men and women in uniform know what courage, sacrifice, and service truly mean.

With that, I note how grateful I am for my Democratic colleagues who are here with me today to show support for our troops, veterans, and Gold Star families.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mrs. LOEFFLER. Mr. President, instead of passing a resolution meant to politicize our military, I am offering my own resolution to honor the service and the sacrifice of the members of the U.S. Armed Forces, veterans, prisoners of war, and Gold Star families.

My resolution also recognizes President Trump's strong record of supporting our troops, taking care of our veterans, defending the American people from foreign threats. President Trump and I have and always will honor the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, as if in legislative session, the Senate proceed to the consideration of my resolution at the desk. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. DUCKWORTH. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. I cannot support the incomplete Senate Republican resolution for a simple reason: We are not honoring the service and sacrifice of members of the U.S. Armed Forces, veterans, and Gold Star families in this Republican resolution. We cannot do that if we stay silent and meek when confronted with President Trump's disgraceful denigration of military service, prisoners of war, and military families continue.

We can't control the offensive comments and actions of the President, but the Senate can make a clear statement that our Chamber rejects such disgraceful sentiments.

Republicans' refusal to criticize President Trump speaks volumes when you remember that the outrage over Donald Trump's disrespect of our military is not a new concern. It actually originates with Republican Senators who were among the very first public officials to speak out against his denigration of military service and prisoners of war. I remind you that the senior Senator from Florida spared no outrage when, in responding to Candidate Trump's claim that Senator McCain was not a war hero, he stated: "It's not just absurd, it's offensive. It's ridiculous. And I do think it's a disqualifier as Commander in Chief."

The Republican resolution is incomplete if it does not condemn this Presi-

dent's comments denigrating our troops. That is why I am disappointed that Republicans won't join me in passing my resolution that recognizes the sad truth that Donald Trump never changed and his denigration of military service and sacrifice is as disqualifying today as it was years ago.

I yield to the senior Senator from Illinois.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me say at the outset how proud I am to serve with my colleague, Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH of Illinois. Her sacrifice for America is nothing short of amazing. Her life's story, her commitment to the men and women in uniform whom she served with and to the veterans and others, is now well established, not just in my State but across this Nation.

Only a small minority of Americans have had the privilege and honor of serving in the military. Many, like myself, count themselves as those who respect the military and understand that they deserve that respect for their willingness to volunteer to serve and even to die for this Nation. What Senator DUCKWORTH has done with her life is a clear indication of the spirit of the fighting women and men who keep this Nation democratic and safe.

I am really disappointed. What a great moment it would have been in the history of the Senate if we had Republican support, as well as Democratic support, for the Duckworth resolution. I am sorry the Senator from Georgia objected. She took exception to The Atlantic magazine article, the one that said the President called those who died in war "losers" and "suckers," but even that article has been accepted by FOX News as being a valid comment made by the President and reported.

Even if you take The Atlantic magazine and set it aside, there is ample evidence of this President's attitude toward our military. We all heard Donald Trump say publicly, when he was running for President in 2015, about our friend and colleague, the late John McCain: "He's not a war hero. . . . I like people who weren't captured." John McCain spent more than 5 years in a prisoner-of-war camp in Vietnam, and this President, Donald Trump, dismisses him as no war hero. John McCain suffered for his Nation. He deserves the respect of everyone, let alone the President.

We also saw Donald Trump publicly attack a Gold Star family in 2016, the parents of the late Humayun Khan, an Army captain killed in Iraq in 2004.

We have heard President Trump dismiss traumatic brain injury faced by servicemembers and veterans as just "headaches."

We have seen his silence in the face of reports that Russia offered bounties to kill American servicemembers in Afghanistan.

We have witnessed his use of military officials for photo ops or as his own personal security forces.

Recall the scene in "A Very Stable Genius" by Washington Post reporters Philip Rucker and Carol Leonnig in which Trump called the service chiefs "a bunch of dopes and babies" and barked: "You're all losers. You don't know how to win anymore." President Trump repeated those claims again in a news conference just this week.

These are just a few examples of not fake news but real news about this President's attitude toward the American fighting men and women. It is no surprise that he would say vile things privately if he would say these things publicly.

Instead of respecting our troops, President Trump ridicules them. Instead of bowing his head in humility, he barks insults and obscenities. No President in our history—none that I can even imagine—has been so juvenile, so abusive, and so cynical in speaking of our fallen heroes. What do we hear from Republican officeholders about these sickening comments? Very little, if anything, in objection. Their silence is deafening.

I want to close by thanking my colleague, Senator DUCKWORTH, for bringing this matter to the floor of the Senate. Every Member of the Senate—man, woman, Democrat, Republican—we all carry the flag and proudly march in parades and give those inspirational speeches on Memorial Day about the men and women who have served our Nation, but where are the voices in the Senate today to speak out against the outrages of this President?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am honored to join Senator DUCKWORTH in supporting this proposal. It gives me great pride to serve in the Senate with her. She is the living embodiment of the kind of sacrifice that our President does not understand.

There are two things here, though, that are very wrong. One is a President who thinks that the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who have laid down their lives for this country are "suckers" and "losers" and that it is OK to say that about them. It is beyond disrespectful. It is beneath contempt, and it is totally in character for this man. Those soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines can't answer; they can't speak for themselves any longer. So when something like that is said, it is very important that people in the highest offices of the country stand up and push back.

In graves in France and Belgium and Manila and around the world lie the mortal remains of men, boys, women who gave their lives and who cannot speak for themselves. It is heart-breaking for me to see that we cannot come together to agree on that in this body.

I can promise you that if President Obama or President Clinton had said anything like this, the other side of this Chamber would have been in pandemonium. It would have been a scene of hysteria. Senators would have been lining up through the doors to come and condemn this foul and hateful speech. We would have been hearing a lot about the last full measure of devotion. Instead, we are seeing the last measure of devolution of a great party into what now resembles, as much as anything, a cult.

I will be interested to see what my colleagues have in mind as they go through next year's Veterans Day and Memorial Day having been unable to say one word against this calumny of our troops today. It is, frankly, heart-breaking.

I traveled a lot with John McCain, and one of our trips took us to the Philippines. I got up very early in the morning to go and have basically a dawn visit to the Manila American Cemetery. The particular reason I went there is to see a name on the wall of the memorial: George Bruen Whitehouse. George was 21 when he was killed. He was flying fighter planes as a Navy pilot off an aircraft carrier called the USS *Cowpens*. His body was never recovered. His plane was shot down and crashed into the wilderness, and that was the end of it, but his name is still there, carved high up in the marble as a last memorial of his sacrifice. A President who doesn't get that is a disgrace.

