

Paul Gallo will always be part of Mississippi's story and always a part of our hearts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, last week, the Senate voted to confirm Pam Bondi as U.S. Attorney General. I was proud to support her nomination both at the Senate Judiciary Committee level and on the Senate floor.

Today, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a markup on the nomination of Kash Patel for Director of the FBI. Likewise, I was happy to support his nomination in committee, and I look forward to supporting him here on the Senate floor as soon as that vote comes before us.

One of President Trump's most important pledges during the campaign was to end the politicalization and the weaponization of the Department of Justice, including the FBI. Pam Bondi and Kash Patel, I think, are outstanding picks to fulfill this pledge, which is very important. I am pleased the Senate is moving to confirm them with no delay.

I believe that the FBI and the Department of Justice are two of the most important institutions in America. If you look around the world, you see a lot of countries that have a similar economic system to ours, and you wonder, why is America uniquely prosperous? Why is it that we succeed where others fail?

I believe it is two things. One is our independent judiciary, and secondly, our institutions of justice like the FBI and the Department of Justice that are supposed to discharge their responsibilities without regard to politics and without regard to the sorts of activities we have seen in recent years.

We know that both of these individuals—Mr. Patel and Ms. Bondi—have their work cut out for them.

The mission of the Department of Justice, after all, is to uphold the rule of law, to keep the country safe, and to protect civil rights. The FBI's mission is to protect the American people and to uphold the Constitution of the United States.

Under the Biden administration and even before that, the Department of Justice and the FBI failed to achieve those noble and worthy goals. Of course, back even during President Trump's first term of office, there was the infamous Crossfire Hurricane FBI investigation. There was the so-called Russian hoax based on a phony piece of Russian propaganda known as the Steele dossier, which ultimately we found out was part of the opposition research that Hillary Clinton's campaign collected during her campaign against President Trump back in 2016. This was dressed up to make it look like a credible bit of intelligence, when, in fact, it was Russian propaganda, we ultimately found out, Russian disinformation.

Two weeks ago, during his hearing at the Judiciary Committee, Kash Patel

told me that the rule of law is one of the fundamental precepts that make America an exceptional nation. Without the rule of law, he said, "we go back to the Uganda that my father fled."

Kash Patel's adherence to the mission of the FBI and its parent Agency, the Department of Justice, is a stark contrast from what we have seen in recent years. We saw, for example, Merrick Garland's misguided memo in October of 2021 directing the FBI to work with U.S. attorneys to "discuss strategies for addressing threats from parents" who were taking an active role in their children's education by participating in parent-teacher meetings and school board meetings.

Similarly, we have the FBI Richmond Field Office that sent a memo in 2023 suggesting that traditional Catholics might pose a threat as violent domestic extremists.

So we know that there is example after embarrassing example of how the FBI and the DOJ have gotten off track.

A report from the House Judiciary Committee highlighted, for example, the FBI's misguided attempt to artificially inflate the number of domestic extremism threats by claiming Americans who were exercising their First Amendment rights were somehow potential domestic terrorist threats, not to mention the FBI's role in censoring information related to Hunter Biden's criminal activities.

A Senate report from the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, in 2020, detailed many of Hunter's and his associates' unseemly—and likely illegal—activities, including payments from Ukrainian, Russian, Kazakh, and Chinese nationals and revealed that the FBI may have had knowledge of these activities for some time and done nothing.

In September 2020, when the House Judiciary Committee sent a followup letter to Director Wray, related to Hunter Biden's alleged misconduct, the FBI stonewalled them and refused to confirm or deny any ongoing investigations.

I know that is a common response by the FBI. Well, they are not going to talk about ongoing investigations, and, certainly, we understand that, as a routine matter, there shouldn't be any sort of interference in ongoing investigations. But Congress has a unique constitutional role of oversight, and, essentially, what Director Wray was saying was, he wasn't willing to give the Congress, as an oversight body, the information we need in order to do our job.

Of course, despite these numerous efforts within the FBI and the Department of Justice to protect Hunter Biden from accountability for his crimes, we know his own father issued a Presidential pardon in the final weeks of his Presidency, even though for months he had said he would never do such a thing. But then he did, claiming his son was selectively and unfairly prosecuted.

