

owners at that panel, like Sarah Hammond, who owns Atlas Electrical Air Conditioning, Refrigeration & Plumbing Services. Sarah is known as a pillar of her community, serving as chair of the Rio Grande Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and helping to oversee the management of Hummingbird Trailer Park. On top of this, she is involved with an organization dedicated to helping develop and empower other women business owners.

Then there was Jessica Delgado, who, having worked in the restaurant industry since age 16, now owns multiple restaurants, and she serves on the board of the Texas Restaurant Association and is a former chairwoman of the Texas Restaurant Foundation.

Another impressive woman small business owner was Hortencia Camargo, the owner of C4 Transport and Hacienda La Hortencia and a licensed Realtor in McAllen, TX, and she is also the founder of GRASP, which advocates for safe gun storage practices around children.

I also had the chance on this same panel to visit with representatives of the agricultural sector, including Dante Galeazzi—I am going to butcher Dante's name—Galeazzi, who is president and CEO of Texas International Produce Association, who emphasized to me how beneficial the Trump tax cuts were for Texas farmers and ranchers.

The message I heard from all of these impressive Texas entrepreneurs, job creators, and pillars of the community was simple: The Trump tax cuts helped their businesses grow and flourish, providing benefits not only to themselves and their families but to their employees and their broader communities.

Stories I heard from my fellow Texans like Andy, Luis, Sarah, Hortencia, Jessica, and others show how patently false the accusation is of our Democratic colleagues who somehow claim that this is just to benefit rich people. The fact of the matter is, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is not about helping the wealthy few at the expense of ordinary Americans, contrary to the Democratic talking points.

You know, I have been here working in Washington—or what I like to call the forward operating base in hostile territory—for some time now, and the truth is, you get these prevailing narratives that get repeated over and over and over again and written about by the press that simply have no basis in fact or reality.

The truth is, if we fail to extend the expiring provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, 62 percent of American taxpayers will see their taxes go up. Obviously—on top of a 40-year high inflation, which has raised input costs across the board by about 20 percent or more as a result of the policies of the previous administration, that obviously would have a tremendously negative impact on our economy and the standard of living, like the folks I mentioned back home.

This is really about lifting up hard-working men and women across the country. The tax cuts are about helping every hard-working American achieve their dreams. If President Trump's tax cuts are not extended, as I say, virtually everybody or at least a significant supermajority of American working families will see a tax increase. Texans specifically will see taxes increase about \$3,000 on average. I am sure every single one of my constituents can think about somewhere better to spend that \$3,000 than to write a check to the IRS. Small business owners like many of the folks that I met with these last 2 weeks would see tax hikes of nearly 50 percent, and working families could see their child tax credit cut in half, along with the standard deduction, which was dramatically increased in 2017.

Despite these hard facts, our Democratic colleagues continue to peddle the myth that President Trump's tax cuts are just for rich folks. It couldn't be more clear that these claims are nothing more than just that—myths.

So I urge my fellow Republican colleagues to never mind the naysayers across the aisle. The American people, on November 5, gave us a job to do. We took the important first step by passing the budget resolution just before the Senate adjourned, and now that we are back in Washington, it is time that we finish the job.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD J. DURBIN

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, everyone enters public service hoping that they can make a difference, but few have the ability or the fortune to do as much good as Senator DICK DURBIN has over his long and storied career.

Since stepping into these Halls of Congress more than 40 years ago, Senator DURBIN has fought passionately for his constituents back home in his beloved Illinois and Americans all across the country. And while so many of us have already benefited from his extraordinary work, both knowingly and unknowingly, his legacy will continue to improve the lives of Americans for many years to come.

To know Senator DURBIN is to understand he is as decent and as principled as leaders come. He is dogged in his fight for fairness and justice but humble in sharing the credit for all of his successes. He is willing to work with everyone but will never compromise his values for anyone.

Over the years, he has picked some very difficult but worthy fights. And he

has won time after time, paving the way for cleaner air on airplane flights, leading the fight against torture, lifting up the voices that are too often left behind in Washington.

A trial attorney by training, Senator DURBIN can never look away from injustice, no matter how pervasive or how entrenched. No challenge was too daunting. He felt an obligation to try to fix it. Outraged by the conduct of the war on drugs that had imprisoned generations of Black and Brown men without a meaningful path to rehabilitation, he worked for years to pass the Fair Sentencing Act and the First Step Act. Those laws have since helped to reduce overcrowding in prisons, lower criminal recidivism, and revitalize communities across the country.

Shocked by the plight of Dreamers who spent their lives calling America home but without the papers to prove it, Senator DURBIN has been on the frontlines of the push to put them on a path to citizenship. It is a fight that still continues and one that I know Senator DURBIN will keep at for as long as it takes.

Anyone who has served in this body long enough knows that there are those votes that test your resolve and weigh heavily on your conscience. And for so long, Senator DURBIN has been a uniquely consistent voice of moral clarity and conscience, not just when it is easy or when it is obvious but especially when it is hard and even when it is lonely.

In 2002, he was among a small group of Senators who voted against the invasion of Iraq, cautioning against the dangers of acting hastily on fear rather than fact. Years later, in the throes of the war on terror, Senator DURBIN became an outspoken critic of the U.S. Government's use of torture in foreign prisons. In both instances, he was criticized and condemned at the time. In both instances, history has rendered his judgment as the right and patriotic one.

It has been one of the true privileges of my career to serve as his chief deputy whip and to watch him work his magic during floor debates and in the Judiciary Committee. He is a gentleman of the Senate through and through. I will never forget the time he took to talk about my dad's legacy on this very floor. I know that he has shown that kind of thoughtfulness and care to so many, even when facing his own loss.