I yield the floor.

Particularly, I yield the floor to a colleague who is an American combat veteran from the Vietnam war, to which my father dedicated 5 years of his life. It is a remarkable honor for me to be able to speak in between Senator DUCKWORTH and Senator CARPER. I am cognizant of that honor.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CARPER. It is an honor to follow my friend Senator WHITEHOUSE.

You could only turn out well, my friend, with the bloodlines you have.

Mr. President, I rise today really for one reason: I rise today to make crystal clear that we are profoundly grateful to every American who has answered our Nation's call to serve in uniform, to risk their lives, and in too many instances to lay down their lives so that we might remain a free people.

We are profoundly grateful to their families who have sacrificed so much while their loved ones were away fighting to protect the rest of us and making this a better and more just world.

We are especially indebted to those families whose loved ones left for war and never came home. It is a sacrifice that many Americans can barely imagine but one that has been all too real for millions of families since the founding of our Nation.

One of those families was my mother's family. I never got to meet my mom's younger brother. His name was Bob Kidd Patton. My mom was a Pat-

ton. Bob was the youngest of five children, born near the coal-mining town of Beckley, WV, to my grandparents, Ray and Effie Mae Patton, a Gold Star mother. Bobby was killed in action on October 26, 1944, during a kamikaze attack in the Western Pacific on his aircraft carrier, the USS *Suwannee*. Among the bodies of the ship's crew who were never recovered was that of my Uncle Bob. On the day of that attack, he was—get this—19 years, 6 months, 23 days old. My grandparents were never able to see their son again or say goodbye. My sister and I, along with our cousins, would never meet him.

Neither Bob Patton nor his *Suwannee* shipmates who also perished that day were "suckers" or "losers," as President Trump has characterized others who answered our Nation's call to uniform; they were and remain heroes.

I was fortunate enough to make it home after serving three tours in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam war, but 58,000 of my brothers and sisters never did. Their names are inscribed in a black granite wall not far from here so Americans will remember their sacrifice. Let me add that those 58,000 Americans were not "suckers" or "losers" either, as President Trump has described John McCain; they were patriots. Unlike Donald Trump, they answered the call of duty.

My squadron and I were deployed to Southeast Asia as part of the Seventh Fleet for several of the years that John McCain was held as prisoner of war in the "Hanoi Hilton," along with hundreds of other POWs. His plane had been shot down in 1967 over Hanoi. Both his arms and one of his legs were broken during the ensuing crash, and he was taken prisoner of war. For 5½ years, John McCain was held captive, beaten, and tortured. Despite this, he refused the early release that was offered to him by his captors. Far from being the loser that President Trump refers to him as, John McCain was the embodiment of courage, and my colleagues know it. He proved that again and again in uniform and right here in this Chamber, standing right over there.

A number of us in this body have been blessed to serve alongside other true patriots both during our time in Congress and in uniform.

The late Dan Inouye lost an arm and earned the Medal of Honor while serving in the 442nd—the most decorated American Army unit of World War II. They were all Japanese Americans who were despised by many Americans. They were heroes too.

There is former Senator Bob Dole—another highly decorated World War II hero who was nearly paralyzed and lost the use of one arm after he had been hit by enemy fire while he helped to save the life of a fellow soldier.

Then there is, of course, our amazing friend and our amazing colleague, TAMMY DUCKWORTH. God love her.

TAMMY, thank you for bringing us to the floor today.

For any American to disparage heroes like them who gave their lives or limbs for a country would be despicable, but to hear that contempt from the man who is now our Commander in Chief and who chose not to serve in the Vietnam war because of, allegedly, bone spurs in his foot is worse than despicable—it is abhorrent.

What is most surprising and really disappointing to me, though, is not that Donald Trump would use words like “loser” and “sucker” to describe heroes like John McCain and others. What is most surprising and disappointing is that there are only Democrats on this floor today who are condemning the utter contempt that Donald Trump has shown for our servicemembers over too many years. There should be 100 Senators on this floor today—100—saying, in no uncertain terms, that we have nothing but respect and admiration for those who have served and that we will not allow them to be mocked or ridiculed by anyone, including by the President of the United States.

Honoring those who have served this country and risked their lives for this country is among the most sacred of obligations any of us has. If we can't stand up and defend those men and women, then we have no business being here.

Let me close with this.

To the millions of soldiers, sailors, air men and women, marines, and Coast Guard members who are risking their lives right now around the world and who have done so for generations, listen to this: We salute you. We thank you. We thank your families from the bottom of our hearts. God bless you. Stay safe. Come home.

I yield the floor.

**THE PRESIDING OFFICER.** The Senator from Nevada.

**Ms. CORTEZ MASTO.** Mr. President, as I listen to my colleagues, I am honored every day to serve with them in the U.S. Senate.

In 2018, in Minden, NV, I had the honor of commemorating the opening of the Moving Wall, which is a replica of the Vietnam war memorial that travels the country so the public can pay its respects to Vietnam veterans. I will always remember the stories that veterans and their families shared with me that day—stories of coming home from a divisive war to an equally divided public. The pain of that reception was still fresh for many of them decades later.

America's servicemembers make an implicit pact with our country. They agree to put their lives on the line, and in exchange, they deserve our support, our care for them and their families, and our respect.

Last week, The Atlantic magazine published a story in which anonymous sources claimed that Donald Trump doesn't demonstrate that respect. The article described a Commander in Chief who calls his own country's fallen soldiers “losers” and “suckers.” The story

has fit a pattern from other anonymous sources over the years, some having described the President as lashing out at generals and calling them “dopes” and “babies.”

Now, granted, these are from anonymous sources, so let's set them aside for just a moment. As the saying goes, journalism is the rough draft of history, and sometimes that rough draft gets things wrong.

What do we know?

What we do know from the President's public statements is that Donald Trump does not understand the sacrifice and heroism that America's Armed Forces demonstrate on a daily basis, and that makes him unfit to lead them. How can a Commander in Chief make life and death decisions for our troops when he doesn't understand the very nature of the sacrifice he is asking?

I am not making up Donald Trump's refusal to understand military sacrifice. You just have to look at the record, and you have heard some of it today. That record is part of the public record that, in 1968, showed that Donald Trump avoided military service through a medical deferment. Although Donald Trump did not serve in the military, he has felt free to criticize others who have and their families.

In 2015, we heard then-Candidate Donald Trump say that John McCain was “not a war hero. . . . I like people who weren't captured.” He was talking about a man who endured torture during the 5 years he spent as a prisoner, a man who upheld the highest standards of our military by turning down the release that his captors offered him in order to stay with his fellow POWs, a man who refused to denounce his country even when his captors informed him it could earn him his freedom.

