NOT VOTING—5

Alexander	Heller	Toomey
Booker	McCain	

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

CHANGE OF VOTE

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, on roll-call vote No. 10, I voted yea. It was my intention to vote nay. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to change my vote since it will not affect the outcome of the vote.

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

(The foregoing tally has been changed to reflect the above order.)

RAPID DNA ACT OF 2017

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the message from the House.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 139) entitled ''An Act to implement the use of Rapid DNA instruments to inform decisions about pretrial release or detention and their conditions, to solve and prevent violent crimes and other crimes, to exonerate the innocent, to prevent DNA analysis backlogs, and for other purposes.'', do pass with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to S. 139.

CLOTURE MOTION

I send a cloture motion to the desk on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative 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 motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 139, an act to implement the use of Rapid DNA instruments to inform decisions about pretrial release or detention and their conditions, to solve and prevent violent crimes and other crimes, to exonerate the innocent, to prevent DNA analysis backlogs, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, James M. Inhofe, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Marco Rubio, Johnny Isakson, Deb Fischer, John Boozman, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, Orrin G. Hatch, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, John Thune, Mike Rounds.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 1870

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to S. 139, with a further amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to concur in the House amendment to S. 139, with an amendment numbered 1870.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion to concur with amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1871 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1870

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 1871 to amendment No. 1870.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''1 day'' and insert ''2 days''

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 1872

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to refer the House message on S. 139 to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 1872.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to refer the House message to accompany S. 139 to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 1872.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1873

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 1873 to the instructions of the motion to refer.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''3 days'' and insert ''4 days''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1874 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1873

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 1874 to amendment No. 1873.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''4'' and insert ''5''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

RUSSIA

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to share with my colleagues a report I released yesterday, which is the product of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The report is called ''Putin's Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security.''

I commissioned this report to be done early in 2017. I had to make a decision on the allocation of resources, and I thought it was extremely important that the American people and the international community understand the breadth of Russia's campaign against democratic institutions.

Yes, we saw it in 2016 in the U.S. elections, but that was only one part of a much broader design, and I recognized we needed to devote the resources at that time in order to make this report work. It is how Russia has interfered not just here in the United States but in Europe.

I want to start with the statement that this is not a partisan report. Yes, I commissioned it as the Democratic ranking member because decisions had to be made early in 2017 on the allocation of resources. I know the Presiding Officer knows, I worked very closely with Senator CORKER on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and throughout the development of this report, I have kept Senator CORKER informed.

The work of this report has relied upon the work of many Members of the Senate on both sides of the aisle. In fact, I think the Presiding Officer will recall the work we did—Democrats and Republicans—in the passing of legislation in 2017 that held Russia accountable for its maligned activities. I was proud that I had the strong cooperation and support and leadership in developing that legislation from Senator MCCAIN, Senator GRAHAM, and Senator RUBIO, who contributed greatly to the enactment of that legislation, and on the Democratic side, Senator MENENDEZ, Senator SHAHEEN, and Senator DURBIN.

This report is the accumulation of a year's work. It had professionalism and dedication and patriotism of the very talented staff at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I want to acknowledge that because I know all of us recognize that our staffs are critically important to the work we do in the Senate.

Damian Murphy was our captain on this project. He was the one who provided the leadership to make sure we had a thorough report, that we had an accurate report, and that our recommendations would be tailored to make our Nation more secure. Terrell Henry provided incredible help throughout the entire year. Laura Carey was an instrumental part of getting this done. Megan Barkley helped us with making sure all of the sources were properly cited.

I also want to acknowledge my Democratic staff leader, Jessica Lewis, who really was the one who decided early that we could get this done and encouraged me to move forward.

Lastly, this report has received considerable attention since I released it yesterday—considerable attention—because this is the first comprehensive report that has been authored that deals with Russia's maligned activities, which are global in nature. Sean Bartlett was capable of making sure this story would be heard. I thank him for his professional work in the way we were able to get this report circulated.

Following the 2016 elections, I thought it was important that we shed more light on the Russian Government's efforts to interfere in democracies beyond our own. Anyone who thinks the threat posed by Russia is limited to hacking emails or the American election in 2016 is missing the real story, and that is what this report shows.

We wanted to describe the scale and scope of this threat to make the American people aware that the Russian Government's interference in the 2016 elections are part of a pattern of behavior and warn that Russia could attack again in 2018 and 2020. The Kremlin is a learning organization, and they are constantly perfecting and improving their techniques.

This report is the first government report to lay out in detail exactly how the Russians operate. Mr. Putin employs an asymmetric arsenal that includes not just military invasions—and they do use their military—but cyber attacks, disinformation and propaganda, and support for fringe political groups. They have employed the weaponization of energy resources. They have a network of organized crime, and they have a system that is fueled by corruption.

This threat existed long before President Trump and will remain following his tenure, unless he takes steps and we take steps to address it.

Our report examines how the Russian Government has sought to interfere in 19 countries across Europe. Many lessons are to be learned from our allies in Europe that have shown his behavior can be deterred. While many in the executive branch understand the threat and have taken steps to address Mr. Putin's asymmetric arsenal, Presidential leadership has been absent. Never before has a U.S. President so clearly ignored such a grave and growing threat to our national security, and without Presidential leadership, the United States will remain uncoordinated in its response.

The Washington Post reported in December that the National Security Council has not had a meeting on countering malign Russian influence—more than a year after the intelligence community assessment that Russia interfered in our elections.

Mr. Putin's rise to power in 1999 was cynical and opportunistic. He capitalized on a war in Chechnya and apartment bombings in Moscow to shore up his image as a strong hand that could steady the country after the rocky 1990s.

To do so, this former KGB officer emboldened his security services to play an outsized, criminal role in running the state. Mr. Putin's regime used violence to stop those who opposed him in and outside of Russia, cheated his way through the Olympics, and, through his security services' connections with organized crime and money laundering, has emboldened cyber theft and racketeering that has real-world implications for U.S. companies and citizens.

Mr. Putin developed his techniques first at home against his own people. In Russia, he repressed independent civil society, journalists, and political opposition, while manipulating cultural and religious influences, the media and information space, and a corrupt crony capitalist system to shore up his own regime.

The tools in Mr. Putin's asymmetric arsenal are drawn from a Soviet playbook but updated with new technologies. These include propaganda and disinformation, cultivating political fringe, religious and cultural groups as influencers, and weaponizing crime and corruption as a system of governance.

In Europe, Mr. Putin's Russia has invaded countries, attempted coups, cut off countries from energy in the middle of winter, temporarily crippled governments with cyber attacks, created a whole new way to exponentially spread fake news using bots and trolls, and used dirty money as a weapon to attempt to buy candidates and political parties. The report illustrates these events in more detail in the 19 countries across Europe.

