

a part of it, but other countries from around the world that wanted to be there and testify—the Prime Minister of Japan, the President of South Korea, the Prime Minister of Australia. None of those countries are members of that alliance, but they wanted to be physically present to make it clear that they stood in support of the alliance and its goals and its values. I salute President Biden for his leadership in bringing us to that moment.

Unfortunately, some lawmakers on the other side of the Capitol seem ready to capitulate to Putin and other autocrats. Last week, the MAGA majority in the House of Representatives voted to inject politics into this Defense appropriations process. Thankfully, their amendment to block U.S. support for Ukraine amid Putin's war of choice failed, even though 89 House Republicans voted for it.

Think of that. Putin is killing innocent people in Ukraine every day. They are begging us to stand with them, to defend their own country, to defend democracy, and to give them a future that is aligned with NATO and the West, and these 89 Republicans said: Cut them off. Don't give them another nickel. That is the end of it.

What were they thinking? Where are their values?

Ultimately, the House passed a bill that would abandon our servicemembers in other ways, along with our allies, and jeopardize our national security in a new age of threats. The bill passed by the House of Representatives would eliminate access to reproductive healthcare for men and women in the military, politicize schoolbooks, and undermine progress addressing the climate crisis and recordbreaking heat.

If you paid any attention at all to weather forecasts across the Nation over the last 2 weeks, how can you question that we are in a real climate crisis? The city of Phoenix, AZ, last week had 3 days with temperatures in excess of 115 degrees. The temperature of the globe measured in scientific terms is the highest ever recorded. Extreme weather events in New England and other places are fair warning to us that if we don't take this seriously, the next generation, our children and grandchildren, will face a world much more difficult to live in.

So MAGA Republicans in the House nevertheless want to rip away not only the addressing of the climate crisis but also the basic freedoms of every American, particularly those who defend our freedom every day. They have hijacked a bipartisan process to pursue an extremist agenda.

The best explanation I can give for this irresponsible conduct is "Don't worry, the Senate will clean it up." Well, we will clean up their mess. We have to. We need to do it on a bipartisan basis. But the MAGA Republicans cannot prevail when we talk about our Nation's defense.

Here in the Senate, one Republican, for instance, is blocking hundreds of

military promotions to advance that same extremist agenda. Think about that. The men and women in service in our military, who have risked their lives and seen their comrades and friends fall beside them, who have been given combat awards for their bravery, are being denied promotions because of one Senator, one Republican Senator from Alabama, who has decided to stop the promotions for over 200 of these deserving individuals. Is that our gratitude to the military for their service to our country and their bravery?

I think it is awful that we are in this situation—indefensible. I hope more and more Republican Senators will speak out against their colleague and what he is doing to our military. It endangers our national security, and it shows great disrespect to men and women who deserve our highest level of respect.

As my colleague from Illinois, Senator DUCKWORTH—and she being a national hero herself for her service to our Nation—has pointed out, this partisan charade by one Senator from Alabama has already had a direct impact on our military readiness. For the first time, for example, in over 100 years, the U.S. Marine Corps is without a Senate-confirmed Commandant. Everyone should take note of how extreme that situation is. Very soon, the Army, Navy, and Joint Chiefs will be in a similar position if the Senator from Alabama does not lift his hold.

So to my Republican colleagues who come to the floor and question President Biden and the Democratic Party's commitment to national security, I say: Take a look in the political mirror.

The National Defense Authorization Act we have before us is a serious proposal, which, of course, means there are compromises included. And while it will make important progress, this bill is far from perfect. For instance, this bill once again, in my estimation, extends unnecessary restrictions on transferring detainees from Guantanamo. This will make it even harder to close this shameful facility once and for all. The amount of money we ask taxpayers to spend on Guantanamo is indefensible—millions and millions of dollars for each person who is being held there after we have agreement that more than half of them should be released. It is time to close Guantanamo, and this Senator would like to see that done as part of this bill.

This bill also includes questionable provisions based on false concerns regarding diversity and inclusion in our Armed Forces—provisions that ultimately impair, not improve, military readiness.

