

military. We are at 250 nominations blocked so far. By the end of this year, it will be 650.

These are our military's top leaders. The notion that all of these positions should remain vacant because one Senator objects to the Defense Department's travel policy regarding servicemembers who get an abortion is a perfect example of letting culture war politics impact our military.

This year, we have been treated to countless speeches about whether politics has infected our military and whether that has impacted its readiness. Now, the single clearest example of culture war politics colliding with our military is this blockade of our top military leaders, a blockade built by one man in defense not of our Nation but of his politics on the issue of abortion.

The clearest price yet was paid this week as the leader of the Marine Corps retired and then Congress tried to replace him with his appointed successor, General Eric Smith, and the Senator from Alabama blocked that replacement. The Marine Corps is now without a confirmed leader for the first time since 1910.

Up next, we have several members of the Joint Chiefs with scheduled retirements, including the Chair of the Joint Chiefs. Half of those positions will be vacant by the end of this year if the Senator from Alabama decides to maintain his blockade.

Asked about this, the Senator from Alabama expresses indifference. He says everything will be fine. He is wrong. We have leaders in place for a reason. When they are not there and crisis strikes, we get chaos.

We are the world's most powerful Nation, and when one Senator chooses to sideline hundreds of nominations for military leaders, he chooses to reduce our power knowingly, willfully, and in the face of our enemies who are delighted by the self-inflicted wound.

When in doubt, act in a way that frustrates your enemy. This does the opposite.

I respect everyone's sincere beliefs on matters of culture and policy. That does not extend to respecting any and all tactics in pursuit of those goals. Those who disagree with the Defense Department, as the Senator does, do their cause a disservice by adopting extreme tactics that carry with them such collateral damage.

The Senator from Alabama is in his first term in Congress, as I am. He is in the minority party in his Chamber, as I am. I have lost several battles here. I will lose several more. But when you can't get something done that you very much care about, how you conduct yourself in that moment matters. Even people who don't follow politics every day can tell the difference between standing on principle and a very powerful man throwing a temper tantrum.

I think he sees that there is no endgame where this tactic works. He is now all the way out on a limb. That

limb is starting to crack. I don't think he knows quite yet what to do.

I have been in the military a long time. One of the things you learn is that hopeless strategies produce disastrous results. The strong move for him is to change course, not to recommit to a path that will lead to nothing except chaos and danger for our country, as seven former Secretaries of Defense, from both administrations, are strongly urging him to do.

MORE EVIDENCE OF WRONGDOING BY THE PRESIDENT AND HIS FAMILY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Madam Speaker, it feels like every week, the House Oversight Committee uncovers more evidence of wrongdoing by the President and his family.

I have seen thousands of pages of suspicious activity reports at the Treasury, the FD-1023 form from the FBI, and piles of evidence that suggest bribery and influence peddling.

All of this is hidden from the American people by a brazenly corrupt two-tiered justice system and a complete media blackout on the subject.

Bribery and foreign influence peddling strike at the heart of our democratic principles. It corrodes the very foundations of our Nation and fosters an environment where personal gain takes precedence over our duty to the American people. It is a responsibility of each and every one of us to demand answers and to hold the President accountable.

It is outrageous that just last month, the DOJ announced a sweetheart plea deal for Hunter Biden that would absolve him of any future charges with the foreign bribery and influence peddling schemes that we have just started to unravel in the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

On the very same day this plea deal was announced, Biden's DOJ went after President Trump. It is a joke. This is something you would expect to see in a tinpot, third-world dictatorship. What is even worse is the complete media blackout on any of the evidence that we have uncovered here.

We used to hail the free press in America as the fourth estate. Journalists used to pride themselves on uncovering corruption.

The American people have a right to know about potential wrongdoing by their elected leaders and their associates and their families. They deserve a media that fearlessly investigates and reports on matters that impact the foundations of our democracy.

These allegations that are not taken seriously by the DOJ or the media have a very real impact on the work we do here in this Chamber every single day.