The international response to the Kremlin's arsenal has been a patchwork. Some European countries have shored up their democracies in ways the United States has yet to do, in a strategic, whole-of-government fashion. Europe's experience with Russia's meddling shows it can be deterred, and the United States must take steps to deter Russia now, as laid out in the report's recommendations.

The report helps us to understand why Mr. Putin is doing this. He is doing this because that is all he has. Russia's economy is faltering. It has a limited military capacity. It doesn't have many friends around the world. Its economy is about 7 percent the size of the U.S. economy—ranks No. 12 in the world. It is smaller than Italy or South Korea or Canada, but we have to acknowledge he has had success with the use of these tools, with the use of these weapons.

He has accumulated, by reported sources, more than tens of billions of dollars of stolen wealth. He has a propaganda machine that has been able to make him popular at home and accomplish many of his objectives in other countries. He has slowed down Serbia's integration into the EU and Ukraine and Georgia's ability to join NATO because of Russia's troops located in its countries.

The report highlights the lessons we have learned from our Europeans. It is interesting, the Europeans understood this risk before we did and took action. The Brexit campaign in the UK, Russia was clearly engaged in it. Prime Minister May has made a resolute public statement that Russia's meddling is unacceptable and will be countered.

France looked at what happened in 2016 in the U.S. elections, and they took steps. The Macron campaign was subject to cyber attacks with emails from President Macron during the campaign. They were released shortly before the runoff election, but France was prepared, and they were able to counter that. The French Government worked with independent media and political parties to expose and blunt the dissemination of fake news.

In Germany, we saw the famous ''Lisa case'' that was fabricated by Russian-sponsored news outlets in order to incite the Russian-German community for an anti-migrant-type protest. The German Government bolstered democratic cyber security capabilities, particularly after the 2015 hack of the Bundestag, and the Interior Minister proposed creating a Center of Defense Against Misinformation. Germany has acted.

In the Nordic countries, the states have largely adopted a whole-of-society approach, with an emphasis on education that teaches critical thinking and media literacy. They have a curriculum in their school for their schoolchildren to be able to differentiate between what is real and what is fake in the news.

In Lithuania, the government diversified its supplies of natural gas. All the Baltic governments have worked to integrate their electricity grids to reduce dependency on Russia for energy needs.

In Spain, the Spanish Government has investigated, exposed, and cut off significant money-laundering operations by Russia-based organized crime.

So what do we do about this? Russia has this plan to compromise our democratic institutions. What do we do about it? Well, the report spells out many, many recommendations. I am proud to say that many of these recommendations have been championed by Members on both sides of the aisle.

First, we call upon Presidential leadership. We need President Trump to acknowledge the threat and establish a high-level interagency fusion cell to coordinate all elements of U.S. policy on the Russian Government's malign influence operations. The President should present to Congress a comprehensive national strategy and work to get it implemented and funded.

Second, the U.S. Government needs to support democratic institution building and values abroad. We need stronger support for these programs. The United States should provide assistance to help bolster democratic institutions in European states.

Members of the U.S. Congress should conduct hearings and use their platform to make democracy and human rights an essential part of their agenda. I am proud of the work we have done in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Working with Senator CORKER, we have highlighted human rights throughout the year, but we need to do more. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has recommended to the full Senate that we pass legislation so we can start evaluating every country and its ability to fight corruption, patterned after the ''Trafficking in Persons Report'' on human trafficking. We need to get that bill enacted into law.

Third, we need to expose and freeze Kremlin-linked dirty money. We should declassify any intelligence related to Mr. Putin's personal corruption and cut off Mr. Putin and his inner circle from the international financial system. We know that the elite class in Russia does not want to hold their money in rubles; they want dollars. We have to deny them that opportunity. They also would like visas to visit the United States; they don't want to be stuck in Russia. Those sanctions have an impact, and we need to make sure they are enforced.

Fourth, we need to create a ''state hybrid threat actors'' designation and impose a sanctions regime. The United States should designate countries that employ malign influence operations to assault democracies as ''state hybrid threat actors.'' Those designated would fall under a preemptive escalating sanctions regime that would be applied whenever the state uses weapons like cyber attacks to interfere with a democratic election or disrupt a country's vital infrastructure. We need to make it clear that, yes, we want relations with all countries, constructive relations, but if they are going to use these weapons against our democratic institutions, we need to be prepared to increase our sanctions against these countries.

Quite frankly, what we must understand is the importance of democracy against what Mr. Putin is trying to do.

Fifth, we have to defend the United States and Europe against foreign funding that erodes democracy. We need to pass legislation to require full disclosure of shell company owners and improve transparency for funding of political parties, campaigns, and advocacy groups. We have bipartisan legislation to do that. Let's get that passed. We know that shell companies are shielding illegal funds. Let's make sure that Russia's game plan is not funded through shell companies that are located here.

Sixth, we need U.S. leadership to build global cyber defenses and norms and to establish a rapid reaction team to defend allies under attack. We should push NATO to consider the implications of a cyber attack within the context of article V and our ability to defend each other. We should also lead an effort to establish an international treaty on the use of cyber tools in peacetime, modeled on the international arms control treaties.

Lastly, we need to hold social media companies accountable. Government should mandate transparency for funding political advertisements. This is the new way of communications. We have to catch up with technology in our laws. We require traditional advertisers to disclose all this information, but we have left social media alone because we didn't know about it when we passed these laws. We have to make sure that we have full laws on disclosure. Companies should conduct audits on possible Kremlin-supported meddling in European elections over the past several years. Companies should establish civil society advisory councils and work with civil society and government to promote media literacy.

That is just a sampling of some of the recommendations that are in this report. It is pretty comprehensive, but I think it does give us a game plan to understand that we can protect our national security, and we must.

Following the end to World War II, the United States led the world in constructing the liberal international order, underpinned by democratic institutions, shared values, and accepted norms. It protects our shared security, advances our interests, and expands our prosperity. Yet the defense of that system of institutions and democratic principles is anathema to Mr. Putin, who seeks to protect little more than his power and wealth. It is therefore up to the United States and our allies to engage in a coordinated effort to counter the Kremlin's assaults on democracy in Europe, the United States, and around the world.

In closing, we must take care to point out that there is a distinction between Mr. Putin's corrupt regime and the people of Russia, who have been some of his most frequent victims. Many Russian citizens strive for a more transparent and accountable government that operates under the democratic rule of law, and we hope for better relations in the future with a Russian Government that reflects these values. We applaud the courage we saw very recently from the protesters in Russia, who stood up against Mr. Putin because they want basic freedom in their country.