I would like to see several of my amendments be considered, including those that would hold accountable perpetrators of heinous atrocities in Ukraine and elsewhere by criminalizing crimes against humanity; strengthening public transparency on the impact of lethal strikes; push the

Pentagon toward technologies of the future, such as EVs; address the troubling human rights record of countries such as Egypt which claim to be our allies and friends in one breath and yet jail peaceful activists in the next—and more. I am heartened that negotiations on a second managers' package continue, and I look forward to seeing these issues considered.

Lastly, I hope any increase in defense spending is matched by a similar increase in nondefense discretionary spending to keep parity between the two accounts. The reality is this: While it is important to provide robust spending for national security, it is equally important to invest in America—schools, roads, hospitals, and beyond. Simply put, our strength at home projects strength abroad.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on these issues before we leave for the August recess.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Carolina.

TRIBUTE TO DR. NIDO QUBEIN

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a distinguished North Carolinian and a dear friend, High Point University President Dr. Nido Qubein.

Dr. Qubein immigrated to the United States from the Middle East when he was 17 years old. He came to our country to pursue his education and attend college. Needless to say, his academic achievements were impressive, and they were an early indication of the success he would build in North Carolina.

He received his associate's degree in business from Mount Olive College, a bachelor's degree in human relations from High Point University, and a master's in business education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

My family and I have had the pleasure of knowing Dr. Qubein and his family and his wife Mariana for decades. We have been inspired by their dedication to education and their service to others.

During his career in business, philanthropy, and education, Dr. Qubein has been widely recognized for his work. He received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, the Horatio Alger Association for Distinguished Americans designation, the Daughters of the American Revolution Americanism Award, and has been inducted into the National Speakers Hall of Fame.

But of all of his accomplishments, what he has been able to achieve for his hometown of High Point, NC, is perhaps his most indelible legacy. In 2005, High Point University trustees asked him to become its seventh President. Dr. Qubein decided to scale back his business career and to accept their offer to lead his alma mater. That decision launched a huge golden age.

What has happened under Dr. Qubein's tenure is nothing short of a complete transformation of High Point

University. Enrollment at the school has more than quadrupled—now over 6,000. Nearly every year, HPU has topped itself, increasing the number of students in each year's class. In 2005, HPU had three specialized academic schools. Today, there are 13, including dental, law, and engineering. In 2005, the university had 108 full-time faculty. Today, they have 500. In 2005, the university's endowment was just over \$45 million. Today, it has quadrupled to \$180 million. The size of the campus has skyrocketed by over 400 percent to 520 acres. Under Dr. Qubein's leadership, the university established a full-time, pro bono physical therapy clinic, as well as new schools for business, communications, law, natural sciences, health sciences, nursing, a school of pharmacy, a conservatory, and so much more.

All of this growth has led to this amazing fact: The percentage of graduates who either begin a career or enroll in graduate school within 180 days of earning their degree is 99 percent. That outcome is 14 percent higher than the national average.

The success is all the more exceptional because High Point University is an institution led by the values of its president. HPU is a God, family, and country institution. They welcome students of all backgrounds, but the values of faith in God and patriotism are at the core of what defines High Point University. They lead, and they lead with purpose.

Simply put, Dr. Qubein has transformed High Point University from a small, little-known southern college into a nationally known and respected institution that now draws students from all 50 States and more than 50 countries around the world.

So on behalf of the citizens of North Carolina, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Nido Qubein for everything he has done for the city of High Point and the university that bears its name and for setting the standard for what it means to be an extraordinary American citizen.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, AI is really grabbing some headlines, and over the past few months, Tennesseans have been watching the Senate as we go about having hearings and deciding how to handle this emerging technology. This technology has broken boundaries in ways that most people never imagined would be possible, and they see great potential in it.

Healthcare companies in Tennessee are already using AI to enhance the quality of care that doctors can offer their patients. If you have been in for a doctor's checkup in the past few years, you have probably noticed that your doctors and nurses are using more digital tools to help inform their diagnoses and choose which drugs they are going to prescribe. Most of those tools

are powered by AI, as are many of the apps and gadgets that healthcare providers recommend to their patients to monitor their health and keep their treatments on track. We have seen the use of these remote monitoring tools just explode, especially in rural areas during the pandemic.

