

At a time of massive wealth and income inequality, we have never had more income and wealth inequality than we have had right now. It is beyond stupidity to provide more tax breaks to the very richest people in our country and then to pay for those tax breaks by cutting back on Medicaid and other programs desperately needed by working families all across this country. That is what we should not be doing.

But let me take a moment to tell you what we should be doing. At a time when 85 million Americans are uninsured or underinsured in our broken healthcare system, we have got to do what every other major country on Earth does, and that is guarantee healthcare to all people as a human right, not a privilege. That is what we have got to do.

At a time when one out of four Americans cannot afford the outrageously high prices that the pharmaceutical industry charges, we have got to end the absurdity of the American people paying by far the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. We have got to cut the cost of medicine in this country in half, making it comparable with what the rest of the world is paying.

The Federal minimum wage today is \$7.25 an hour. That is a starvation wage. While 60 percent of our people—60 percent of Americans—live paycheck to paycheck, we must raise that minimum wage to a living wage, at least \$17 an hour. If you work 40 hours a week in the richest country on Earth, you should not be living in poverty.

Mr. Musk and Mr. Bezos want to make it harder for workers to join unions. Well, we have got to do exactly the opposite: Make it easier for workers to join unions by passing the PRO Act.

At a time when we need the best educated workforce in the world, we need to have the best public schools in the world, and, among other things, that means we need to substantially raise teachers' salaries. We need to attract the best and the brightest young people into education, and we do that, among other things, by making sure that no teacher in America earns less than \$60,000 a year. We also radically reform our broken childcare system so the little kids in this country get the quality care they need and the workers there are adequately compensated.

All over this country, from Vermont to L.A., we have a major housing crisis, and it is not just the 800,000 Americans who are homeless; it is millions of working families who are spending 40, 50, or 60 percent of their limited incomes on housing.

Instead of spending almost \$1 trillion a year on a wasteful and bloated Pentagon budget, we have to build millions of units of low-income and affordable housing. When we do that, we put large numbers of American workers to work at good-paying, union jobs.

I have heard time and again from Mr. Trump's supporters that the President

won the election and he has been given this huge mandate—just an overwhelming mandate—to do whatever he wants. Well, no President has the right to move us to oligarchy or authoritarianism or kleptocracy. But more important, let's not forget that while Trump did win this election, he actually received 4 million fewer votes than Biden did in 2020 when Biden won the election.

So here we are. Where do we go? What do we do? I think now is the time for the American people to come together, to not allow those who want to divide us up by the color of our skin or our sexual orientation or where we were born—that is what they want to do. They want to divide us up. Now is the time for us to come together like never before and make certain we do not move toward oligarchy, make certain we do not move toward authoritarianism or a kleptocracy.

Most important, in the richest country in the history of the world, we must understand that we have the capability of providing a decent life for all of our people. We can do that when we stand together and we don't let folks divide us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF PAMELA BONDI

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in a few minutes—probably shortly, I should say—we will vote to confirm Pam Bondi as the Attorney General of the United States. Before we do, I would like to speak in support of her nomination and, in doing that, urge my colleagues to vote for her, hopefully in a bipartisan way like we did for Garland under the Biden administration.

Ms. Bondi has been nominated to one of the most important offices in our country, and she has shown that she is up to that task. Her impressive record and presentation at her hearing are proof that she is ready to take the helm of the Justice Department.

Ms. Bondi made history in 2010 as the first woman elected to be Florida's attorney general. She held this role for 8 years after she was comfortably re-elected by the people of Florida to that second term. Eight years of service as attorney general of the third largest State in this Union is excellent preparation for the role of Attorney General of the United States.

As Florida's attorney general, Ms. Bondi was a member of the Florida cabinet, its chief legal officer, and led a very large agency. She handled many issues at the State level that she will be handling at the Federal level, and by all accounts, she has handled those jobs expertly.

As attorney general, Ms. Bondi didn't shy away from hard work or complicated problems. She engaged in an aggressive campaign to eliminate pill mills, took a leading role in securing a \$3¼ billion settlement following the Deepwater Horizon oilspill, and eliminated the backlog of rape kits. She also

stood for law and order and sought justice for victims of violent criminals. Her record shows that she is highly qualified to be Attorney General of the United States.