I remember very clearly that when we passed the Magnitsky law that holds those who violated the basic human rights, in Russia, of Sergei Magnitsky, who was just doing his job as a lawyer—that they would be denied our banking system and denied the ability to travel to this country—when that bill was enacted, it was the people who were protesting against the government who said: That law passed by the U.S. Congress was the most pro-Russian bill passed by the U.S. Congress. We stand with the people of Russia.

I am also the ranking Democrat in the U.S. Helsinki Commission. I have worked for the Helsinki Commission for a long time. The Helsinki Commission includes all the countries of Europe and the former Soviet Union, the United States, and Canada. All countries had signed on to the Helsinki Final Act. It talks about basic democratic principles, and it gives each member state the right to challenge the activities of every other member state.

We have an obligation to call out what Mr. Putin is doing because it is not only against our national security interests; it is not only hurting the people of Russia; it is against the commitments Russia made in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The United States must work with our allies to build defenses against Mr. Putin's asymmetric arsenal and strengthen international norms and values to deter such malign behavior by Russia or any other country.

I stand ready to work with all of my colleagues to protect our national security interests and to recognize the threat that Mr. Putin poses to our democratic institutions. I look forward to a day when we can truly have a better relationship with Russia because they stop this assault on democratic institutions in Europe, the United States, or anywhere in the world.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

MY SENATE AGENDA

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, earlier this month, I announced that my current term of service would be my last. Since then, many of my colleagues have asked how I feel with my Senate tenure drawing to a close. I think many expect me to say that I feel an overwhelming sense of satisfaction and relief. Hardly. If anything, the decision to retire has imbued me with a sense of urgency that I have never felt before.

With a year left in office, I have an agenda that is as ambitious as ever,

and the ticking shot clock is a constant reminder of just how much I have left to accomplish. Just 168 legislative days remain in my Senate term, and I can assure you that those 168 days will be among the proudest and the most productive periods in all my public service.

Anyone who thought ORRIN HATCH would coast quietly into his golden years clearly doesn't know me. The stars have aligned for this year to be one of my most successful yet. So don't expect me to go gentle into that good night. Expect me to be right here on the Senate floor, early and often, pushing the most critical reforms of this Congress. Expect me to take the lead on a Finance Committee agenda that will equal in ambition our accomplishments of 2017. Expect me to be the same steady presence in this body that I have been for the last 41 years.

Above all, expect a flurry of legislative activity from my office. I have a dedicated staff. They are determined to drive this old workhorse into the ground. And I have arguably the best working relationship with this President of anyone on Capitol Hill. Add to this the advantages that accrue from a lifetime of legislative experience and bipartisan dealmaking.

The point I wish to make is simple: In legislative terms, my final year could well be the most fruitful yet, and I hope it will be.

In the months ahead, I am eager to capitalize on our tax reform victory by putting the Nation back on the path to fiscal sustainability, finding a way forward on immigration, and securing long-term funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program—a program that I helped put into law and have been very pleased with over the years. I also intend to update our intellectual property laws for the 21st century, enact key fixes to our higher education system, and fill our courts with as many qualified judges as possible. Likewise, I look forward to working with my colleagues across the aisle to improve the competitiveness of our workforce, strengthen digital privacy, and blaze new trails on medical marijuana research.

But this brief overview doesn't cover even half of my agenda for 2018, nor does it include some of the legislative surprises I plan for later this year. The virtue of being a seven-term Senator with a reservoir of good will is that you have a little bit of latitude in your final year. That is why my plan is to go big and to go bold, because unless you are Michael Jordan, you retire only once, so you might as well make the most of it.

The truth is, I put the pieces in place long ago to ensure that my final year in office would be a legislative knockout, so no one should count me out, not for a single second, and anyone who does should be reminded that I can do in just a few months what it takes most a decade to complete. Tough old birds like me don't have lameduck years; we just dig in and get tougher. For me, 2018 is not a victory lap but a sprint to the finish, and I plan to finish strong. I look forward to working with all of you until the very end.

With that, I just want to say how much I love the Senate, how much I love my colleagues on both sides of the floor, how much I have enjoyed working with all of you over all these years and will enjoy this remaining year hopefully even more. I hope I can do some things that will be very beneficial to our country, to all of us, and that will help us all feel better about our service here and help us all strive to do better together.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to assure the Senator from Utah, who just spoke, who is also the President pro tempore of this entire body, that he is well regarded on both sides of the aisle. I don't think any Senator has had a more distinguished or consequential career—four decades of legislating.

I want to assure the Senator that nobody thinks he is going to slow down. In fact, as he just said, he has plenty on his agenda for the next year, and we look forward to working with him during that time period.

We also wish him well on his retirement. I have talked to him a little about this. He has a wonderful family, and he has big plans for the future with some important work he wants to do in public policy through his foundation.

I have so much respect for Senator HATCH. I thank him so much for what he did most recently to help guide us through this latest tax reform and tax cut bill that actually is making a difference for the people I represent and he represents.

Mr. HATCH. If the Senator will yield, I thank the Senator so much. I am grateful for the friendship that I have with all of you but especially with him. He is one of the up-and-coming, moving, strong Senators in this body. I have tremendous respect for his work ethic, the effort he has put forth on a daily basis, the ethics that he imposes upon himself, and the logistical all around way of doing the Senate's work. I am very pleased to have him as a friend.

Mr. PORTMAN. I thank the Senator. I have to get the last word, though, because this is about the Senator.

Senator HATCH said he loves this place and he loves its Members. There is a lot of love for him in this place on both sides of the aisle, and it is well deserved and earned.

RUSSIA

Mr. President, I heard Senator CARDIN earlier speaking about the threat that Russia poses not just to us—and the meddling that has been occurring here in our elections over the years—but also the threat that they pose to other democracies around the world, particularly in Eastern Europe. I appreciate his report. I appreciate the fact that he has worked with a number of us, including Senator MURPHY, on the other side of the aisle, to put forward legislation to try to push back against this disinformation.

In fact, we have required that the State Department increase their efforts through what is called the Global Engagement Center. I am meeting with the Deputy Secretary of State here after this speech, and I am going to speak more about that with him, but we really want to be sure that the United States is taking more aggressive action against the kind of disinformation that can destabilize democracies.

We heard some of the examples of what his report was able to uncover in terms of some of the Russian activity, particularly, again, in Europe and in Eastern Europe. This is an issue. It is a foreign policy issue that we have been, in my view, slow to respond to. It didn't start with the last Presidential election, and it will not end with this last Presidential election unless we take a more aggressive stance and step up.