Well, my recollection was Hunter was convicted of one crime by a jury but pled guilty to others. So it is not clear to me how President Biden can say that he was selectively and unfairly prosecuted for the crimes that he pled guilty to.

It is hard to imagine thinking someone was unfairly targeted when the entire government—all the government Agencies involved—did everything they could to assist the Biden family and to protect that person from justice.

While it is no surprise that the American people were upset and even outraged by this, who could forget the marked differences, the double standard, in response to when President Trump was found to have sensitive documents in his home in Mar-a-Lago and when President Biden was found to have sensitive documents in his home in Wilmington, DE.

And all the while, during the historic crime wave we have experienced in recent years, Merrick Garland directed his Agency not to enforce mandatory minimums against most drug crimes. He did this while Americans across the country were suffering from fatal drug overdoses at record numbers, especially from fentanyl, which took the lives of approximately 70,000 Americans last year alone.

The results of all of these abuses of authority has been a loss of trust and confidence by the American people in these important institutions: the FBI and the Department of Justice. These institutions were no longer believed to be engaged in the fair administration of justice based on facts and evidence, as opposed to political gamesmanship.

Now, I realize that Attorney General Bondi and soon-to-be Director Patel are going to have a huge task ahead of them to restore these Agencies to their core missions and to restore the trust that has been eroded of the American people in our American system of justice. But both of these individuals have pledged to do just that, and I believe they should have an opportunity to do that.

Pam Bondi, after all, has been a career prosecutor. She then went on to be attorney general of Florida for two terms. As a former attorney general of my State in Texas, I know how tough that job can be. But she has done an outstanding job, and I have no doubt that her promotion to U.S. Attorney General by President Trump was well deserved. She is prepared for this important job.

My goal for the Department of Justice and the FBI is to restore the non-partisan functioning of our country's chief law enforcement Agencies. The American people deserve an FBI and a Department of Justice that they can trust. They deserve to live under a system where the guilty are prosecuted and where the innocent are not unfairly targeted. They deserve to live in a place where political views are not a basis for a criminal investigation and where an accused person is still presumed innocent until proven guilty. In

short, we need a Department of Justice that will deal out justice evenhandedly, without fear or favor.

I believe that being Attorney General is probably one of the toughest jobs here in Washington, DC, because you are not only the chief law enforcement officer for the country, you are also a member of the President's Cabinet.

But even given the difficult nature of the job, Merrick Garland practically abdicated his responsibilities as chief law enforcement officer in order to be a partisan advocate for President Biden's policies.

President Trump's Attorney General will have a chance to turn the page from Merrick Garland's failures by reversing the partisan hackery that has been a part and parcel of President Biden's Department of Justice. President Trump's Attorney General can restore the Department of Justice to its core mission. Pam Bondi can serve President Trump and the Nation well by enforcing the law that is on the books and ending the weaponization of political enemies.

Similarly, Kash Patel has an opportunity to turn the page from the abuses and the lack of accountability that we have seen at the FBI in recent years.

So I look forward to working with Ms. Bondi and Mr. Patel in their noble endeavor to restore trust in our Nation's justice system, and by doing so, to restore the trust of the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

FOOD FOR PEACE PROGRAM

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today I want to speak about a program that has shaped our Nation's humanitarian efforts and made a significant impact on my home State of Kansas, a program called Food for Peace.

In 1953, agricultural surpluses had reached an alltime high, but the price of storing excess commodities was too expensive to rationalize, and it was at risk of going to waste.

Kansas farmers, like Cheyenne County's Peter O'Brien, worked hard to cultivate and grow these commodities. Looking for a solution, Peter suggested at a local Farm Bureau meeting that maybe the excess food could be sent to countries in need. Peter understood that, out of our abundance, we have a moral duty and opportunity to feed the hungry. His idea sparked the origin of a program we now know as Food for Peace.

Another Kansan, one of my predecessors, Andy Schoepel, led the Food for Peace Act in the Senate, which was signed into law by President Eisenhower, another Kansan, in 1954, and Senator Bob Dole from Russell, KS, later championed the reauthorization of Food for Peace.