Clearly, this President has no conception of that integrity and that sacrifice. A President who refuses to honor men and women who were captured doesn't understand what heroism is.

In 2016, as the Republican nominee for President, Donald Trump attacked the family of CPT Humayan Khan, who was killed in Iraq while trying to stop a suicide bomber. For his brave and self-sacrificing actions that day, Captain Khan received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart.

Accompanied by his wife at the Democratic National Convention, Mr. Khan spoke about his son's sacrifice. In response, after seeing Mr. Khan and his wife, Donald Trump said:

If you look at his wife, she was standing there. She had nothing to say. She probably—maybe she wasn't allowed to have anything to say.

Can you imagine criticizing a mother for not being able to articulate the pain of losing her son? A President who mocks a military family's pain doesn't understand what selflessness is.

Just this Monday, we heard Donald Trump say that the top people in the

Pentagon want to do nothing but fight wars so that all of those wonderful companies that make the bombs stay happy.

A President who attacks America's generals as valuing profits over the men and women they command doesn't understand what leadership is, and because, even after 3 years as Commander in Chief Donald Trump can't understand or appreciate the commitment and sacrifice of America's servicemembers, he cannot effectively lead them.

At the end of the day, Donald Trump does not understand the very purpose of our military. He seems to believe that the military is his personal police force. He doesn't get that the allegiance to which our Armed Forces swear is to the American Nation, its people, and its Constitution.

We saw this when, in June, President Trump threatened to use the Insurrection Act to send Active-Duty troops to police the streets of this country. I was in Washington on the day this administration ordered police on horseback, armed with tear gas and concussion grenades, to disperse protesters who were peacefully protesting against police violence—all so that Donald Trump could stage a photo opportunity in front of a church while he held a Bible. On that same night, I could hear the noise overhead from the National Guard Black Hawk helicopters that engaged in a show-of-force display on the streets of Washington.

I come from a family of servicemembers. My father was stationed in Korea after the war. My grandfathers both served in the U.S. Army, and I had a great uncle who was on the beach at Normandy. My father-in-law piloted LCM-3s in Korea for the Army, and I keep on the shelf in my Senate office a photo that he took of the Korean War Veterans Memorial, here in Washington, in winter. That stark image of troops in the snow, moving cautiously through danger, is a reminder to me of the humanity and sacrifice of our servicemembers, including of my father and father-in-law.

Each year, when I celebrate the induction of new Nevadans to the service academies, I see the next generation devoting its idealism and its courage to our country, and I consider the weighty sacrifice of people who are so very young.

After reading the stories in the news and reflecting on the history of comments from our current Commander in Chief, I just want to say one simple thing to veterans, servicemembers, and their families in Nevada and throughout this country: Thank you. I will always stand with American troops who put their lives and bodies on the line to protect our country, and the American people deserve a Commander in Chief who will do the same.

I yield the floor.

**THE PRESIDING OFFICER.** The Senator from Connecticut.

**Mr. BLUMENTHAL.** Mr. President, I am proud to follow my colleagues who

have spoken on the floor, particularly Senators CARPER and DUCKWORTH, and to join them today, for they are in the great tradition of this body—Bob Dole, Daniel Inouye, TAMMY DUCKWORTH, TOM CARPER, and John McCain. We have known our share of heroes, and I am here to say thank you to them and to the others among us who have served.

I am proud to be here as a dad of two veterans—one a combat infantry officer in the Marine Corps, another a special operator in the Navy. Both are deployed. I myself served in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. I am here to say to the other moms and dads and loved ones that Donald Trump does not speak for me; that Donald Trump does not speak for us; and that Donald Trump does not speak for America.

When he called those brave heroes who laid down their lives “suckers” or “losers,” my first reaction was disbelief. Then, in an instant, it was totally to believe that he had said it because it was so much in character for Donald Trump. For him, it is all about Donald Trump. If somebody else can serve and take his place without there being sacrifice on his part, so much the better. Donald Trump does not speak for the America I know and love or for those who have given of themselves or risked their lives, like my colleagues who have spoken today.

When Donald Trump talked about the heroes of Belleau Wood, he could have used a history lesson because, clearly, the marines at Belleau Wood were not suckers. In fact, the relentless tenacity of their fighting earned them a nickname from the German soldiers who were their adversaries. The Germans called them “Teufelshunde,” meaning “devil dog.” This proud moniker has stuck with them all of these years, and they use it when addressing each other—“devil dog.” That is what they were.

One of their commanding officers, Maj. Thomas Holcomb, wrote a letter to his wife 2 days into battle, which reads:

The regiment has carried itself with undying glory, but the price was heavy. . . . There never was such self-sacrifice, courage, and spirit shown.

In the 3 weeks of fighting, the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade suffered a 55-percent casualty rate—55 percent. His battalion alone suffered 764 casualties out of 900 men. He became the 17th Commandant of the Marine Corps and Belleau Wood became part of Marine Corps history. That battle was one of hundreds, even thousands of battles, where soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines distinguished themselves with uncommon valor. For every Belleau Wood, there are other battles for each of those services. None of them fought like suckers or losers.

The cost of war is unspeakably high, and we know that from our own work on the Armed Services Committee and on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. I had just come from a hearing of the

Veterans' Affairs Committee where we were discussing the problem of veteran suicide. Twenty of our heroes take their own lives every day. Yet we in this body have failed to provide effective solutions to those invisible wounds that caused those deaths. That is a national disgrace.

So, to the loved ones of those who have risked and given their lives, we are here to make a point. This resolution makes that point eloquently and powerfully. Donald Trump speaks for no one in this body, as far as I know, and it is a shame that our Republican colleagues are literally absent. They are absent without leave. They are AWOL from this moment in history that calls upon them to stand up and be heard in the name of our Nation's heroes. Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to express my support for the resolution introduced by my colleagues, Senators DUCKWORTH and REED. I thank both of them, not only for acting swiftly to defend the honor of our servicemen and service-women but for their distinguished service to our country, both of them veterans themselves.

By now, we are used to Donald Trump saying a lot of dishonorable, distasteful, and downright disgusting things, but there truly is no bottom when it come to this President, as is evident in the despicable comments he made about our fallen soldiers as reported last week by The Atlantic, comments that have since been confirmed by additional reporting from FOX News, which is normally very supportive of the President, and the Associated Press. He called these heroes, these fallen soldiers, “suckers” and “losers”—“suckers” and “losers.”

The Atlantic reports that, while traveling in Europe to commemorate the end of World War I back in November of 2018, President Trump canceled a scheduled visit to honor those buried at Aisne-Marne American Cemetery. He didn't understand why he should bother visiting such a cemetery in the first place. “It's filled with losers,” he said. Can you imagine? Can you imagine?