During her confirmation hearing, Ms. Bondi answered questions for more than 5 hours. What we learned during her hearing reinforced what we knew from her existing record as attorney general of Florida: She is a tough, fair, career prosecutor who built her reputation by enforcing the rule of law—pretty simple.

We also heard from witnesses who praised Ms. Bondi's character, fairness, and willingness to work with members of both parties to solve the problems in Florida, and we are sure she is going to work the same way as Attorney General of the United States.

What did we hear from these witnesses? We heard from an elected Democrat who never voted for President Trump. He said Ms. Bondi was fair, tethered to the rule of law, and could work with both Democrats and Republicans to serve the American people.

We heard from Florida's statewide prosecutor, who praised her competence running the legal department, as I have said, of the third largest State in the Union.

We heard from a Florida sheriff, who testified about her commitment to law and order and to her partnership with law enforcement to keep Floridians safe.

These witnesses have worked with Ms. Bondi for decades, and they all vouch for her capability and character.

Ms. Bondi's nomination has also received a flood of support from all across America. I have a group of people here that have expressed their view through letters to the committee. Law enforcement groups representing more than 650,000 officers wrote to urge us to support Ms. Bondi's nomination. A few of these groups include the National Association of Police Organizations, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, Major County Sheriffs, National Narcotic Officers' Associations, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and still some others. This support is a testament to Ms. Bondi's history of backing the blue.

We should all be backing the blue. I just met with some law enforcement people just before coming over here, and I tell every one of them, I am not for defunding the police, and thank you for keeping the peace.

We have also received letters of support from more than 100 former senior Department of Justice officials, scores of former U.S. attorneys, dozens of State attorneys general, women's rights groups, Second Amendment groups, and, of course, others.

Between her record, her presentation in committee, and the support she has received from across the country, I am convinced that Ms. Bondi is the right choice.

When confirmed, Ms. Bondi will take the helm of what we all know is a turbulent time and also a Justice Department infected with political decision making and its leaders refusing to acknowledge that reality; in other words, political decision making at least on the seventh floor of the Hoover Building overtaking the major role of the FBI, and the FBI is part of the Justice Department. They aren't putting first things first.

Here are a few examples of political decision making and infection in the Department: Crossfire Hurricane; secondly, the Justice Department's targeting my staff—yes, that is right, my investigative staff—who at the time was investigating, at my direction, the government's abuse in Crossfire Hurricane; thirdly, coverup of the Hunter Biden laptop story and sweetheart plea deals offered by the Department of Justice to Hunter Biden; fourth, the FBI's inappropriate briefing to me and Senator JOHNSON during our Biden family investigation that was later leaked, and nothing is supposed to be leaked from what we call the SCIF; fifth, Special Counsel Jack Smith's lawfare operation—in other words, trying to put now-President Trump in jail; sixth, the targeting of traditional Catholics, concerned parents, and abortion protesters as security threats; and, seventh, the coordination of censorship of political speeches.

I don't have an eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth, but they exist. I am not going to take your time on that.

All of these things that I mentioned, plus things I haven't mentioned, are very serious breaches of the public trust, and we can't tolerate that sort of breach.

I am confident Ms. Bondi will not tolerate that breach, and I am looking forward to working with her to shed sunlight on these abuses. And sunlight, as some Supreme Court Justice said, is the best attack against—oh, my gosh, I forgot exactly what it was. But sunshine coming in will really solve a lot of problems. This is the way I put it.

I say we need more transparency in government, and transparency brings accountability. I have already released new FBI records, in fact, just last week, with Senator JOHNSON that show even more political bias within the Justice Department and the FBI. These records prove that former FBI Special Agent in Charge Thibault, a known anti-Trump agent, authored the initial language for what ultimately became Jack Smith's Federal case against Trump regarding the 2020 Presidential election. That case was code-named "Arctic Frost." I don't know where they get the name "Arctic Frost," but that is what the case was called.