So I appreciate that it has been a bipartisan effort that we should acknowledge as Americans that it is in our interests to push back against the disinformation and the propaganda and the destabilization of democracies.

TAX REFORM

Today, Mr. President, I wish to speak about some good news; that is, that here in Congress we actually did something with the tax relief and tax reform legislation that is actually creating a better economy and more hope for people.

There was news announced today, just a few minutes ago, that is in addition to the news we have heard over the last few weeks. This historic tax reform was created, we will remember, with two goals in mind. One was to cut taxes for middle-class families—so individual tax cuts. The second part of it was to make America a better place to do business. Let's ensure that there will be more jobs created here rather than elsewhere. Let's level the playing field so our workers aren't competing with one hand tied behind their back.

As I have said through the process and as we developed this bill, we had a bipartisan agreement that our Tax Code was broken, but we couldn't seem to come up with an agreement of how to fix it. Some Democrats said: Well, that is great that you guys have done this bill, but it is not going to help. I said at the time: The proof will be what happens, what happens to jobs, what happens to wages, what happens to the economy in general, and what happens to your paycheck.

I am here to announce today that the results have been pretty darn impressive, and they have been across the board—all of those things I talked about. We have already seen as a result of this tax legislation that America has become a better place to do business. All over the country there are companies and businesses, small and large,

that have stepped forward to talk about that. I now have a list of 150 businesses—and I am sure there are many, many more—that have decided to do something. Either they announced a pay increase, a bonus, an increased 401(k) contribution, an increased pension contribution, or maybe a new investment in equipment and in technology to make workers more competitive. All of this is specifically because of the tax relief and reform bill. That is what is happening.

For those who haven't followed it, even today another company, Walmart—the largest employer in my State—announced that they are indeed going to increase pay and provide bonuses to over 1 million workers. Some companies have actually announced a combination of things, not just a pay increase but maybe a pay increase as well as an increased contribution to a 401(K) or an increased contribution to a charity.

So I think we are already seeing the direct effects—the direct and very positive beneficial effects—of this tax reform legislation, as many have hoped that we would see, given the fact that we wrote it to create these incentives for more jobs and better jobs.

But today we are going to begin to see the direct effects of the other part of the bill; that is, the tax relief directly to individuals. The IRS just announced about an hour ago that they are publishing updates to the tax withholding tables for employers. Now, what does this mean? This means that Uncle Sam is going to take a little less of your paycheck, and you are going to see it on your paycheck. So the withholding—the amount that is withheld from your paycheck with taxes—is going to be changed. The Treasury Department says that for 90 percent of Americans—90 percent—there will be a change in withholding that will be positive for them. In other words, they will have less money coming out of their paycheck.

Most people whom I represent in my home State of Ohio live paycheck to paycheck. This is really important. We talked earlier about how much this is going to be: $2,000 a family on average. That is the median income for a family in Ohio. Whatever the amount is, this is significant, and it is something that people are going to be pretty surprised about because so many people have misrepresented what this legislation is about. They are now seeing that it is about jobs, it is about wages, it is about bonuses, and so on. But they are also going to see in their own paycheck that it is about more take-home pay. It is about having a little healthier family budget.

So, again, as we went through this process, when we would have these debates I would say: I encourage people to look online, to look at the professionals, to look at a tax calculator. I said: The proof is in your paycheck. I think the proof will be in their paychecks—more hard-earned money staying in their pocket rather than going to Washington is something that my constituents will like, particularly if we see this economy start to pick up because of this tax reform bill, which, by the way, will result in a stronger economy.

Therefore, there will be more revenue through growth. So the Federal Government will have more revenue coming in. Every 1-percent increase in GDP—a 1-percent increase in growth in this country—means about $2.7 trillion in increased revenue coming into the Federal coffers. So that is more revenue coming in, not from a tax increase but from growth. That is the kind of revenue we want to have to be able to deal with many issues we face on the fiscal side, including our large deficits and debt, and that we will also begin to see as we see a better economy grow and develop because of this tax reform legislation. That is my strong belief and, again, I think the evidence is pretty clear that we are headed that way.

I want to commend the IRS for moving so quickly because this is pretty quick for us to turn it around. We just passed the legislation at the end of the year. It became effective on January 1. Here we are on January 11, and we are already seeing them changing the withholding that is going to go to the employers so that employers will withhold less from people's paychecks.

I also want to personally commend the Treasury Secretary, Steven Mnuchin, because I know he has a passion to make sure that our hard-working taxpayers get this tax relief as soon as possible. My sense is that he is the one who has promoted our moving quickly on this, in a professional and careful way so that the withholding tables are accurate but ensuring that we do allow people to begin to have a little more in their paychecks to be able to help make ends meet. Again, with most people I represent living paycheck to paycheck this is a big deal. Steve Mnuchin has been, I think, essential to getting this done as quickly as it has been done, as he was essential in the tax reform legislation, along with Gary Cohn of the White House, and others.

So this law is going to help middle-class families in three main ways.

First, it cuts taxes across the board. As I noted, the IRS announcement means that about 90 percent of taxpayers will see more money in their paychecks. They do this in a number of ways in the tax reform legislation, and I am talking about the reform notice here. It is Notice 1036. For those who want to go online and look at it, just go on the IRS website, irs.gov, and you can see it, the new withholding tables. They lay all of this out. Depending on how much your paycheck is, whether you are paid weekly, biweekly, semimonthly, or monthly, you see what your benefits are going to be. But it happens because there is a doubling of the standard deduction, and most people already take the standard deduction in my State of Ohio. Now more people will take it because there is a doubling and essentially a zero tax bracket. So it goes from about $12,000 a family to about $24,000 a family.

It also has a lowering of the rate of tax. So your tax rate is going to be lower relative to what it was before this.

Also, if you have kids, you get a doubling of the child tax credit, including part of that being an increase in the refundability of that if you don't have income tax liability. But if you still have expenses, if you still have payroll taxes, you get your benefit there.

So these are the kinds of things that, combined, end up with this notice going out saying: You are going to have a little more in your paycheck.

Second, the result of these tax cuts is going to take about 3 million Americans off the tax rolls altogether. I say ''about'' because the Joint Committee on Taxation doesn't have the final number yet but they have told me that it is at least 3 million Americans who now pay income taxes who will no longer have income tax liability. Now, they may have payroll tax liabilities, and they may have State and local taxes, but the point is that this was about Federal income reform and relief, and they are going to be out from under the IRS and again be able to help make ends meet. That is as a result of this legislation. I said earlier that about $2,000 per family is the average tax savings for a median family income in Ohio, $2,000 a year in tax relief is about the average.

