

denying the allegations against Pete, saying:

There was no physical abuse in my marriage.

Yet, look at this headline—“Hegseth’s Ex-in-Law Claims He Was Abusive to Second Wife”—even though, in the same article, the second wife disclaims all of this. This isn’t journalism. Take a moment to think about this. This is a hit job. The New York Times intentionally ran with the salacious and debunked account, buried the truth, and distorted the lead simply to undermine President Trump and his nominee.

The New York Times is not alone, unfortunately; NBC News, The Hill, Politico, and even the Associated Press all chose to run the same salacious false headline instead of the facts.

Unfortunately, I am not surprised. This is the type of misleading—and often unequivocally false—reporting that we have learned to expect from the left-leaning media.

The American people remember that the New York Times is the same publication that denied and suppressed the Hunter Biden laptop story leading up to the 2020 election. It is the same paper that endorsed Joe Biden in 2020. The same paper that endorsed Kamala Harris in 2024.

The American people are sick and tired of the deception stemming from this alliance between the Democrat Party and the so-called mainstream media. This is yet another example of a story published with an aim to do harm and despite evidence to the contrary. It is why media has lost much of its credibility with the American people who see this article for what it is, a desperate, last-minute attempt to generate controversy where none exists.

Pete Hegseth is someone who is going to fix the Pentagon and deliver on President Trump’s vision of peace through strength. He is exactly the type of leader that the Pentagon needs in the face of an increasingly complex and escalating security situation that is occurring around the world.

So while I am disappointed, I am not surprised at this 11th hour attempt by the media to raise debunked and completely discredited falsehoods simply with an aim to derail a confirmation.

I urge my colleagues to see through this noise, evaluate Pete’s nomination based on the merits, which is why I plan to vote for Mr. Hegseth.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I want to reiterate what my colleague from Tennessee just talked about, the importance of the vote that we just took just a few minutes ago—our nominee for new Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth.

Now, the procedure is—as we just voted—to close the vote, and now we wait 30 hours from just a few minutes ago and have the final vote on his nomination, which it looks like that he has

the votes of the majority to be appointed or sent to the White House to be confirmed as the next Secretary of Defense.

I am on the Armed Services Committee, and I have watched 4 years of the destruction of the best military in our world—the United States of America.

It is a shame what has happened. The DEI, the woke agenda that is being pushed on the troops in our country, to me, is embarrassing. I am a military brat. My dad died on active duty in the military. Awarded five Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart at age 17, driving a tank across Europe after landing the first day of Normandy.

We have to change course in our military. And we can talk about inflation and pumping gas and the crime and all the things that we are having a lot of problems with, but if you don’t have a strong military to protect our borders and protect the citizens in our country from adversaries all over the world, we have problems. And it has to start there.

Pete Hegseth is the choice, the right choice. I like his age; I like his demeanor; I like the things he brings to our military. He is exciting, and he will energize this military into the next decade. And I am excited about that.

So, hopefully, in about 30 hours, we will vote tomorrow night around 9:00, and we will vote to confirm Pete Hegseth as our new Secretary of Defense.

FOREIGN ADVERSARY RISK MANAGEMENT ACT

Now, I would like to turn to national security threats in our Nation’s agriculture sector and food supply chains. I am on the Ag Committee. Over the past few years, the United States has experienced a rapid increase in foreign investment in the agricultural sector, particularly from China.

We have to open our eyes; bad things are happening around us. Growing foreign investment in agriculture and other essential industries, like healthcare and energy, is a direct threat to our country’s national security.

You know, for years now, I have been sounding the alarm about foreign ownership of American farmland and other elements of our food supply chain.

According to the USDA data, from December 2023, foreign investors own approximately 45 million acres of U.S. agricultural land. Now, let me say that again, 45 million acres of our forest and agricultural land in this country has been sold to foreign entities.

Does that not scare us? What did we just see during COVID about our drug supply? We looked around, we looked for healthcare and help after COVID hit our borders, and what happened? We found out that it was all being made in China.