It was on that same trip that President Trump referred to our marines who died in battle at Belleau Wood as “suckers” for getting killed—“suckers” for getting killed—“losers” and “suckers.”

Those words are hurtful words. They are damaging words. They are words that should never be spoken by a Commander in Chief. It is unthinkable, it is unforgivable, and I think it is un-American.

The same story also recounts the President's visit to Arlington Cemetery with then-Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly, himself a Gold Star father, who lost his son Robert in 2010 in Afghanistan. Standing over 1st

Lt. Robert Kelly's grave, the President of the United States turned to his father and said, “I don't get it. What was in it for them?”

“What was in it for them?” This question captures the very essence of what is so deeply wrong with this President. In other words, why would any American give their life in service to our country? Why would anyone do anything if not for fame or fortune?

You see, Donald Trump cannot fathom the idea of serving a cause greater than yourself because Donald Trump only serves himself. He cannot understand why anyone would choose to live a life of service; why anyone would risk it all to carry our flag on the battlefield; why anyone would put their own life on the line to defend our country, our people, and all that we as Americans stand for.

Since these despicable comments came to light, the White House has bent over backwards to deny them. Once again, too many of our Republican colleagues have stood silent, instead of forcefully and unequivocally condemning the President's words. They would rather cower to the cruelty of Donald Trump than stand up to those who have worn the uniform of the United States.

The sad truth is that none of us have to stretch our imaginations to picture President Trump calling our fallen soldiers “suckers” and “losers” because he has repeatedly denigrated our men and women in uniform and the entire concept of military service.

This is a man who, according to a New York Times investigation, had his wealthy father reportedly pay off a doctor in order to get a medical deferment from serving in Vietnam; a man who spoke out against disabled veterans selling goods on ritzy Fifth Avenue in New York City; a man who said that our late colleague, Senator John McCain, whom I was privileged to work with on so many national security issues, was no war hero—he is not someone who should be praised because he was caught, a prisoner of war—and resisted lowering U.S. flags in his honor; a man who has publicly attacked Gold Star families and failed to grasp the weight of their sacrifice; a man who, when asked about America's soldiers injured in the Iranian missile attack last January on Al Asad Airbase in Iraq, shrugged off traumatic brain injuries as nothing more than a mere headache; and, most recently, a man who, as Commander in Chief, has done nothing—absolutely nothing—in response to revelations that the Kremlin was awarding bounties to Taliban terrorists for killing U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan—the Kremlin, Russia, giving Taliban soldiers a bounty—a premium, a prize, a bonus—for killing U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan.

What message does it send to the children of fallen soldiers when they read that the President called their parents “losers” and “suckers”? What message does it send to the young people I will speak with this weekend,



whom I host an academy weekend with, who are considering applying to some of our Nation's most prestigious military academies?

What message does it send to adversaries like Vladimir Putin to learn that the President of the United States thinks that our service men and women on the ground in Afghanistan are suckers for being assassinated by Taliban terrorists?

Article II of the Constitution does not give much instruction when it says that the President shall serve as Commander in Chief; yet somehow, every President, until now, has carried out their responsibilities with a reverence for the men and women who serve our country and a sense of gratitude for those who give their lives in defense of our freedoms.

Let me close with the words of a Gold Star mother from southern New Jersey. Camden County Freeholder Melinda Kane's son, Marine LCpl Jeremy Kane, died in Afghanistan more than a decade ago. She wrote:

I am nauseated to think that the commander in chief of our military would even think to disparage individuals, like my son, who paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to every American. . . . For the parents raising children whose fathers and mothers have given everything to this country, how do they explain President Trump's words? These brave Americans served with honor, integrity and heroism doing the things that civilians could not and would not do. That said, here we are today, in a place we never thought we would be—ensuring the world knows that those that serve our country are heroes.

Today, I want to say to our service men and women—from the young recruit who just enlisted, to the soldier patrolling distant lands, to those who wore the uniform, to the loved ones of those who lost a loved one at war—you deserve an apology from our Commander in Chief. Because you are not likely to get one, I think it is important to say it here on the floor of the U.S. Senate: You are not suckers. You are not losers. You are heroes. Your families deserve our admiration and support for their sacrifices. The American people will always value you for bravely bearing our country's cause, even when the President of the United States will not.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I join my colleagues to honor the service and sacrifice of members of the U.S. Armed Forces, veterans, and Gold Star families, and to commemorate the men and women in uniform who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our Nation.

Since the earliest days of this country, we have been blessed by selfless men and women who have run toward, not away from, mortal danger. Driven by a profound sense of patriotism, they laid down their own lives to defend the freedoms that define our Nation.

That level of courage is difficult to comprehend and impossible to repay. Therefore, we show our gratitude by re-

membering these heroes—their bravery, their strength, and their hope—and also the sacrifices of the loved ones who have lost family members in uniform.

One such hero is SFC John David Randolph Hilty from Bowie, MD. Sergeant Hilty was serving in Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, helping to defeat ISIL, when he died this past March 30, 2020. This was after completing three previous tours to Afghanistan and earning several awards for his valiant service, including the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and Joint Service Achievement Medal.

Those who knew Sergeant Hilty remember him as a devoted son, husband, father, a tremendous leader, and a dear friend. I am thankful for Sergeant Hilty's service to our country and so sorry for the loss of such a wonderful member of our community.

We are forever indebted to the brave men and women like Sergeant Hilty who gave their lives to keep the rest of us safe. As President John F. Kennedy once said, "We must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." All Americans should be reflecting on the values that these men and women defended, and we must redouble our efforts to uphold them.

Values like the freedoms to speak, worship, think, and dissent, values like equality, justice, and tolerance, values like truth and fairness, these are the pillars of the democracy that so many have died to protect. We honor their sacrifices by working together to build and preserve the America they fought to defend and support.

Our citizen soldiers never need to ask what is in it for them. They know they answer life's highest and most honorable calling. We should all remember the sacrifices that so many servicemen and service women have made defending our freedoms. My thoughts and prayers are with all the families in Maryland and across the United States who have lost loved ones protecting our Nation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, in 2015, when I heard then-candidate Donald Trump denigrate the service of my friend, the late Senator John McCain, suggesting that he was a loser and that his status as a POW was somehow cause for shame or embarrassment, I was rock-solid certain that the America I knew and loved would never allow such a man to occupy the office of the President. I was wrong.

