

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

could even lead to supply shortages because refinery and delivery infrastructure just doesn't turn on a dime.

President Trump's new 10 percent tariff tax on energy from Canada would also directly raise the cost of keeping warm for Granite Staters during the coldest months of this year. In New Hampshire, our No. 1 import from Canada is heating oil, and nearly a quarter of a million households in New Hampshire—that is about 40 percent of our households; more than Vermont, I think—rely on fuel oil to heat their homes. We are the second highest State in the Nation, next to Maine, that relies on No. 2 heating oil to heat our homes. Another 100,000 Granite Staters rely on propane, and about 30,000 homes use wood.

So that is about 60 percent of New Hampshire that relies on delivered fuel to stay warm. Much of that is coming from Canada. The average home in New Hampshire on heating oil uses about 600 gallons in a winter. And for older, draftier homes—and, sadly, we have a lot of those in New Hampshire, those who are further up north—families may be using upward of 1,000 gallons a winter. And with temperatures dipping as low as 20 below zero in the State in recent weeks, heating oil is a real necessity.

My constituents are already getting notices. I don't know, Senator WELCH, if the same is true of your constituents, but I bet it is. They are saying those notices tell them their costs are going to go up if these tariffs go into effect.

On Sunday, I heard from Derek in Sandwich, NH, who received a letter from his heating supplier, Irving Oil, that informed him that his bill for heating oil would be going up.

The letter stated:

As you may be aware, the U.S. Government has announced a new tariff on imports from Canada, including the heating oil or propane that Irving Energy delivers to you.

The letter went on to describe that the tariff costs will be added to the price that he pays, even though he already has a contract.

Derek wrote to me:

I will now have less to spend locally. My local businesses will suffer through lost business and increased costs. Then their suppliers and employees will suffer.

It is a real hardship.

On Inauguration Day, this year, heating oil cost an average of \$3.93 a gallon in New Hampshire. Tacking an ill-advised 10-percent tariff tax on heating oil from Canada could mean about \$150 to \$250 more for many in New Hampshire just to keep warm through the winter. And while for Elon Musk and his billionaire friends and the billionaire friends of the President \$150 to \$250 may not sound like a lot in a winter, there are a lot of people in New Hampshire for whom \$150 to \$250 is the difference between staying warm and being cold in the winter.

Let me also be clear: We don't use gas and heating oil from Canada be-

cause we don't produce it here in the United States. We do it because it makes logistical and economic sense, because in New England, we are at the end of the pipelines that are coming from Texas and the South.

The United States produces more oil than any other country in the history of the world. That was true during the last 3 years of the first Trump administration. It was true for the last four years of the Biden administration. But for New Hampshire, the St. John refinery in Canada simply provides us the closest, lowest cost supply. And, by the way, that refinery sources as much as half of its crude oil from the United States. So it is helping oil producers in the United States send their oil to the refinery, and we get it back in New Hampshire and New England.

President Trump campaigned on cutting energy prices in half. Reckless tariffs on Canada and Mexico would make those prices higher, not lower. New Hampshire families shouldn't be punished for what the Wall Street Journal has just called "The Dumbest Trade War in History."

That is not all. These tariff taxes will affect groceries because the United States imports 38 percent of our fresh vegetables, 60 percent of our fresh fruit, and more than 99 percent of the coffee that we drink. If we take all these together, Americans could be seeing an extra \$200 a year on their grocery bills because of the Trump tariff tax. That doesn't include the longer term impact of taxes on farm equipment or fertilizer. America imports about 85 percent of the potash fertilizer we use, and much of that comes from Canada.

We already have record-high prices for coffee and eggs—if you can find eggs. Some groceries stores are sold out. One of the things that just happened in the last week is that because of the stop-work order that President Trump put on our services that we provide overseas to track bird flu, we are no longer tracking the bird flu that has helped drive up the cost of eggs. So it could get worse, and we are not even going to know about it until we see those prices reflected at the grocery store.

Any new 25 percent tariff tax on these imports would make our food more expensive at a time when families are already stretching and straining their household budgets.

Tariffs sometimes get talked about as a way to support American manufacturers, but that also misses the mark. Half of the products the United States imports are either raw materials or intermediate components, and that means the parts we make into cars or electronics. All of these inputs would get more expensive for American manufacturers, which is only going to make it harder for them to compete internationally.

One of the messages I hear regularly from businesses is that uncertainty is one of the hardest things for them to

deal with. One example of this is a call I got 2 weeks ago from a small business owner in New Hampshire who sells specialized agricultural equipment both in the United States and overseas. This is a family business with five employees. His father founded it 50 years ago. He reached out specifically because he is worried about what tariffs on the components he buys from Canada could do to his business. For the specialized equipment that he needs, there aren't a lot of manufacturers out there. So he reached out to my office asking if he was going to have to pay \$5,000 more in costs for each of the machines he sells.