I am lucky to call him a mentor and friend, someone who I have learned as much from and rely on for counsel and perspective over many years.

The good news for the country, for me, and for all of us colleagues is Senator DURBIN's work here in the Senate is far from over. We are lucky to be able to count on his leadership and example, as always, in the 2 years ahead. But for now, I want to thank Senator DURBIN, his family—especially his wife Loretta—and his excellent staff for their decades of extraordinary service

to the State and to the Nation. We are all better for him.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

UKRAINE

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I come to the floor today to add my voice to the many who are commending President Trump as he works toward peace in Ukraine.

The President recently gave the aggressor, Russian dictator Vladimir Putin, every chance to put down his guns and end the killing. He has done that over and over, but our President is now showing that he will not wait on Mr. Putin forever. Every time Ukraine and the United States have extended the hand of peace, President Putin has responded with aggression. With one hand, Vladimir Putin always makes a show of participating in peace talks. With the other, he has repeatedly bombed civilians—a clear war crime, a war crime—including just on Sunday of last week, Palm Sunday, when he bombed worshipers and children who were playing on a public playground.

On Saturday, the day before yesterday, the President took Mr. Putin to task for this brutality, and I commend the President for doing that.

The President said:

There was no reason for Putin to be shooting missiles into civilian areas, cities and towns, over the last few days. It makes me think that maybe he doesn't want to stop the war—he's just tapping me along—and has to be dealt with differently.

Thank you, Mr. President, for saying that.

One of the President's staunchest supporters in this body echoed that statement just yesterday.

Senator KENNEDY of Louisiana said:

[P]utin thinks that America has taken the bullet train to chump town.

Chump town.

The President is right, and Senator KENNEDY of Louisiana is right. There is one man to blame for this war. If Vladimir Putin puts down his guns, there will be no more war. If Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Ukraine put down their guns, there will be no more Ukraine. That is the simple truth, and I appreciate the President expressing that forcefully.

Then, today, GEN Jack Keane, a very respected observer and officer and official in the Institute for the Study of War, expressed essentially the same sentiments as Donald Trump expressed the day before yesterday and as Senator KENNEDY expressed yesterday. On

FOX News this morning, General Keane gave the President due credit for pursuing peace in Ukraine. The general noted that President Trump, understandably, seems to be running out of patience with Putin's intransigence.

I know that many Members of this Chamber are running out of patience too.

General Keane then asked a simple question: Which side has shown that it wants a peace deal? Both sides claim they want peace, but what is the evidence?

And here is the truth: The truth is that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has shown that he is interested in peace. He has negotiated at length with the administration. Ukraine and its President agreed to a 30-day cease-fire. Vladimir Putin rejected the idea. Instead, Putin initiated an agreement to halt attacks on energy infrastructure, and then he immediately violated that agreement. Mr. Putin did.

Worst of all, throughout these so-called peace talks, Vladimir Putin has repeatedly taken the lives of non-combatant civilians and pummeled residential neighborhoods with bombs. Every statement Mr. Putin makes should be viewed through that lens.

President Trump is right. Too many people are dying, and that includes the Russian people who are also suffering.

The Russian people do not deserve to live under a vicious, larcenous, trillionaire president-for-life like Vladimir Putin. So far, only one side has worked to end violence.

This weekend, the Trump administration set a timeline for Vladimir Putin to choose peace, and I commend them for it. I commend Secretary of State Marco Rubio who said the President will decide soon whether Putin is interested in actually working toward a just end to the war.

All signs indicate the answer will be no. The real answer from Vladimir Putin will be no. Just this morning, the Russian Foreign Ministry published words straight from the mouth of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. In no uncertain terms, this high-ranking Russian official rejected President Trump's peace deal.

So this is a pivotal week. I look forward to the President's decision. I would remind him and my fellow colleagues: Putin cannot be allowed to drag the United States along.

The U.S. Senate is ready to back President Trump as he stands up to Putin, on a bipartisan basis; 50 Senators—25 Republicans and 25 Democrats—recently introduced a bill called the Sanctioning Russia Act of 2025. Who says there is not bipartisanship in the Senate? Recently, 25 Republicans and 25 Democrats have introduced legislation that would introduce primary and secondary sanctions against Russia and against actors supporting Russia's aggression in Ukraine, imposing real consequences on Putin if he continues refusing to engage in good-faith talks

with Ukraine and the United States. And he has never engaged in any talks that were in good faith.

Putin repeatedly bombs civilians. He has forged a trail of broken promises. He, and only he, chose—unprovoked—to start the largest land war in Europe since World War II. Putin, and only Putin, did that. Where in any of this has there been a showing of good faith?

On Saturday, the President suggested that Putin “has to be dealt with differently.” I applaud this. My Senate colleagues applaud this. Experienced military professionals like General Keane applaud this. The President has been exceedingly patient, but he is correctly stating that there should be an end.

It is time to treat Putin like the deceptive, cunning war criminal that he is.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Perdue nomination be waived.

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

The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote begin immediately.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 80, David Perdue, of Georgia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China.

John Thune, Jim Justice, Ted Cruz, Bernie Moreno, Jon A. Husted, Steve Daines, Josh Hawley, Marsha Blackburn, John R. Curtis, Tommy Tuberville, Tim Sheehy, Pete Ricketts, Joni Ernst, James E. Risch, Mike Rounds, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Eric Schmitt.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of David Perdue, of Georgia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.