These records that we released last week showed a scheme in place between the Justice Department and FBI officials to get Trump. I had to rely on brave whistleblowers to uncover the truth because I was stonewalled by the

Justice Department and the FBI, and I was stonewalled even after they promised, at their own confirmation hearing, that they would answer the letters that Congressmen wrote them.

We never got any answers. In fact, there are 58 questions, in the last 4 years, that I have written to the FBI on my investigations that I have not gotten answers to.

So if you wonder why I am so passionate about Pam Bondi, I am confident that she is going to take a different approach and when she says "yes" for answering her letters, it will be yes, instead of what the other people should have said as the answer to that question, which is "maybe."

As the recent terrorist attacks in New Orleans and around the world have shown, we are faced with very serious threats to our national security. The President needs his team in place to protect our country, and the American people deserve a secure homeland and borders, safe streets, and orderly markets. We need to swiftly confirm a capable and serious Attorney General to get to work.

I am disappointed that none of my Democratic colleagues on the Judiciary Committee voted for Ms. Bondi in committee. I hope it will be different when we get to the full Senate. We had a bipartisan vote, as I have said previously, for Attorney General Garland. Maybe, in hindsight, we shouldn't have had, but we did.

There is no doubt that Ms. Bondi is highly qualified. In committee, several of my Democratic colleagues even acknowledged as much. She is qualified for the job. She represents mainstream views shared by at least the 77 million Americans who voted for change on November 5. This should earn her the same bipartisan support this body gave Attorney General Garland. That is the third time I have said that.

If my colleagues will not cross the aisle to vote for this qualified nominee, they will show that Senate Democrats are intent on opposing President Trump's Cabinet picks for purely partisan reasons, even at the same time they admit how fully qualified she is to do the job.

So ending now, I say once again, I proudly support Ms. Bondi. I look forward to confirming her. She is ready and able to serve our country well and I know she will work with President Trump to restore faith in the Justice Department. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in confirming Ms. Bondi.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

TARIFFS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am happy to be on the floor this afternoon with my colleague from New England, Senator WELCH from Vermont. We are neighboring States that have been spooning for a very long time. But we are here today to talk about a very serious issue, and that is the tariffs that

President Trump is talking about imposing on goods from Canada and Mexico and the impact that will have on Americans.

On Saturday, President Trump announced a 25-percent tariff, which would be a tax on imported goods from Canada and Mexico; and a 10-percent tariff, which would amount to a tax on imported energy from Canada and on all goods for China—so 10 percent on all goods for China and 10 percent on energy for Canada.

He has also threatened universal tariffs on all countries. Thankfully, the tariffs that he announced on Canada and Mexico appear to have been delayed for a month, but the tariff taxes on China are now in effect. Even though many of these tariff taxes were delayed, they are still scheduled to go into effect next month, and they have created unnecessary panic and uncertainty among businesses and families across the country and in New Hampshire.

I want to point out in the beginning, very clearly, that it is not foreign countries who pay these tariff taxes. It is Americans who pay these tariff taxes. These are tariff taxes on imported goods, meaning that the person or company who is importing the good will be footing the bill. And these costs will be passed on to American consumers and businesses.

You don't have to take my word for it. Best Buy's CEO said:

The vast majority of that tariff will probably be passed on to the consumer as a price increase.

And Walmart's CFO said:

There will probably be cases where prices will go up for consumers.

Columbia Sportswear's CEO said about tariffs:

We're set to raise prices. . . . [and] it's going to be very, very difficult to keep products affordable.

If we look at the cost of just the tariff taxes that were originally announced on Saturday, those would raise costs for the average American household by more than \$1,200 a year. If we get into a trade war, with increasingly high tariffs on both sides—and that is what appears could be happening with China—those costs will go up even more.

President Trump campaigned on a promise to lower prices for everything. The tariffs that he is talking about would have the exact opposite effect.

I am glad the administration and the President listened to reason. He delayed the start of these tariffs. But I hope we don't have to be back here in a few weeks making this case again.

I want to make sure that people understand what these tariff taxes will do and highlight some of the areas where Americans would be directly affected.

First is energy. America imports more oil and gas from Canada than any other product. In New Hampshire, more than half of the gas in people's cars comes from Canada. These tariff taxes would make gas prices go up, and they