This week, we are considering the NDAA. House Republicans have in-

cluded strong language to combat the threat of the Chinese Communist Party. Meanwhile, our President and his family have alleged business ties to that same Chinese Communist Party. How can we expect a President to appropriately represent the interests of the United States if there is a vested interest in seeing our adversaries succeed for their own personal gain?

If not for the work of the House Oversight Committee, the American people would be left in the dark, and this is unacceptable. We need every American citizen to speak up and say that it is "We, the people" that run this government; not Joe Biden, not the bureaucrats, and certainly not the Department of Justice, or those in the corrupt legacy media who have put a complete media blackout on this corruption story. We are not going to let this stand.

IN SUPPORT OF BIPARTISAN BURN PIT AMENDMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RUIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of three amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act which include language from three of my bills, the Burn Pits Registry Enhancement Act, the Reducing Exposure to Burn Pits Act, and the Toxic Exposure Education for Servicemembers Act.

All three of these amendments are bipartisan here in the House as well as in the Senate. I thank my partners and friends here in the House, Republican Congressmen WENSTRUP and BILIRAKIS.

Fighting to ensure our veterans get the care and benefits they have earned and deserve has always been, still is, and will always be a priority of mine.

Additionally, all three of these amendments are endorsed by the major veterans service organizations, including Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, and the Wounded Warrior Project. All three amendments will help care for servicemembers exposed to toxic burn pits.

Amendment 460 is my Burn Pits Registry Enhancement Act. It would allow veterans in the burn pit registry to designate someone to update the registry with their cause of death. This data is crucial to further identify the vast array of illnesses that are causing burn pit-exposed servicemembers and veterans to die, and it will help doctors recognize early symptoms of life-threatening conditions and save lives.

The next amendment, 464, is my Reducing Exposure to Burn Pits Act. It would require the Department of Defense to submit a report to Congress on what the cost would be to get rid of the use of burn pits. This amendment will get us one step closer to ending the use of dangerous and toxic burn pits to prevent illness.

Finally, amendment 503 is my Toxic Exposure Education for Servicemembers Act. It would require the Department of Defense to establish a new risk assessment for toxic exposure for servicemembers who are assigned to work near toxic burn pits. This amendment would also require the Department of Defense to establish an outreach program to inform servicemembers about the harms associated with working near toxic exposures.

These three amendments all aim to save lives and help prevent exposure to toxic burn pits. They do this by requesting the collection of data in the hopes of catching associated illnesses and conditions faster, educating our servicemembers on the harms associated with them, and forging a path forward to end their use.

I have fought for years to bring attention to this issue and its devastating toll on our Nation's servicemembers and their families. Time and time again, I have come before this body to tell the stories of those whose lives were devastated and forever changed by burn pits.

I have told the story of Jennifer Kepner, an Air Force veteran from Cathedral City in my district. Jennifer was an otherwise healthy mother of two who lost her courageous battle with pancreatic cancer likely caused by her exposure to burn pits during her military service.

I have told the story of Alejandro Camacho, from Palm Desert, who developed testicular cancer from the toxic fumes, particulate matter, and carcinogens he breathed in every day during his service in Iraq.

Their stories shed light on the obstacles that veterans across the country have faced and continue to face to get the care and benefits they earned and deserve.

It is for Jennifer, Alejandro, and the millions of other veterans suffering from their burn pit exposures that I founded the bipartisan, bicameral Congressional Burn Pits Caucus.

It is our duty to take care of our veterans who sustained injuries and illnesses while they were fighting for our country.

I am encouraged by the steps we have taken to address how we take care of our servicemembers and veterans suffering from toxic exposures.

The historic passage of the Honoring our PACT Act, led by Ranking Member TAKANO, will provide generational change, giving care and support to veterans and their families suffering from illness due to their toxic exposure.