He took over this business just a couple of years ago, and he has been working to invest to modernize it and expand. Now he has to worry about whether he can try to grow the business, whether he might face new foreign competition, or even if he can pay out bonuses or give raises to his employees. He can't even be certain what kind of pricing schedule he should send out for the year because his costs could go up \$5,000 next month.

Last week, I heard from another small business, Granite State Packing. It is a startup meat processing company that is only 2 years old. They started just 2 years ago, and they already have 10 employees.

Last year, they actually got \$1.6 million in a grant from USDA to expand their operations. That is going to allow them to double their workforce. In order to expand, they placed an order for \$500,000 in new equipment because the specialized equipment they use isn't made in the United States.

Now, depending on how and when these tariffs go into effect and when their equipment might get delivered, they could be looking at a bill—an increased bill—for \$125,000. That is going to affect whether they can follow through on the expansion, whether they can actually add the staff they want to add, and they don't have any way of knowing if they are going to face an unexpected \$125,000 bill because President Trump and this administration haven't made up their minds what they are going to do about these tariffs.

Over the weekend, I had another business owner from C&J Bus Lines. They run a great bus line from the seacoast of New Hampshire to Boston. The owner told me that they have ordered seven buses from Quebec, new buses. They are made in Quebec. These tariffs would add \$150,000 to the cost of each bus. Between that and the higher fuel costs they would pay, they could be looking at \$1.3 million more in added costs this year because of the Trump tariff tax.

No small business can easily just absorb a 25-percent price increase, nor can they plan on how to grow their business and keep providing good-paying jobs with this kind of uncertainty.

Make no mistake, I am glad the administration delayed these tariffs. I hope they understand how this action

would affect America's small businesses and the impact this would have on the economy.

Let me finally just talk about the housing impacts because New Hampshire has an affordable housing crisis. These tariffs would make that worse.

Lumber makes up about 15 percent of the cost of building a house, and a lot of building materials, in addition to lumber, are imported. The National Association of Homebuilders wrote in part that "imposing additional tariffs on these imports will . . . ultimately be passed on to home buyers in the form of increased housing prices." That means that this 25 percent tariff tax would directly add to the cost of building a home at a time when too many Granite Staters and too many Americans across the country already can't afford housing.

We shouldn't pretend that American tariffs are going to go unanswered. Other countries are going to retaliate. Getting into a tit-for-tat trade war is not going to help working Americans pay their bills.

Families across New Hampshire and America are worried about the high cost of housing, about the cost of groceries, and about what it costs to heat their homes. Business owners are similarly worried about costs or unexpected expenses. I am hearing regularly from them about the impact of the uncertainty on their ability to grow their businesses because of these tariffs.

President Trump promised during his campaign to "lower the price of everything," but instead of doing something to lower costs, what he is doing now, what his administration is doing, is planning to add a 25-percent tariff tax to countless imports from Canada and Mexico, and they have already added a 10-percent tariff tax on goods coming in from China.

Again, while this was delayed at the last minute, this would raise costs for everything from groceries, to housing, to energy. It would disproportionately hit lower income families.

I am glad for the delay—I don't want people to misunderstand that—but how is a business or a family supposed to plan when they don't know if important costs like gas or heating or groceries are going to spike any day?

I want to finish by reading a quote here. The quote says:

Tariffs are inflationary and would strengthen the dollar—hardly a good starting point for a US industrial renaissance.

That is a quote from Scott Bessent, the new Treasury Secretary who just got confirmed, when he wrote to his investors just a year ago. I happen to agree with what he said then, but unfortunately the administration he just joined seems to be willing to risk more inflation.

These sweeping tariff tax increases would hurt American families, businesses, and workers. I am glad the taxes on goods from Canada and Mexico were delayed. I hope this administration can provide everyone with cer-

tainty that they won't go into effect next month.

I yield to my colleague from Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, everything my colleague, the senior Senator from New Hampshire, said about New Hampshire and about how people are really struggling to pay their bills, the cost of rent, the cost of housing, home heating fuel in the winter, which has been brutal, groceries—that is totally the same situation for families in Vermont, and it is around the country. I can't add, really, to the recitation of the practical consequences that this has on businesses and on Vermont families beyond what Senator SHAHEEN said.

But it really mystifies Vermonters. People come up to me, and they say, "PETER, seriously, this is going to increase our grocery prices. This is going to mean lumber is more expensive. This is going to mean home heating fuel"—and we rely on Canadian gas probably more than you do—but also home heating fuel. "This is going to raise our prices." And that 150 bucks to 200 bucks you are talking about—that is real money.