So 45 million acres, this represents over 1.5 million acres in one calendar year. Foreign ownership of U.S. agricultural land increased modestly from 2012 to 2017 at an average increase of 0.6

million acres per year. That is 2012 to 2017.

But since 2017, the number has skyrocketed to an average of 2.6 million acres a year that we are selling our farmland to our adversaries. And this is just not China; it is Russia, it is other entities that don’t wish us well at the end of the day.

So, additionally, between 2010 and 2021, entities or individuals from China increased their ownership of U.S. agricultural land more than twentyfold, from about 14,000 acres to 400,000 acres. This is an unbelievable and unsustainable pace for the United States of America.

Now, Alabama is experiencing—my State—this firsthand. We have the fourth largest amount of foreign-owned agricultural land in the United States at 2.2 million acres, most of which is forestland. It is not really agricultural in terms of growing row crops, it is basically our forest.

I represent over 62,000 farmers in the State of Alabama. I hear from them time and time again about foreign activities in our agricultural communities.

Threats like these are something our States can’t handle all on their own, which is why President Ford established—President Ford—established the Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States, also known in short terms as CFIUS. This was in 1975, and this committee was supposed to keep an eye on foreign investments in our country.

This is the governmental body that oversees the vetting process of foreign investments and acquisition of American companies in the interest of national security.

CFIUS is composed of nine members of the President’s Cabinet, including Secretaries of State, Treasury, Defense, Homeland Security, Commerce, and Energy. The Attorney General, the U.S. Trade Representative, and the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy also sit on this vetting board of industry and land in our country.

Nowhere on that list did you hear me say the Secretary of Agriculture. Now, why is that? Considering the massive increase in foreign investment in our country, we need additional oversight for what is going on in our country. We have our eyes closed.

Which is why, yesterday, I introduced the Foreign Adversary Risk Management Act, called the FARM Act, here on the floor that will accomplish three major things. First, it would add the Secretary of Agriculture as a permanent member of CFIUS; in other words, somebody that is going to help our agriculture people vet land that is being bought by foreign entities; second, it would protect the U.S. agriculture industry from foreign control through transactions, mergers and acquisitions and agreements, or it would also designate agricultural supply chains as critical infrastructures

and critical technologies; third, it would require a report to Congress on current and potential foreign investments in the U.S. agricultural industry.

This legislation, folks, is long overdue. These foreign investments now reach into every aspect of agriculture industry and supply chains—from farming and processing, to packaging and shipping. We cannot—I repeat—we cannot allow our adversaries to have a foot in the door to our critical supply chains.

Food security is national security. We must prioritize increased oversight of foreign investment into our food supply chains, especially those coming from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. This starts with giving the agriculture community a permanent seat at the table of CFIUS. The FARM Act does just that.

And there is no better person to fill this permanent seat on CFIUS than my good friend who we had a hearing today as a new nominee for Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins.

I have known Brooke for 30 years; I met her while I was coaching at Texas A & M. She was the student body president in 1994. The students saw then what President Trump sees in her today: her strong leadership and her conviction of agriculture.

It will be no different when she becomes the Secretary of Agriculture for the United States of America. Brooke was brought up in a small agriculture community of Glen Rose, TX. She comes from several generations of American farmers.

She participated in all levels of 4-H and FFA. She raised livestock throughout her life. Now, she is a mother, she is involved in the show steer industry with her four children.

She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Development at A&M, and, later, a law degree from the University of Texas. Later, at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, she was engaged with rural and agriculture communities throughout Texas. She led litigation efforts that focused on the defense of Texas landowners and farmers against Federal interference and regulations.

Next, Brooke went on to serve in several roles in President Trump's White House. She served as the Director of Domestic Policy Council, Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives of American Innovation.

In these roles, she helped roll back terrible EPA rules like Waters of the U.S., or WOTUS, that targeted farmers and ranchers. After the White House, she joined the America First Policy Institute where she focused on protecting U.S. farmland from foreign entities, seeking to gain control—especially from the Chinese.