The McCain attack began a slow reveal of the unsurprising moral bankruptcy of a man and the surprising willingness of Republican leadership to tolerate that moral void. The reveal reached a new level last week with Jeffrey Goldberg's reporting—significantly verified by other reporters—that President Trump as Commander in Chief still denigrates the service of

military members, calling them "suckers" and "losers."

The Trump campaign protested loudly against the charge, but in the same instant put out a social media message ridiculing Joe Biden as he visited the grave of his son Beau, an Iraq war veteran, after church last Sunday.

As a Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the father of a U.S. marine, I find President Trump's attack on our military infuriating. In an era when his countrymen were risking their lives in Southeast Asia, the President dodged service with a timely and miraculously short-lived diagnosis of bone spurs. He bragged that his own personal Vietnam was trying to avoid sexually transmitted diseases at home while others were trying to avoid bullets, landmines, and torture in Vietnam. The selfish young man who avoided service and then equated the ultimate sacrifices of others with his sex life has now ascended into the world's most powerful office holding on to those same immature views.

It is not just about the President's words and attitude. Solid intelligence suggests that Russia has paid bounties for the killing of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. The President and his team have spent time trying to deny the news to the American public with ridiculous efforts to pretend that the President was never even briefed about the matter. The President still refuses to acknowledge the gravity of the threat or hold Russia to account, but, of course, he has described Vladimir Putin as "a better leader than Obama" and as a "friend." He must think: Why risk that friendship for suckers?

After watching this President for years, I conclude that the attack on the military is part of a broader hostility to the notion of serving others. The President stifles charities, disrespects Federal employees, denigrates teachers, and undercuts programs like public service loan forgiveness. He treats the office as a personal piggy bank, filling staff positions with family members and cronies, steering business toward his resorts, making his main domestic priority a tax bill that dramatically benefited his own pocketbook. The death, economic depression, deficits and social division that he has caused through his chaos hardly trouble his conscience because he has the satisfaction of knowing that he has used the office to enrich himself.

Is this the exemplar that we want for our country? President Trump may be unique among American Presidents in that no one holds him up as an example for America's children. No parent or teacher or minister or youth mentor who I know tells children to act like him or talk like him or treat people like he does. Even his supporters, professing support for his nominees and tax plan, have an instinctive understanding that he is not an example we would want our young people to emulate.

Of all the critical issues on the ballot for America in November, the most important is the most elemental. Is America a place where the commitment to serving others matters? Are we our brother's keeper? Do we want our young to join the military or enter the Peace Corps or teach in our public schools? Is service just for suckers or is it the essence of American patriotism?

Growing up, I was certain that I knew the answer to that question. I am less certain today, but I am infinitely more determined.

Mr. CARPER. Would the Senator yield?

Mr. KAINE. I yield.

Mr. CARPER. I spoke earlier of my Uncle Bob. I forgot that we had his photo, but this is what he looked like at the age of 19 years 6 months, and this picture was framed and could be seen in the dining room of my grandparents' house until they died. Alongside it was my picture. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. May I ask the Senator from Delaware a question?

Did that young man lose his life in battle?

Mr. CARPER. He was one of a number of sailors on the USS *Suwannee* who was killed in a kamikaze attack, and none of the bodies were ever recovered.

Mr. TESTER. I want to thank the Senator from Delaware.

You know, this isn't the first time—this isn't the first time the President has denigrated our military. It is not the first time and will not be the last time because there is a total lack of appreciation by this President of the people who serve our country in our military.

I don't have to talk about the bone spurs that gave him how many deferments? Five deferments? He found a way to not fight in Vietnam. Thank God his daddy had enough money to allow him to do that.

Then we think back to John McCain, the decorated war hero. Oh, no, no, no, not in President Trump's mind. It didn't matter that he was a prisoner of war. He was no war hero, the President said.

I am going to tell you, everybody in this body knew John McCain. Everybody in this body probably had a scrap with John McCain and everybody in this body had the highest amount of respect for John McCain. He truly was a war hero.

Then there are the veterans who served in Vietnam, which Agent Orange got the best of them. They are now in their seventies, and they are dying because of their exposure to Agent Orange. Let me tell you, the President denied them their benefits—denied them the benefits. If it wasn't for this body and the House, they still wouldn't have those benefits.

Then there is the time that Vladimir Putin put a contract out on our military. Did the President speak up? No, not to his good buddy Vladimir. No, he wouldn't do it.

Then there was the privatization of the VA. It cost Secretary Shokin his job because he said no, and in a bipartisan way we said no. Well, it is time to say no again in a bipartisan way. This President has crossed the line. "Suckers" and "losers" in our military do not belong in the same sentence, especially when you are talking about the "greatest generation" in Europe who gave their lives for this country.

It is time. It is time not for resolutions that are political games, but it is time to tell this President that he has screwed up in a big, big way. If we don't, it will affect this country's future long after he steps down from the Presidency.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. JONES. Mr. President, I rise in support of my distinguished colleague Senator DUCKWORTH and her resolution to honor our veterans, military servicemembers, and their families.

Senator DUCKWORTH knows more than anyone in this Chamber about what it means to serve and to sacrifice, and I am honored to serve alongside someone who has given so much to our country—and I might add, she got her training in Alabama, down in Fort Rucker, where we have the training for all Army helicopter pilots. So thank you for that, and I hope you enjoyed your time, and we are going to get you back. Senator DUCKWORTH is but just one representative here with her many brothers and sisters in uniform who have worn the uniform throughout.

Many in this body have served, and we heard a lot today about Senator McCain. I think few stand out as a military veteran more than our late colleague John McCain, the Vietnam veteran war hero, someone whom I served with but never, unfortunately, had the chance to meet. He was still a Member of the Senate by the time I got back here in January of 2018. His illness prevented him from coming to the floor. It will always be one of my great regrets that I could not have had at least 1 day on the floor of the U.S. Senate with John McCain.

He was a Vietnam veteran and a war hero, but he dared to speak out against a President. And this President, to this day, almost 2 years after John McCain's death, John McCain is the target of the President's wrath. Two years later, and he still has comments about a war hero.

I will tell you, to stand on the same floor at a moment like this, the same Senate floor where a hero like Senator McCain of Arizona spoke so passionately on behalf of our military and on which Senator DUCKWORTH speaks so passionately about our military and our veterans, it is truly an honor.

Today, the loss of John McCain's voice in this Chamber is magnified by the silence of too many who will not say what needs to be said. Our military families and veterans deserve our full support. They don't deserve insults.

They deserve our support every day, not just when it is politically convenient. It is the duty of this body and every Member of this body to defend those who have sacrificed so much to defend and protect our Nation. It is the obligation of all patriots in this country to do the same. In fact, true patriots would never think to do otherwise. It would never cross our minds as true patriots—it would never cross their mind to launch an insult to our military and our veterans, much less those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. It is what I do today and every day, as a Senator from Alabama, to honor our military—to honor them because I come from a State of heroes: Alabama.