This is important because as expenses have gone up over the last couple of decades—particularly, healthcare expenses in the last decade—wages have not. So wages have been relatively flat. In fact, on average, if you take inflation into account, they have been flat over the last couple of decades. We are beginning to see some increase in wages now. This is terrific, but with wages being flat and expenses up, people have had a real squeeze, and that middle-class squeeze is real in my home State. So this is extra money that families—many people living paycheck to paycheck—can use for expenses like healthcare, maybe make a car payment, save for retirement, or maybe help their kids.

The second goal of this tax reform, boosting the American economy, is also beginning to happen, as I said earlier. When the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act became law, immediately we saw a number of companies and businesses, small and large, around the country say: We are going to do something about this. I remember being home over the holidays and, actually, the day after Christmas, December 26, I was talking with friends, and a guy who owns a small manufacturing business, the brother of a friend of mine, said: Would you be willing to come out to our little company to talk about the tax bill?

I said: Sure, if we can figure it out schedulewise.

He said: Because I want to give my employees a bonus. I am looking at this tax bill, how it is going to affect our little business, and what it is going to do for us to be able to invest more in the company, and I want to give my employees a $1,000 bonus—everybody, 137 employees—and I also want to do something in terms of investing in my equipment because I want to make my people more competitive.

This is a small manufacturer in Cincinnati, OH, that makes a high-quality product, a precision product, and he wants to make sure that his people have the best equipment to be competitive. In his case, he has competition from overseas, as do a lot of American businesses, either directly or indirectly these days in an increasingly global economy, and he wants to be sure he is competitive. So I went there.

I went to the company, Sheffer Corporation, and I had the opportunity to talk about the tax reform bill and what it does across the board. He made the announcement, and I can tell you that people were very happy because these are folks who work hard and play by the rules. They aren't looking for any kind of a handout, but what they do want is to be able to know that if they work hard and do the right thing, they will be able to see a little better future for themselves and their kids and their grandkids and not have that middle-class squeeze we talked about, where wages are flat and expenses are up.

When the economy is not growing at a fast rate, which we have seen over the last decade, it is really a challenge. When we have an economy growing at 2 percent or less, it is tough to see that kind of open opportunity. Now, with this tax reform bill, I think we have a much better chance of seeing that. In fact, looking at some of the projections for next year, it looks like most people think the economy is going to grow at better than 2 percent—maybe 3 percent or maybe a little higher. We don't know. The point is that people are going to have more hope and opportunity.

It is not just Sheffer, though. In my hometown of Cincinnati, the Fifth Third Bank announced a companywide wage increase. So wages are going to go up for entry-level jobs and push all wages, as well as bonuses, for 13,000 employees in Cincinnati.

Across the country we have seen this. Tomorrow I will be at a plant in Cleveland, OH, that is putting more money into their pension plan. I think it is going to be about $15 million into a pension plan, which isn't in terrible shape, but it could be a lot healthier. That is going to help those employees directly.

Last Friday I was at a plant in Columbus, OH, a small manufacturer, Wolf Metals. They do an awesome job there competing with people all around the globe, and they are going to make more investments in equipment. In fact, I like this comparison to the tax bill because one of the pieces of equipment—a $1 million piece of equipment they are going to replace with the tax bill savings—is 32 years old. The Tax Code that we reformed was 31 years old. So it is time, don't you think, every few decades to actually reform our Tax Code, to bring it up to speed and make it more competitive to give our workers the edge, just as it is time to replace that machine to give his employees, what they need to compete globally.

Nationwide Insurance in Columbus, OH, is going to reinvest in their workers. Western & Southern Financial Group, Boeing, Comcast, and AT&T are some of the big companies we have heard about. They have all announced increased investments in their workers and new investments in their operations as a result of this law.

With regard to Walmart, they employ about 1.5 million Americans now. As I said, it is the largest employer in Ohio, with over 50,000 employees. They are going to raise wages, provide bonuses, and expand benefits for the workers as a result of this tax reform legislation.

So these are the results. This isn't a hypothetical. This is not something we are just saying might happen; it is something that is actually happening.

I think every single American is going to see a benefit from this because a stronger economy helps everyone. The 90 percent of people who see their withholdings change so that they have more tax relief are obviously going to see it. The people who work in the businesses we have talked are going to see it. But all of us benefit.

President John F. Kennedy once said something I think makes a lot of sense. He talked about a rising tide. He said, ''A rising tide lifts all . . . [ships].'' In other words, it helps to have a growing economy.

These results are going to help with regard to our competitiveness too. Right now, we have a situation where, because of our Tax Code, jobs and investments are going overseas. Now, we may not hear as much about this, but what we are going to see is fewer foreign companies buying U.S. companies and, therefore, less investment in jobs going overseas.

In 2016, the last year for which we have numbers, three times as many American companies were bought by foreign companies as the other way around. Ernst & Young has done a study saying that over the past 13 years, 4,700 American companies were purchased by a foreign company that otherwise would still be American if we had in place this tax bill that we have now.

Part of the result of this tax reform and tax cut legislation we are talking about today is obvious. We will see better jobs, higher wages, more investment in companies, more investment in retirement—all the things we all want to see, Republican and Democrat alike. Part of it is the tax cuts. Today, with the IRS announcement, people will see this in their paychecks. If not this next pay period, they will see it before February 15 because that is what the Treasury Department is requiring companies to do. So it is coming soon.

The other part we may not see, but is very real, is that the decline we have seen in American competitiveness—the result being that jobs and investment go overseas—is going to start to reverse, and it is none too soon. We needed to do this years ago. Many of us have been talking about it for years.

Finally, we are putting American workers in a position where they can compete and they can win. Isn't that what it is all about? I don't want these 4,700 companies going overseas. I don't want three times as many American companies bought by foreign companies instead of the other way around. We don't want that. What we want is people to say: I am going to invest in America and American workers.

I believe we have so many advantages in this country, and we are so blessed to be Americans. We have great universities. We have the opportunity here, through our workforce, to be as productive as anybody in the world. But when we have a tax code that is holding us back, it is unfair. It is our responsibility as Members of Congress to fix it, and that is what we have done. We should have done this sooner, but now that we have done it, I think we will see continued good results, as we have talked about today. We are going to see the opportunity for more investments in American workers, in American jobs, in American families, and in American businesses, and that investment will pay off for all of us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, today I was honored to be invited to the White House and included in a small meeting with President Trump, and it was very clear that I was invited to the White House to stand firm with President Trump today. We talked about immigration, and today I was proud to stand with our President.

We have been crystal clear. Chain migration must end, period. Any solution to our current immigration crisis that the U.S. Senate will consider must include ending chain migration. Before I talk about the details of what chain migration is, I want to put it in perspective.