At AFPI, she strove to improve American food security and independence, as well as support measures that defend U.S. agriculture trade. Brooke understands these many challenges. In

short, Brooke is a conservative warrior and will be an excellent Ag Secretary.

I look forward to working with her to secure our farmland from foreign entities and working with her to pass a farm bill that puts American producers first again.

As Alabama's voice on the Senate Ag Committee, I will continue fighting to secure our agriculture supply chain so our agricultural community can continue to put food on the table, and that starts with someone like Brooke Rollins as our Secretary of Agriculture.

She is a terrific nominee, and I look forward to working with her on the committee. I expect her to move easily through the committee vote and here on this floor.

So once she is out of committee, the Senate must vote on her confirmation. She will do great. She is perfect for the job. And I ask that the Senate take up both efforts quickly to defend our agricultural communities, which feed not only the American people but the entire world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). The Senator from Tennessee.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I concur with the remarks of my colleague from Alabama. We are looking forward to confirming Pete Hegseth. We are looking forward to working every single day until we get this Cabinet completed. And Brooke Rollins over at Agriculture, we know that she is going to do a stellar job. And I do commend the Senator for his FARM Act. I have joined him in cosponsorship on that bill to protect our Nation's farmers and our farmland owners and producers.

This has been an exciting week. On Monday, we started with the inauguration of President Trump, and I will tell you for so many of us in Tennessee and, indeed, across the country, this has been a reason to absolutely rejoice. It is so interesting to me. So many people say they survived the Biden-Harris administration. Isn't that an interesting way to think about it? The inflation, the border, all the issues—it was like survival to get through those 4 years. Because of this, the American people have really given the Trump administration and those of us in Congress a mandate. I refer to it as a to-do list because at the Blackburn household, when there is something that has to be addressed, Chuck and I put it on a to-do list, meaning you don't stop until you get it done.

Well, the good thing is, one of the top things is the southern border and securing that, and indeed we know President Trump has taken Executive action to address this. He cut off that CBP One app and ended these migrant flights from other countries. He has ended catch-and-release. He restored the successful "Remain in Mexico" program. Importantly, he is designating the cartels as "foreign terrorist organizations."

Now, there are other things he is doing. We all know that ICE is conducting raids and doing deportations, and we know that Congress is going to have to work with the Trump administration to make certain that these Executive actions that he is taking—that we pass laws so that this is in Federal statute.

Now, one of those is the CLEAR Act, which is legislation I have had for years, and it ensures that State and local law enforcement officials can help the Federal Government with deporting these criminal illegal aliens. By the way, that legislation requires ICE to reimburse those local law enforcement agencies.

Of course, my CONTAINER Act, which, again, has been here for a while, would empower the border communities, those communities that are right there on that border—farmers, ranchers, communities—those crossing illegally are running through their property. It would allow them to place barriers on Federal land in order to protect their communities.

My Preventing Violence Against Women by Illegal Aliens Act would require illegals convicted of sexual offenses or domestic violence to be deported. These are individuals who have absolutely no business being in this country.

Of course, we are going to have to do more than secure our border, and that means doing mass deportations, and here is the reason why: Under former President Biden, more than 10 million illegal aliens came into this country. Now, those are the ones we know about. On top of this, you have a classification that is called the "got-aways." The "got-aways" are those that the Border Patrol could see on the camera, but they could not get to them to apprehend them.

We know that in this number, you have tens of thousands of criminal illegal aliens. These are not people that are coming for a better way of life; these are people that have committed crimes in their home countries and are looking to come here.

Now, we know this open border has caused far too many tragedies to begin to count, and this is the reason that this body voted in a bipartisan manner for the Laken Riley Act, and that is going to be one of the very first bills that President Trump signs into law.

Because of the American public's overwhelming support for a secure border, for an end to illegal immigration, we are on our way to making this country and making our communities safe again.

Now, we all know that border security is a critical part of national security. Indeed, that southern border is where national security and our foreign affairs actually meet because that border is being overrun by people from about 150 different countries every single year.

Now, we also know that when it comes to national security and how the