I worked for one of those heroes. He was a military hero who later became a distinguished Member of this body from 1979 to 1997. Howell Heflin distinguished himself as a Marine officer in the brutal fighting of the Pacific theater of World War II, where he was wounded twice, awarded the Purple Heart and the Silver Star for Valor, and retired at the rank of major. I am so honored to be in his seat today where I worked for him as a young staffer so many years ago.

He, too, would rise in this Chamber in support and defense of our military. I know. I was here. I watched him. I saw him over the years. I was with him in every campaign. He was a tireless proponent of a strong military and understood Alabama's tremendous contributions to our Nation's defense, something I try to carry on in his stead.

As Alabama's Senator, Howell Heflin may have been called many things in the heat of politics, but none would have ever called him a sucker or a loser. None would have ever questioned his patriotism. Even though Alabama has a strong private sector supporting our Nation's military, no one would have ever accused him of simply promoting the business of defense contractors with his strong and unwavering support of defense spending to make America safe and secure.

You know, they are the less than 1 percent of Americans who have volunteered to risk their lives, to be away from their families, their loved ones, for weeks and months at a time, to uproot their families every few years and move, to put themselves in dangerous training, in physical and mental strain, and put themselves in harm's way when they are deployed in combat. Yet they ask for so little in return. That, folks, is the definition of selflessness.

While at one time I worked directly for a military hero in this body, today, as a U.S. Senator, I work for thousands of them—tens of thousands across America but, importantly, in the State of Alabama. I say Alabama is a State of heroes because it is true. Our sons and our daughters enlist and serve our Nation in numbers that far exceed our State's population, and I am so proud of that.

In Alabama alone, there are 27,000 men and women who serve either on



Active Duty or in the Guard or Reserve. Alabama is home to 377,000 veterans. That is a lot of folks in a State of my size. Not quite 10 percent of the population are veterans.

The point here is that families in Alabama know what it means to see a loved one raise their hand and stand ready to make the ultimate sacrifice for their country. I have stood witness and nominated our best and our brightest to military academies in the 2 years that I have been here. We have been able to get over 40 of Alabama's best and brightest high school students into our military academies—40. And I watched with pride in how they became members of the military and how their families were so proud of them, not ever dreaming that one day, if they lost their life, the Commander in Chief of the United States might refer to them as a loser. I can assure every American that among the folks I know of, there are no suckers, and there are no losers. What every volunteer from Alabama, enlisted or officer, has in common is a deep and abiding love for our country.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have had the honor to meet some of these folks overseas. I have traveled with my friend and colleague Senator REED. I have met with folks from Alabama. I have felt their pride in the job that they were doing in Afghanistan and Iraq. They feel it deep down because that is the core of a patriot; that is the core of American values.

We owe each of them not just our gratitude but our commitment to serve them as they are serving or have served us. We have a duty to uphold our promises to care for them and their families, to provide good healthcare, to help them get an education and transition to good jobs after service. We have a duty to honor them with action and with humble appreciation. We should have the decency and sense of patriotism not to denigrate their service, especially if you have avoided making such a sacrifice yourself.

Over the past 2 years, I was fortunate to know a little bit better what it really means to serve and to sacrifice while I was working on the elimination of the military widow's tax. I got to know people like Cathy Milford from Mobile, AL, and so many others whose late spouses had served honorably. I was shocked to learn that for decades they had been denied full survivor benefits that their spouses had earned because the Federal Government wanted to save a few extra bucks. That our country could allow such an injustice to occur for nearly four decades is unconscionable, and we set out to change it.

Cathy used to talk about how she came up here every year, and she would say that every time she would argue for the elimination of the tax, it was like digging up her husband from the grave.

Sadie McCormack's husband passed away in a training accident in South

Korea some 3 years ago. She has two kids at Auburn University, including a daughter who is the recent Miss Peanut for the Dothan area, where Fort Rucker is located. Sadie is a Gold Star wife who became a strong advocate of the military widow's tax issue. She had to go back to work teaching school to pay the bills because of that widow's tax.

Lois Thompson of Dothan is the widow of Army CW4 Richard Thompson, who retired after 35 years and 1 day of service. He retired in 1991 and died on March 18, 2013, having suffered from ALS for more than 6 years. He served two tours of duty where he waded into streams contaminated with Agent Orange. Senator TESTER spoke about the denial of benefits to those who have suffered because of their contamination with Agent Orange.

Mrs. Thompson is 85 years old, and she was his caretaker during his extended illness. She said: My husband served two tours in Vietnam, wading in streams of Agent Orange. The war was so unpopular he couldn't wear his uniform home and was spit on upon arrival back to the States. Our soldiers were often not treated right, even these days.

I agree with Mrs. Thompson, and that is coming down from the Commander in Chief. So, let me make this clear. The sacrifice made by these women and men and their families is incalculable, and for far too many years we have failed to do our duty and keep our promise to those heroes. So I am so glad that with a bipartisan effort in this body and in the House—bipartisan, bicameral—we were able to correct that in last year's defense budget.

Unfortunately, I cannot say that I am surprised by reports that the President called Americans who died in the war losers and suckers. It seems to be just the latest in a series of comments he has made that demonstrate a lack of respect for those who serve. That respect goes far beyond simply putting money into our defense and our military. It goes to your patriotism. It goes to your heart. It is easy to put money into something. It is easy to do those kinds of things, especially when you have an Armed Services like we have here in the Senate that works in such a bipartisan fashion. It is a whole different thing to really talk in the privacy of only a few people about what you really believe.

I can't say I am surprised that combat-wounded veterans make him so uncomfortable that he would ban them from military events and parades. They are reminders of his own failure to serve when called upon. I am not surprised, but I am deeply disappointed—deeply disappointed. Our troops deserve a Commander in Chief who understands or, at the very least, appreciates their service.

As of yesterday, 52,143 Americans have been wounded in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Free-

dom, and 6,784 Americans have given their lives for those two missions. Many more have been deployed, often repeatedly, bringing home experiences and memories that are going to impact them for the rest of their lives. Their dedicated families have served alongside them through every step of the way. Few among us—few among us—can truly understand this kind of sacrifice for a cause greater than ourselves. But what we should all be able to understand is that they deserve our respect, our gratitude, and our unwavering efforts to uphold our promises to them and their families.