The program's premise was simple but impactful: By leveraging the food surpluses we produce in Kansas and across the Nation, we could address famine around the world, while cre-

ating new markets for our commodities and bolstering our agricultural economy.

The first shipments of American wheat and corn were sent to Korea and Greece in 1954, and by the end of Food for Peace's initial year of operation, it had fed 1.2 million people. Over the last 70 years, the program has fed more than 4 billion people in more than 150 countries, all with American-grown commodities.

Hunger, whether driven by price increases or food shortages, can act as a catalyst for protest and armed conflict. We have seen how food can be used as a weapon of war as radical Islamic groups in Syria used food as a means to recruit soldiers. We have witnessed regions of the world that are critical to America's strategic interest descend into chaos due to people not having access to affordable food.

In a turbulent world, stricken with conflict, American leadership is more than just our military and our economic might. Food aid provided by the United States reduces despair and increases stability within fragile countries by enabling economic productivity and minimizing the risk of radicalization.

For countless individuals around the world, their survival is dependent upon the resources provided by the American people. These vulnerable populations rely on the strength and prosperity of the United States. However, much work remains in the ongoing battle against hunger, and part of that battle is improving the process and programs that administer our aid.

Food for Peace is administered by the USAID, and the inefficiency of USAID has been a growing concern. The Agency struggles with bureaucratic delays, mismanagement, and a lack of coordination, which undermines its ability to deliver effectively aid to those in need. This inefficiency not only wastes taxpayer dollars but also diminishes the impact of America's foreign aid in addressing global crises.

Reports suggest that millions of taxpayer dollars have been allocated to promoting tourism in Lebanon and Egypt, funding the purchase of electric vehicles for Vietnam, and inadvertently supporting the cultivation of opium in Afghanistan.

Even more concerning, it has been confirmed that \$9 million intended for civilian food and medical supplies in Syria fell into the hands of terrorist organizations linked to al-Qaida, due to the failed oversight of USAID.

Amid these concerns of corruption, President Trump has taken steps to dismantle USAID. In conjunction with the President's action and with approval of the White House policy team, I have introduced a bill with Senator JOHN HOEVEN and Senator ROGER MARSHALL and Representative TRACEY MANN to move Food for Peace from the turbulent USAID program and move it to the Department of Agriculture, in an effort to prevent waste and bring

the program closer to farmers that depend upon it.

USDA has a long and proven history of managing agricultural policy and programs that support American farmers, food distribution systems, and global security efforts. USDA has boots on the ground and the infrastructure already in place to support the logistics for food assistance. The Agency understands how to move crops efficiently, sustainably, and quickly. This knowledge is indispensable when responding to international crises, where speed and reliability can mean the difference between life and death. By placing Food for Peace under USDA's authority, we make certain that the program is in good hands and can continue to bring revenue to American agriculture.

As of just a little over an hour ago, the Senate confirmed the new Secretary of Agriculture, Brooke Rollins. I have no doubt she will be an excellent advocate for our Nation's farmers, and I appreciate the conversations we have already had on this legislation. The Secretary has told me she is excited about this proposal and looks forward to working together on this issue.

We produce more than we can consume in this Nation. So without programs to export to, our ability to make a living in agriculture in Kansas and across the country disappears.

In fiscal year 2023 alone, \$713 million of U.S.-grown commodities were purchased by the Food for Peace program, putting money back into the hands of farmers. In rural America, food assistance programs like Food for Peace put American-grown products in the hands of the hungry, and this food is a tangible extension of the hard work and dedication of farmers and ranchers.

I am pleased to help find ways to make our delivery of food aid more effective, more efficient, and remove the challenges and things that we have seen that are so disturbing.

America is the greatest country on Earth and the most prosperous. Food for Peace bolsters the farmers who feed us, creates a more stable world, and feeds the hungry.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I am here to speak in opposition to the confirmation of Senator Kelly Loeffler to serve as Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

I am concerned for the more than 722,000 small businesses that call Massachusetts home and that last year relied on \$708 million in loans from the Small Business Administration.

I am concerned because of Donald Trump and Elon Musk, who have sent a clear message: They are here to illegally cut off funding for critical government Agencies and services. They are here to make government work for billionaires but at the expense of working-class people, and they are filling their Cabinet with people who are going to carry out that illegal bidding.