They just are mystified that we would, through the President, increase their monthly bills. And for what reason?

You know, I want to talk a little bit about that. New Hampshire and Vermont—we mostly get along, but we are rivals in hockey and other things. But we both have incredibly close relationships with Canada. They are our friends. We have a library in Derby, VT, that is half in Vermont and half in Canada, and our kids are going back and forth to play hockey. That is just on a very personal level, the affection that we have for Canada and they have for us. They come down and ski on our mountains. They come down and visit, and we go up there.

There is an element of "PETER, what is going on? National security is the reason you are doing this? Is there a threat from Canada to our national security? We know there isn't."

So this is an arbitrary decision that is made by the President, in my view, abusing authority that Congress gave him to use tariffs if there is, in fact, a national security threat, which all of us in a commonsense way would think might be something from a military threat or it might be from the coercive economic policies we face from China. There is a legitimate case there for national security. But Canada has been in the trenches with us in every war we have had. They have been by our side. They are our friends.

You know, that is another thing people say: PETER, you don't treat your friends this way. You just don't do that.

So I had a concern about what the impact was on Vermont, and instead of me speculating about it, what we did is

invited some Vermonters who had businesses and some Vermont families to come and tell us what is going to happen if we have these tariffs. Let me tell you some of what they said.

We met in Saint Albans, which is a few miles from the Canadian border. I asked these businesses: Just tell us what happens.

First of all, there was nobody from these businesses who said that the cost of this tariff would not be passed on to the consumer, all right? Common sense. It is like somehow, if there is a 25-percent increase in cost, the business can just eat it, when we know, especially our small businesses, they are operating on the margin. They are doing every single thing they can to make their product competitive and affordable for the people they are serving. These are really, really good people who are totally committed to the communities they are in. Every one of them said that whatever the cost of the tariff is, that is going to be passed on to the consumer—not that they like to do that, but they have to pay their own bills. It is just reality.

The second thing they talked about was the uncertainty that occurs for businesses. One business was talking about how, when these tariffs go in—by the way, we have some history with this from the last Trump administration. There was supposedly a tariff, but if you knew the back entrance into the White House and could make a connection with somebody who had influence, you could get an exemption. So you get this terrible situation—which is not going to be available, by the way, for our Vermont fuel dealers or our Vermont homebuilders. If you knew somebody, you somehow got out of the tariff. And there was no guidance about how these tariffs would have been rolled out, so there was an enormous opportunity for special treatment to be given.

But even then, there is the complexity of this. For instance, one manufacturer was talking about if you got a certain kind of aluminum, it was subject to the tariff, but if you got an ever so slightly different definition of aluminum, you wouldn't be subject to the tariff. So you have a whole production process that has been using aluminum A that would be subject to a tariff, and if you go to aluminum B—if you can find it—it won't be subject to a tariff. If you got a square panel, it would be subject; if it was rectangular, it wouldn't. I mean, this is truly bizarre because there is no common sense in this at all.

So I keep asking the question: Why? Why are we doing this? Why are we inflicting this complexity on our businesses? Why are we inflicting this cost on our consumers and on our businesses? And there is no justification for it at all.

So let me go through some of the stories:

Garret Hirschak at Manufacturing Solutions—they do precision machining.

They are a manufacturer. That is what we want. And there are no margins on it. They work with sheet metal and cardboard. He said these tariffs create a whole burden to determine what is tariffed—the type or shape of aluminum—and he is bracing to respond to whatever chaos comes next.

This company has been in business for 29 years, and it employs 275 people. That is a big deal in our State of Vermont—a big deal. Why mess with him? Why?

Rock Gaulin at H2O Innovation—they make—we have better maple syrup than New Hampshire, I am sorry to say, and definitely better than Canada. They make the equipment that is used in maple syrup production, and this is going to increase their costs and threaten jobs.

And it really does threaten jobs, OK. And then, if you lose a market, by the way, then it is hard to get it back. So this company that might face this huge increase in the cost of aluminum to manufacture its product could lose market share and not be able to claw their way back.

Mike Tetreault from Poulin Grain: Poulin Grain is a great Franklin County, family-run—actually Northeast Kingdom, too—family-run grain dealer. They have been around for generations. And they have kept—they are a huge contribution to keeping our dairy farms going. They import organic grain, a huge market in Vermont. Their products are heavy to transport—think of corn and canola and oats—so they need to buy nearby, and they buy from Canada. And importantly, it is 30 to 40 percent of what they buy. And these tariffs could cost them about \$10 million.

And it is just like the fuel dealers. They have got a contract, but they honor their customers. They can't eat \$10 million. It just can't be done.