So, as I conclude, I stand here today and think about those sacrifices, the pain that John McCain lived with, the pain that TAMMY DUCKWORTH lived with, the honor with which he and she and Howell Heflin served and all of those who have served and sacrificed over the years—all those families and all those who serve today—and it is stunning to me that the only sacrifice that we in this Chamber may suffer for our vote today is to suffer the wrath of a President because we stood in support of them and not him. After all they have done—say what needs to be said—we have to support them and not fear a baseless tweet from the President. A baseless tweet is simply not too high a price to pay for doing what is right by our military and our military families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to express my strong support for the Senate resolution sponsored by Senator DUCKWORTH, which condemns the denigration by President Trump of our Nation's Armed Forces and veterans. I also want to commend Senator DUCKWORTH for her extraordinary and heroic service as an Army aviator. She inspired all of us with her courage and her sacrifice.

In a September 3 article in *The Atlantic*, Jeffrey Goldberg catalogued a list of disparaging comments President Trump has made about members of the U.S. military and wounded warriors. Such remarks are not unusual for this President, and most are public knowledge. However, we should not become numb to such behavior, so some of the comments bear repeating.

The *Atlantic* article states that the President refused to visit the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in France, the final resting place of 2,289 Americans who died in battle, ensuring our freedom and the freedom of our allies against the march of totalitarianism, authoritarianism, fascism, and communism over the past century. He refused to visit because he said the cemetery was filled with "suckers and losers."

Several years ago, in planning a military parade to honor himself, he refused to include wounded war veterans, stating "no one wants to see that." When he visited the grave of Gen. John Kelly's son who died in Afghanistan at

the age of 29 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery, he wondered to General Kelly why his son joined the Marines: "What was in it for him?"

When impressed by a presentation by Gen. Joe Dunford, then the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he asked his staff why such a talented person would join the military.

Donald Trump is a man who cannot conceive of service to others before oneself. His view of the world is transactional. The only thing of value to him is money—not ideals or principles or the lives of our fellow Americans. He simply doesn't understand the words of one of his predecessors, President George Herbert Walker Bush, who said:

On this day, we must tell the stories of those who fought and died in freedom's cause. We must tell their stories because those who've lost loved ones need to know that a grateful Nation will always remember. We must tell their stories so that our children and grandchildren will understand what our lives might have been like had it not been for their sacrifice.

Donald Trump does not think deeply about what it means to be in the military; to be deployed in a battle zone, wondering if every day would be your last day; to be a family member waiting anxiously at home; to be a young, healthy person suddenly disabled or a Gold Star family who wakes every day, mourning their lost son or daughter but understanding the great cause they died for. Donald Trump only cares about the next "win" for himself, his fortune, or his popularity.

Donald Trump deferred service in Vietnam five times, including one deferment for a diagnosis of "bone spurs," which is remarkable, given the propensity he has to play golf, given such a debilitating injury. He has said that those who served in Vietnam were "suckers" for not finding a way out, never able to acknowledge that his privilege of birth and race were largely responsible for being able to avoid service in that war.

Furthermore, President Trump, true to his character, has doubled down and denigrated the military service of past Presidents and military officers, including, as has been referred to repeatedly, Senator John McCain, my close colleague on the Armed Services Committee and my chairman.

He referred to Senator McCain as a "loser" when he died and wondered why the Nation should honor him with flags lowered to half-staff. He said he prefers those who were never captured in war. He would prefer those who never served to a man like Senator McCain, who survived over 5 years in a Vietnamese prisoner-of-war camp, who refused to leave his comrades behind when given the chance, and who endured well-chronicled torture and humiliation that made him an inspiration to so many. In fact, one of the most moving moments in my life was to be in the Hanoi Hilton with John McCain and to have Senator McCain talk about the torture, the humiliation, and the degradation that he endured each day

but maintained his courage and his commitment to this Nation.

The President also does not understand the good order and discipline that are the hallmark of a military in a democracy, ensuring that our military men and women remain firmly tethered to our Nation's moral and ethical principles in the most demanding wartime environments. That is why he saw nothing wrong with intervening in the legal process to pardon a servicemember accused of war crimes. That is why he was able to stand on the steps of the White House and make comments intended to drive a wedge between the men and women in uniform—the junior officers who enlisted and their senior leaders—impugning the motives of senior military officers who have dedicated their lives to the service of the country and who have bled, in some cases, for this country.

Never in this Nation's history has a President held the military and those who served in such disdain and disregard—never. His support for the military is hollow. He touts pay raises that were scheduled to happen anyway and congressional increases in defense spending for readiness which he then diverts to build an ill-advised and wasteful wall on the southern border. He falls short in caring for our men and women in uniform and their well-being and lives—and thinks instead of how they might be useful to him to further his own interests and image.

Donald Trump cannot relate to those who serve in the Armed Forces or understand what would motivate them to choose the harder road of a life of service, of discomfort, and the arduous experience to defend this Nation.

While I know that every American, especially those in uniform, listens to the words of the President, it is my fervent hope that our uniformed personnel do not take the President's words on this issue to heart. As a person who has had the privilege to have led paratroopers, I can tell you there is no greater honor to be among those who serve and protect our Nation, who sacrifice every day so that Americans can live in freedom and peace.

As President Theodore Roosevelt famously said:

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best, if he wins, knows the thrills of high achievement, and, if he fails, at least fails daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat.

I guess President Trump would say "the losers."

Our men and women in uniform, who fight, die, and are wounded for our Nation and its ideals, are in the arena, not President Trump. As all other public servants who are trying to make our country a better place, they—particularly those in uniform—deserve all the credit. A President who is proud that he has always stood on the side-

lines and denigrates them does not deserve much credit.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to honor our veterans and servicemembers.

I thank Senator REED for his beautiful remarks and his service, as well as Senator CARPER. I also thank Senator DUCKWORTH, who is leading our efforts today, as she has led for so long.

As I listened to my colleagues, I know that many of them were couching their remarks in the history of people. I literally could imagine John McCain right now walking up and down that aisle, crossing the aisle, coming over, working with people, slapping people on the back. That is how much he loved this place and how much he loved our country.

I remember the silent, courageous fortitude of Danny Inouye, and I remember so many of those whom I crossed paths with, like Senator Dole.

I think the reason we talk about that history is because we know that this argument and this cause is based in history. Our democracy is based in history. The idea that people serve is based in history. They don't serve for themselves. They serve, in the words of Senator McCain, for a cause larger than themselves. That is why I picture those who served before us, just like our soldiers do when they sign up to serve.

The brave men and women who have served in our Armed Forces represent the best among us. Whether you served decades ago or you still wear a uniform today, we owe you a debt of gratitude for your service and sacrifice on behalf of our great Nation.