Our immigration crisis today has been longstanding. We had a law written in 1965 and other changes in 1986, but it has really not been since 1991 that there has been any meaningful immigration change.

Three times in the last 11 years, well-intended people in this body and in the House have done a yeoman's job of trying to solve the comprehensive problem of immigration in the United States—without success. Here we are, again, right now, facing a deadline that the President has put on, and rightfully so. We have a sense of urgency.

The President has done a couple of things. He has defined the scope of the problem, and he has defined a sense of urgency for the people in Congress.

The legal immigration system right now is broken, but to deal with that, we have to deal with our entire immigration system in pieces. The reason I believe most past efforts have failed is that they tried to do a comprehensive solution.

Today, we are breaking it into three areas. One is our legal immigration system, and the next step might be our temporary work visas. Today, we bring in about 1.1 million legal immigrants a year, and I will talk about how that relates historically. But we issue about 2.2 million temporary work visas a year. Then the third issue is, of course, the people who are in the United States illegally.

President Trump had a meeting 2 days ago at the White House. In that meeting, he had Democrats, Republicans, Members of the House, and Members of this body, the Senate, and he drove consensus in that meeting.

It was very interesting that he had the media in there for almost 60 minutes for an open dialogue, and we heard from all people in that room about their position on these topics. I thought it was very interesting that the President had the courage to put this issue in front of the American people and create an air of transparency that we have not had on this issue in decades. In that meeting, he drove two conclusions: one, a scope of the problem and, two, a sense of urgency.

The scope is very simply defined as this: We have to address the DACA situation. The President has given Congress the date of March 5 to come up with a solution for these individuals who are in the country illegally—but not of their doing.

The second issue is border security. We know that border security is a national security issue as much as it is an immigration issue. The good news is that we know that illegal crossings of our southern border are down dramatically this year just because of a couple of reasons. One is the enforcement of current law, and the second is an understanding around the world that we are going to deal with this issue.

The third piece of the scope is chain migration. Any solution to the DACA situation or the legal immigration situation must include addressing the chain migration issue.

Then the last is this archaic diversity visa lottery we have in the United States that was related to at least one of the terrorist attacks, and chain migration was involved in both of the terrorist attacks we have recently experienced here in the United States.

With regard to DACA, the first item on the scope is that we know we have a March 5 deadline. There is a growing consensus in this body of how to deal with that, and there is great latitude on the part of Republicans in this body to deal with that in a way, with our Democratic partners here, to get a consensus bill that solves this once and for all.

The second is border security. Here, with the President's leadership and in these recent meetings with Democrats and Members of the House, there is a growing consensus that we can deal with the national security issues related to our southern border. We don't need a 2,000-mile wall, as even the President of the United States has said just this week. But there are things we need to do, and we need to do them quickly.

The President today said that his goal is to get this done this year. Coming from the real world, I know that is possible. This President, who comes from the real world and is an outsider to this community here in Washington, knows that is possible, and I think he is going to hold us accountable to that.

The third area I mentioned before is chain migration. I will say more about that in a minute.

The fourth is the diversity lottery. This diversity lottery has not served us well. It is not the number; it is the way it is being handled. We know there is fraud, and we know this is a loophole terrorists are now using to put people in their chain inside the United States.

There is a growing consensus on these four items of this scope that the President has defined, and we had a consensus in that room 2 days ago in the White House. There is consensus that we can get to a solution within the timeframe here, but let me be very clear. Any deal—whether it is in business, sports, or certainly in politics—has to have some symmetry. Therefore, any solution for the DACA situation must include a solution for our chain migration crisis.

We must continue working with the President. He is holding us accountable. He is moving at a business pace, but to do that, we really have to talk about chain migration. I understand there are other areas that we have to talk about, as well, but there is a lot of disinformation about what it really is.

Chain migration is nothing more than a law put in place in 1965 to allow legal permanent residents and U.S. citizens to sponsor people for U.S. citizenship. It was put in place in 1965. It has been updated a little bit. But today, a legal permanent resident—for the most part, this is someone who has come in qualified in our legal immigration system, who goes through a 5-year waiting period, who eventually can apply for U.S. citizenship. While they are a legal permanent resident, almost immediately they can sponsor spouses, minor children, and unmarried adult children. That is current law.

Once they become a citizen—and this is true of any U.S. citizen, whether they were a recent immigrant or were born here; a U.S. citizen can sponsor their parents, their spouses, minor children, unmarried adult children, married adult children, and siblings.

The issue around this is pretty simple. We have a chart here which shows that in 1965, when this law was put in place, approximately 300,000 U.S. citizens were brought into the United States in that year under this system. Last year, we had, roughly, about 1.1 million. We had a high of somewhere close to 1.3 million. But we can see, this is a geometric progression that increases unbounded. It is not really the number here, but it is the balance that we have lost.

What happens, and the criticism I have as a business guy looking at this, is that the individuals who determine who future immigrants are going to be are current and recent immigrants.

We don't have many guidelines. We have a country cap system which says that most countries have a percentage of the total they have to have, and they can't exceed that. But there is no real cap here, such that if all these numbers were maximized, then over time you would see this number go up geometrically.

We have a second chart that shows this and demonstrates that over a very short period of time, the numbers can increase dramatically, as we have seen in the last 40 or so years.

There have been studies on this. Princeton has a study which says that right now, based on recent history, any immigrant who comes in sponsors somewhere around 3.5 future immigrants within a short period of time. We don't know what the 3.5 immigrants do when they get sponsored and become citizens or legal permanent residents, but if you extrapolate this out—let's say we start with 2 million as a starting point. They become citizens and they sponsor—let's just say the number is 3. In the first iteration, now we have 6 million people sponsored by the original 2 million; then the second iteration goes from 6 to 18; and in the fourth iteration we are at 54 million people. So all of a sudden, as you can see, there is no limit here, other than the country caps, and the country caps do not limit the total number. They limit the mix.

What is wrong with this system? The problem, as I said just now, is that future immigrants are determined by current immigrants without any regard to their ability to participate in the system.

The second one is that because you can bring parents in, immigrants who come in under this system and become U.S. citizens can bring their parents in, and all of a sudden, now we have an aged population coming in—not a younger population—and they then draw social services on an already bankrupt system.

Chain migration is not based on skill or the ability to participate in the current economic situation in the United States. Last year, we brought in 1.1 million immigrants. Of that, 140,000 were immigrants who were related to the worker; 70,000 were the workers, and the other 70,000 were their immediate family. So we can see that over 950,000 people were derivative iterations of what I am talking about.

The third thing is that if chain migration is not stopped, it continues to incentivize future illegal immigration because of what you can do once you get here.