We are also seeing AI make a substantial impact on manufacturing. The largest auto manufacturers in Tennessee are already using this technology to make our cars safer and more efficient. Many of them are experimenting with automated driving systems. They are also using it to make operating a vehicle a little more practical. One that I found amusing is that Ford used AI to develop a program that would automatically hook a trailer to a hitch. Now, I know some of our Members who have farms and ranches probably think you should have that skill, but I think, for many of us, that would be a practical application.

So whether we are talking about making things safer, finding which pharmaceuticals are going to better treat diseases, or making things more convenient, AI has the potential to completely transform entire industries. Indeed, innovators are working on those components as we speak.

It also comes with significant drawbacks, and nowhere are those problems more pronounced than in Tennessee's music industry. All things considered, technology has been great for the business side of the music industry. The increased use of social media by up-and-coming musicians has allowed record labels to sign artists who have millions of fans. Platforms like Spotify automatically generate playlists that promote new music, and all of that music is available instantly via an app on your cell phone. But the thousands of musicians, songwriters, and artists who call Tennessee home are really quite worried about the lack of control they have over how AI platforms exploit their creations and their intellectual property.

This month, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing to examine the downsides of making technology an essential element of the creative process. The most obvious problem that we have uncovered in our discussions with artists and songwriters comes down to a basic question of copyright infringement.

We know that to create artistic works, AI systems must train on data scraped from existing artistic works. If you look at how this technology has advanced, it becomes clear that generative AI is often trained on popular music that was used without the copyright holder's permission. One AI model that we reviewed was trained on a staggering 280,000 hours of music. There is not a reasonable person who would ever suggest that the writers and artists were compensated fairly for that 280,000 hours of use of their products that was used to train AI to mimic and clone their voices and their words.

Now, the very existence of this tech and what it produces are enough to draw challenges to spurious claims that data scraping counts as what is called fair use, but we have even more extreme examples of what AI can do after training on existing popular music, or music that has been scraped, in order to train the platform.

Most recently, an anonymous content creator uploaded an AI-generated song called "Heart on My Sleeve." It was a perfect replication of the vocals of Drake and The Weeknd. It was so perfect that listeners on multiple platforms were duped into thinking it was real. The song gained over 9 million views on social media and hundreds of thousands of plays on Spotify and YouTube before the platforms took it down. But because the internet is forever, so is this fake song, and there is nothing those artists can do about it.

Not only does this raise questions about what "fair use" means in the age of AI, but it also raises serious concerns about our current State-by-State approach to protecting an individual right of publicity. Common sense tells us that this isn't right, even if the law is still catching up with the pace of technology. We have discussed having a Federal—a Federal—individual right of privacy law.

AI has also affected how fans interact with real music. At least on streaming platforms, playlists have outpaced platforms as the preferred listening format. Companies have employed AI-driven playlists to expose listeners to new artists, with decidedly mixed results.

Martina McBride, who knows a few things about country music, has gone public about her experience in trying to build a playlist using Spotify's "recommender" system. In a playlist she prompted with the words "country music," she had to refresh her recommendations 13 times before it delivered a song by a female artist. Country music is an expansive genre. Yet, somehow, that algorithm spit out 120 songs by men before managing to include a song by a woman.

We could chalk up this apparent bias to a glitch in evolving tech were it not for the fact that fans rely almost exclusively on technology to listen to and discover new music. People expect more innovation, not less, because that is exactly what Big Tech is selling them. When they spin one of those customized playlists, they expect to hear a fair sampling of whatever it is they asked for, but that is clearly not what these platforms are delivering. This matters to established artists like Martina, but it matters even more to up-and-coming artists who are forced to rely on these algorithms to gain exposure to the music-listening public.

Over the past few years, Congress has learned a very important lesson about the perils of allowing technology to outpace the law.

Over the course of several hearings, we produced evidence of the unraveling