All servicemembers and veterans have something in common. Wherever they are politically, they have something in common. Regardless of when and where they served, they have something in common—a deep love of our country and a very real understanding of what it means to serve and sacrifice. They deserve a Commander-in-Chief who loves our country in the same way and for the same reasons and has that same deep understanding of why those soldiers signed up to serve.

Unfortunately, as my colleagues have pointed out, the person currently entrusted to be the Commander in Chief of our brave service men and women, according to many, many recent reports, including things he has actually said on TV, has made repeated comments denigrating their service, questioning their judgment, and belittling those who were prisoners of war or who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country.

Yes, I will never forget what he said about Senator McCain when he died, as Senator McCain's friend, JACK REED, just recalled. I, too, stood in front of that cell in Vietnam with John McCain, where he had been held. When you stand there and you think about

the fact that he made the decision to allow others to be released before him—that is courage.

What does it say to our servicemembers when a Commander in Chief cancels a visit to an American cemetery in France because, according to one report, he feared his hair would be ruined by the rain? What does it say, as reported in *The Atlantic*, when he questions the value of paying his respects to fallen Americans by claiming servicemembers killed in the service of this country are “losers” and “suckers”? What does it say when he expressed his contempt for not just John McCain, who spent more than 5 years as a prisoner of war, but also accuses former President George H. W. Bush of being a “loser” for being shot down by the Japanese as a Navy pilot in World War II? Finally, what does it say to our troops when the President refuses to publicly condemn, warn, or even criticize Vladimir Putin following news reports that Russia offered bounties for the killing of members of our Armed Forces and our coalition partners?

Our servicemembers are always there for us, and we must be there for them. Even when our Nation is divided, we must still collectively reject any attempt to diminish their service.

We learned that in a big way after Vietnam. I remember standing at one of our Serving Our Troops events in Minnesota a few years ago. That is when our restaurants and the community come together—sometimes thousands of people—to serve the families of the troops who are serving overseas a steak dinner, all donated, and at the same time, the troops are somehow getting the same dinner. It is an extraordinary event. Many of us volunteer to work on the lines. One day when I was there, there was a Vietnam vet, and he was serving up mashed potatoes. He had a Vietnam hat on, and I said: Thank you for your service.

He said: When I came home, I was greeted with tomatoes. I don't want this to ever happen to another soldier again. That is why I come here every year to volunteer.

We learned back then that you can have major disagreements about war and war policy, but you do not take it out on the warriors on the frontline.

Sadly, right now, we have a Commander in Chief who takes out everything on everyone, including personal vendettas against people like Senator McCain. Rather than being silent as, sadly, too many have been in reaction to his comments, I think we must stand up. I think the way that we honor their service and sacrifice is being very clear that we condemn the remarks that the President has made.

I will end with this. The last time I saw Senator McCain I was at the ranch. He was in his last months of life. My husband and I went there and sat with Cindy and with John. At the very end, he was getting tired, and he wasn't talking much anymore. He was having trouble talking anyway. He

pointed at one of his books. I picked it up, and that is when he pointed, without saying the words, to that sentence: “There is nothing more liberating in life than fighting for a cause larger than yourself.” That is what unites our troops when they sign up to serve. That is what should unite us in this Chamber right now.

I urge my colleagues to join in this effort so that our men and women in uniform, across the United States and around the world, know that we will not remain silent.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking the Senator from Minnesota for her remarks just now.

I rise with her and to join Senator DUCKWORTH and our colleagues in responding to the shameful comments that President Trump reportedly made about our servicemembers.

I want to begin by thanking Senator DUCKWORTH for leading us in this effort and for her service to our country, as I thank all of the Members of the U.S. Senate and all of the staff of the U.S. Senate who have served their country and all of their families.

One of our Nation's greatest strengths is the countless Americans who, throughout our history, have been willing to sacrifice everything to keep us safe and preserve our freedom.

In New Hampshire, we are proud to be home to a high percentage of servicemembers, veterans, and their families. In my experience, people in my State—and all across the country—revere the bravery and sacrifices of those who serve and those who have served.

We may disagree about policy matters, including those that impact when and where servicemembers are deployed, but the respect that we have for servicemembers, veterans, and their families must be undisputed.

It is the President's duty to honor the sacrifices of our troops, to care for them, to support them and their fallen comrades. The role of the President of the United States of America is not just limited to being the Commander in Chief. Presidents should also lead by example and represent the values of the American people.

Unfortunately, President Trump has, yet again, expressed his disdain and lack of understanding of why people sacrifice for our freedom and democracy. This is a failure of leadership, and it is a failure of basic citizenship that is out of step with most Americans.

Last year, I joined a bipartisan group of Senators to travel to burial grounds in both France and Belgium, as we paid our respects to our World War II fallen servicemembers. It was the honor of a lifetime. It was also deeply personal, as my dad served in the Battle of the Bulge.

Standing on those hallowed grounds was a powerful reminder of the loss of

war, of those heroes who gave everything to fight against fascism and to protect freedom.

We owe these heroes our profound gratitude and our deepest respect. Yet, when speaking of servicemembers who were killed or captured, the President referred to these heroes as “suckers” and “losers.” For such words to come from the President of the United States is an affront to all that we stand for, and it is beneath the office that he holds. Unfortunately, these comments were not surprising given the President's long line of denigrating comments against those who have served, including the late Senator John McCain, Gold Star families, and other American heroes.

The resolution that we are introducing today recognizes the unmeasurable debt that we owe to those who have valiantly served our country, as well as their families. This resolution condemns the repeated disrespect that this President has bestowed upon them. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle have seen the hurtful comments President Trump has made about members of our military. Every single one of us should condemn them.

I will close with this: My father didn't talk about his service in World War II very often, but he did talk about his unit, a group of men who came from as diverse backgrounds as our country is large. They had their disagreements. They didn't agree on politics. But they came together every day to win that war.

Of course, they knew that their lives depended on their unity, their cohesion, but they knew something else too, and this is what my dad always reminded us of. Sometimes, at the breakfast table, he would look up at us and say: “What are you doing for freedom today?” It was a question he had the right to ask because he was remembering his unit of men from all over the country, from all different life experiences, who knew that freedom, their country—our country—the United States of America, is worth fighting for.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today, the day before we will be voting on a piece of legislation to deal with relief for people, for a country, dealing with coronavirus. I come to the floor today as Americans are looking to us, the U.S. Senate, to provide relief in this ongoing battle against this disease.

Republicans, as you well know, are offering a path forward. That is what the American people want. They want a path forward. So tomorrow, the Senate Republicans will move a targeted bill, a bill to help people get back to work, to help kids get back to school, and to deal with and put the disease in the rearview mirror.