Chain migration is another problem with the DACA situation because if you permit a pathway to some sort of legalized situation in the United States for the DACA population, you end up with a situation where those people who are then legalized can sponsor their parents. The problem with that is, the DACA population is not violating fair law, but their parents have.

The last issue I will bring up is, the national security issues are profound. We have seen two national security incidents just this past year related to chain migration and the diversity visa lottery. There is more than enough evidence to show this has to be addressed.

Again, any symmetric deal on immigration has to include, I believe, the four points the President talked about the other day. We have to deal with the DACA situation. We have to deal with our border security, and that means building a wall. We have to deal with the chain migration issues, and we have to deal with this diversity visa lottery. The President demands it. The American people demand it. Today, as a matter of fact, over 80 percent of America believes we need to deal with the DACA situation. Likewise, 72 percent of people in America believe the immigration law should be the worker, the spouse, and their immediate minor children only—72 percent. I can't think of another issue that has come before this body where we had those sorts of agreements in the American population.

The President wants results. He has charged leadership in this body and the House and those of us who have been involved in this for some time to get to it. There is a March 5 deadline looming. Some people say there is a January 19 date that has to do with funding the government. I personally believe the two have nothing to do with each other, but we want a sense of urgency. The President has demanded it. We need it.

We know there are going to be other steps. This is not the last step to this problem. We know we have to deal with how we bring people to the United States. We need a balance. Of course, we want to continue to be the open arms of the world today in terms of welcoming people to our shores. Just look at what is written on the Statue of Liberty. Who can argue with that? At the same time, we have to have a balance. Right now, we don't bring in people who are contributing to the economy, for the most part, and we are eliminating—we are not bringing in people who can contribute. All we are asking for is a dialogue to bring balance back to that system.

I am excited to be a part of this dialogue because I believe we have a unique, historic opportunity with people on the other side and people on this side who generally have hearts that are not that dissimilar with regard to how to deal with the DACA population, how to deal with the Dreamers population, how to deal with future immigrant populations that are coming to the United States. We can have those debates, and we are having them now. I welcome input from all points. I am anxious to get to the bottom line of this.

I will close with this. It is exciting to have leadership from the executive branch on this issue that has put the responsibility back on this body to come up with something that will not allow us to be back here in the next 3, 5, or 20 years dealing with this same problem. We have a historic opportunity. It is time to get to it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I have been consistently voting against cloture motions to proceed to debate on judicial nominations, and I would like to take this opportunity to explain why. The Senate has a constitutional obligation to provide advice and consent on judicial nominees, and I take this obligation very seriously.

The American people depend on the Senate to fully consider and vet each judicial nominee because throughout the course of their lifetime appointment, judges will issue rulings and opinions that touch each of our lives. The process of nominating, considering, and confirming judges should be a deliberate one. Its purpose should not be to confirm as many judges as quickly as possible. Senators should be able to provide input on who should sit on the Federal bench; Senators should have an adequate opportunity to hear from third-party experts about the records and qualifications of each nominee; and Senators should have enough time to question and examine a nominee during a confirmation hearing.

Insisting on a deliberate and comprehensive process is not, as some of my Republican colleagues might argue, an effort to deny the President his prerogative to nominate judges to lifetime appointments to the Federal bench. Instead, this process is essential in determining whether each nominee is qualified for the job and can separate their personal ideology from the decisions he or she renders. For a lifetime appointment to the Federal bench, this shouldn't be too much to ask.

Over the past year, we have observed a number of concerning issues in the nomination and confirmation process for Federal judges that need to be corrected. The President has essentially outsourced the judicial selection process to two organizations with strong, ideologically driven agendas—the Federalist Society and the Heritage Foundation.

The Federalist Society, for example, describes itself as ''a group of libertarians and conservatives dedicated to reforming the legal order.'' This is a group that has supported legal efforts to undermine environmental protection, erode the constitutional right to choose, and blur the lines between church and State.

The Heritage Foundation describes its mission as one to ''promote conservative public policies.'' Over the past few years alone, this organization, this group, has fought to undermine the Affordable Care Act, oppose LGBTQ rights, and erode the ability of Federal agencies to issue lifesaving regulations. It is not unreasonable to assume that these organizations, through their close association with the White House, expect their ideologically driven agendas to be reflected in the nominees they recommend.

While I concur with Justice Rehnquist's assertion that no judge joins a court tabula rasa, or as a blank slate, we should have a baseline expectation that lifetime appointees should be able to render justice free from their own personal ideologies. At the same time as the Trump administration relies more heavily on the Federalist Society and Heritage Foundation to select its judicial nominees, it is devaluing the work done by the American Bar Association. The ABA has reviewed and vetted judicial nominees in a nonpartisan manner for over 60 years. With the exception of George W. Bush and now Donald Trump, Presidents in both parties have consulted with the ABA prior to officially nominating to the bench.

President Obama, for example, provided a great demonstration for how this process should work. Working closely with the ABA, President Obama routinely submitted potential candidates for scrutiny prior to their formal nomination. After conducting their independent, nonpartisan reviews, the ABA issued ''not qualified'' ratings for 14 candidates who had been proposed by President Obama. President Obama followed the ABA's recommendation and did not formally nominate any candidates rated ''not qualified.''

Under President Trump, on the other hand, we no longer wait for the ABA to complete its assessment of nominees prior to a nomination hearing itself, much less before the nomination. We no longer have an opportunity to review the ABA's report and, in many cases, do not have the chance to question an ABA representative at a nomination hearing about its review of the nominee.

We have seen the serious consequences of this change in practice in two high-profile nominations this year.

Despite having never tried a case, President Trump nominated Brett Talley to serve the District Court for the Middle District of Alabama. Mr. Talley was nominated, given a hearing, and listed for a Judiciary Committee vote before the ABA could even finish its evaluation. Given his complete lack of qualifications for the job, it wasn't

surprising that the ABA unanimously rated him ''not qualified.'' Because he was rushed through the nomination process, we only learned later that Mr. Talley failed to disclose that his wife works in the White House Counsel's office. After two Republicans on the committee—Senator GRASSLEY and Senator KENNEDY—expressed their opposition to Mr. Talley, he, fortunately, withdrew from consideration.

We were not so lucky with Steven Grasz, who was recently confirmed to the Eighth Circuit. Mr. Grasz was nominated and scheduled for a Judiciary Committee hearing before the ABA could complete its review. By the time the ABA finished its exhaustive evaluation, during which it found him to be not qualified, Mr. Grasz was scheduled to appear before the Judiciary Committee in less than 48 hours. This was not nearly enough time to adequately address and assess the ABA's conclusion that Mr. Grasz would not be able to serve as a judge without the undue influence of his personal beliefs.