The foundation of the bill was built upon my bill, the Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn Pits and Other Toxins Act, which removes the burden from veterans to prove that 23 illnesses or conditions, including various cancers that they are suffering from, are due to their service near burn pits.

However, there is more to do to prevent toxic exposures from happening,

and I will not stop fighting until our servicemembers are safe.

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STOP FUNDING IRAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, as the country deals with distractions, the truth of which is very difficult to get out of the White House or other sources, such as the missing Titanic submarine—when did it actually implode? We couldn't get the truth on that.

Where is the packet of cocaine that came in the White House? Who is responsible for that? Why can't they track that with their massive security systems?

Also, it is silly that males compete in women's sports and are being allowed in women's places like their locker rooms. These are important issues in and of themselves, but they distract from some really important issues that don't get a lot of press or coverage these days.

Madam Speaker, look at the situation with Iran and its development of nuclear weapons. Iran is a very unstable country and one that is a very well-known sponsor of terror around the world in many areas. Let's hearken back a little ways here.

Under the Obama administration, everybody remembers that first pallet of cash that was flown into Iran of about \$400 million, basically of other currencies because there were still sanctions at the time that we couldn't send U.S. dollars in there. It was mainly Swiss francs and euros that were sent in for a total of about \$1.7 billion to help sponsor terror that Iran is so good at.

How are we supposed to ask our partners around the world to continue sanctions against Iran—whatever is left in place after the JCPOA was put in in 2015—to help stop the major sponsor of terror in the world? How are we supposed to continue that?

Indeed, the Biden administration has a plan or an idea of sending \$17 billion more over there to help prop up their treasury. What in the world are we doing that for?

With all the things we need to spend money on in our own country here, why would we want to help prop up the treasury of the major state sponsor of terror that Iran is?

JCPOA, agreed to under the Obama administration, has been a complete failure in trying to limit the amount of uranium that they would be refining through their centrifuges. Our understanding is that they have 23 times the stockpiles of these uranium materials provided for in the 2015 JCPOA. We are really adhering to that agreement and enforcing that agreement it sounds like. Yet, we are talking about this ad-

ministration sending \$17 billion more to help prop up their economy and help them do more terror activity.

At the point that Iran reaches 90 percent enrichment on its uranium, Israel is going to have some very important decisions to make because Israel is already surrounded by a lot of people that don't like them in the Middle East, including Iran.

If they get the weapons they need and the ability to deliver them, Israel is going to have some very, very tough decisions to make on preserving themselves. Israel is not getting much of a good signal coming from the current administration in the White House that the United States is going to be there to back them up like they need to be. What will that force them to do?

Who knows? It will probably force them to do some very extreme things. I don't blame them. The International Atomic Energy Agency can verify that they have reached already 83.7 percent of enrichment levels of a certain amount of stockpile that Iran has. They are not far from having nuclear-weapon capable materials. When they reach that 90 percent point, that is generally accepted as nuclear bomb ready.

Is Iran a stable enough country that we can trust them with nuclear bombs?

That was what supposedly the whole JCPOA was about—to keep them from getting nuclear weapons. This isn't the Iran of old where the United States at least used to have a relationship with them, and they had a lot more of a westernized culture with free movement, free activities for women or for many Iranians. This was pre-1979 when the Ayatollah was taking over there. It is still a very unstable country and causes much instability in the world.

The idea of them gaining nuclear weapons very soon, when they reach that 90 percent mark, puts us all in a pretty perilous position. We are across an entire ocean from the situation. We are across the Atlantic and such. Our great ally, Israel, as well as part of Europe, what are they going to be facing with a nuclear Iran?

We better get serious on not sending them \$17 billion or more, but putting the sanctions back in place that will bring Iran to its knees and stop this nuclear proliferation and their ability to sponsor terror.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I will address one of the very important Supreme Court decisions which came down in the last couple weeks and some of the comments that have been made critical of that decision. I am talking about the one that dealt with a policy now known in the United States as affirmative action.

What that policy does is it gives, as a practical matter, preferences both on