So the Poulin family is really worried about the costs rising for farmers, who are on the thinnest of thin margins. And nobody works harder than our dairy farmers. That is hard work. But it is so important to us in the State of Vermont, that we give them every chance to succeed when they are facing tough odds every day.

And why in the world would an act of the President of the United States add to the burden these dairy farmers already face when they are trying to hang on? It just doesn't make any sense to me.

Mike also said something that is really important: The unknown and uncertainty is very difficult.

There seems to be a point of view in the Trump administration—the President, I will be candid—that he thinks chaos is a good negotiating tool. I will leave it to others to decide their view on that, but if the chaos creates this uncertainty for the Poulin Grain Company, for the dairy farmers in Franklin County, for a family that is hoping they can build a house and they thought they had a price, for a family

that is struggling to pay for groceries at the end of the month, that uncertainty is really an infliction of distress. It is unfair.

And to create uncertainty in everyday people who are trying to live in their community, do a good job for the people that they serve; families that are trying to make their contribution in the community and keep the well-being of their family together, and they are on a tight margin—it is cruel to inflict unnecessary uncertainty.

The people from Vermont, the people from New Hampshire—and I think this is true around the country—they are OK with facing hard and grim circumstances, and they will grit their way through it. And they will take care of their kids, and they will take care of their community. They will be generous.

But—you know what—when the hardship that is something they have to deal with is a hardship that has been arbitrarily inflicted upon them by authorities or powers in Washington—in this case, the President—and, in my view, totally improper invocation of so-called national security with our biggest ally, Canada, then they start to wonder. That makes the burden even more and more difficult.

So another person was there, Sarah Mearhoff, who was a representative of the General Contractors of Vermont. And they do all the building. They have been incredible with the infrastructure challenges we have had after Tropical Storm Irene—that was a while ago—and then the floods that we had in July of 2023 and then again in July of 2024.

The cost of raw materials is already very expensive. And she quoted one of her members—Kevin Moyer from Vermont Frames—saying:

Tariffs have always been bad for everyone. As a business owner who buys a lot of timber from Canada, I'm very worried about the impact of tariffs on my company. I cannot absorb those costs, and will have to push them through to my clients in the form of price increases, which will make my company less competitive versus other construction techniques like conventional framing.

So I keep asking myself: Why are we doing this to folks who are so essential to the well-being of the communities that we represent?

And, by the way, you have got two border State Senators here. And we have a lot in common, but everything we have said applies to similar businesses in every single State in the country. So this is not a Republican or Democrat deal. These tariffs are going to cost our families—our families that the Presiding Officer represents, that the senior Senator from New Hampshire represents, and that I represent—it is going to cost them more money. And for what? What are we getting in return?

So I, too, am very relieved, actually, on behalf of the people of Vermont and the people in New Hampshire and the people of this country, that there has been a temporary pause in these tar-

iffs, but the uncertainty goes on. There will be no more justification 30 days from now to impose these tariff taxes on Vermonters and on New Hampshire residents than there is today. And today, there is no justification. In 30 days, there will be no justification.

And I would call on the President to get real in accepting the consequences to everyday families, to small businesses. These aren't billionaires. These are really hard-working people in Vermont and in New Hampshire, and they just, rightly, don't understand this.

So, yes, it is good the tariffs have been suspended. It is really bad that they were ever threatened to be imposed. They will never do any good when there is a bogus reason—so-called national security—and a real abuse of that authority by the President, to invoke that with respect to our closest ally and neighbor in the trenches with our soldiers in every war we have been in.

So I just urge President Trump to do the right thing here. He can be tough. He can pursue his policies. But the first principle that every one of us in public office should respect is that we do no harm to the people we represent by the policies we advocate.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

USAID

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, over the past 2 weeks, political operatives in the administration of President Trump and Elon Musk have shown the American people and the world that they plan to destroy as much of the professional workforce in the executive Agencies as they can get away with.

Whether it is illegal—and it is—or unconstitutional—and it is—is of no concern. Inspectors general and career civil servants who have served the American people for decades—some for their entire professional lives—are being summarily removed without any due process at all—due process they are legally entitled to.

They are being replaced with Musk-approved partisans who have little, if any, government experience or little, if any, substantive knowledge. They do have a qualification, and that is total loyalty to the President.

On top of Mr. Musk's list of Agencies to eliminate in the United States is the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID, as we know it. That has been the subject of a ferocious attack by Mr. Musk.

That Agency is one that not many Americans know about but which fulfills a vital mission. It has a relatively small budget—less than 1 percent of the total Federal budget—and it has a large responsibility to support humanitarian, economic development, and governance programs in more than 100 countries.

Whatever "savings" Elon Musk might obtain from cutting USAID would have no appreciable impact in