Courts are supposed to protect the rights of minorities, and it is troubling to reflect on the ABA's conclusion that Mr. Grasz would be unable to divorce his positions on issues like reproductive and LGBTQ rights from the cases he will hear on the Eighth Circuit. Circuit court judges are only one step away from the U.S. Supreme Court and deserve to be scrutinized closely in the Judiciary Committee. Unfortunately, last year, the Judiciary Committee overrode the objections of the minority to hold four nomination hearings with more than one circuit judge nominee considered simultaneously.

To put this in some historical context, the Judiciary Committee held four such hearings in the entire 8 years Barack Obama was President, and it held each of these hearings with the consent of the Republican minority on the committee. During hearings on circuit and district court nominees, each committee member generally has only 5 minutes to question nominees—many of whom are highly controversial and deserve maximum scrutiny. Five minutes, which includes the time the nominee takes to respond, is not nearly enough time to engage in meaningful dialogue about a nominee's judicial philosophy or to examine controversial cases a nominee may have decided in the past.

The American people deserve much more as we consider lifetime appointments to the Federal bench. I am also concerned about the erosion of the blue-slip process, which has traditionally been a collaborative mechanism to enable Senators to confer with the White House on nominees from their States. Although there have been exceptions over the years, Presidents and Senate majorities of both parties have both respected the blue-slip process.

In 2009, the Democrats controlled the White House and had a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate. Every Senate Republican signed a letter to President Obama urging him to respect the blue-slip process. I would like to read a passage from that letter for emphasis.

> Regretfully, if we are not consulted on, and approve of, a nominee from our states, the Republican Conference will be unable to support moving forward on that nominee.
>
> Despite press reports that the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee now may be considering changing the Committee's practice of observing senatorial courtesy, we, as a Conference, expect it to be observed evenhandedly and regardless of party affiliation. And we will act to preserve this principle and the rights of our colleagues if it is not.
>
> Because of the profound impact that lifetenured federal judges can have in our society, the founders made their appointment a shared constitutional responsibility.

This is the Republican conference asking the Democratic majority, the Democratic President, and the chair of the Judiciary Committee to observe the blue-slip process.

President Obama, and the Democratic majority at that time, upheld the blue-slip process without exception. Last year, the Judiciary Committee held a nomination hearing for David Stras to serve on the Eighth Circuit despite his not receiving two positive blue-slips from his home State Senators. This is the first time since the early years of the George W. Bush administration that the Judiciary Committee has held a hearing for a nominee when a home State Senator has not returned a blue slip. If the Senate proceeds to vote on and confirm Mr. Stras, it will be the first time since 1989 and only the third time in the last 100 years that a judicial nominee will be confirmed without having two positive blue slips.

I, certainly, take the chairman at his word that this was a onetime exception to the blue-slip process, but I will hold him and the President to the same standard they demanded from President Obama in 2009.

I will continue to rigorously defend the Senate's constitutional obligation to provide advice and consent on lifetime appointees to the Federal bench. Until we return to a normal process through which we can provide this kind of advice and consent, I will continue to oppose invoking cloture on any judicial nominee, and I encourage my colleagues to join me in this position.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO JEFF COOK

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, every week, I try to come down to the floor and talk a little bit about my State and do a little bit of bragging in what we call our ''Alaskan of the Week'' series. Now, there is a lot to talk about with regard to Alaska. We would love for the people in the Gallery and the people who are watching to come out and visit our great State. It will be the trip of a lifetime. The scenery, of course, is gorgeous, and the mountains are rugged, but it is really the people who make my State so special—rugged, self-sufficient, kind, and very generous people all across an area that is over two and one-half times the size of Texas.

I apologize to my Texas colleagues, as they get a little upset when I talk about that, but it is true.

Every week, we have been recognizing a group or a person who has worked to make Alaska a stronger place, a stronger community—a State that, I think, is the best State in our great Nation. I call these individuals our Alaskans of the Week.

Today, I take all who are watching to Alaska's interior, to a town called Fairbanks, AK, where about 32,000 of my fellow Alaskans live. It is a beautiful, wonderful place. Fairbanks is hot in the summer. My wife and I were married there many years ago. It was over 90 degrees when we got married in August, but it is really cold in the winter. We spent January 1, 2000—the millennium celebration—in Fairbanks with our kids and our family. It was 50 below zero without the windchill—cold. It is a place I love, where my wife was born and raised, where we lived, where my in-laws still live, and the place Jeff Cook, our Alaskan of the Week, calls home.

Jeff has been in Fairbanks his whole life. His parents moved to Fairbanks in 1938. He went to college in Oregon, and his wife Sue was there, but the couple moved back to Alaska, to Fairbanks, and started a family. He is now 74 years young. He and Sue have four children, two of whom have settled in Fairbanks, and they have five grandchildren. He is the patriarch of not only a great family but of many community organizations throughout Fairbanks and, really, Alaska.

Throughout the years, Jeff has had a career in real estate, in business. He has sat on numerous boards—community boards—and been in community groups. Let me just give a couple of examples of his community work, of his sitting on the board of the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, the University of Alaska Board of Regents, the Rotary Club of Fairbanks, the Greater Fairbanks Community Hospital Foundation board, the board for the State of Alaska Chamber of Commerce, the Rasmuson Foundation board, and the boards for Alaska Airlines and Wells Fargo Bank. This is an individual—a leader—who has been involved in his community for decades. He is a perfect example of the community-minded individual whom we call our Alaskan of the Week.

We could be done right here. It is a pretty amazing career—a great example of someone who is dedicated to his State, to his country, to his community. Yet Jeff has done a lot more. He recently used all of his energy, all of his experience, all of his community involvement to embark on what really has become an extraordinary fundraising campaign to raise money for cancer research—so important for our Nation, so important for Alaska. This became a personal issue for Jeff. Let me tell you this story.

Last March, he and Sue received, really, a devastating phone call from their youngest daughter Chrissy, who is 34 and lives in Las Vegas with her husband and 2-year-old daughter. She called to tell them the bad news—really, the horrible news that millions of American families hear every year—that she had been diagnosed with breast cancer and that she had a positive match for the BRCA2 gene, which increases one's risk of developing breast cancer or ovarian cancer.

Jeff and Sue felt powerless against this disease when they heard this. He said: ''When you're a parent, it doesn't matter how old your children are; you're supposed to slay the dragons and conquer the monsters'' and protect your kids.

If that were not devastating enough, weeks later, he and his wife made sure that everyone in the Cook family got tested. Unfortunately, five other members of the family tested positive for this gene. They are all being monitored now.

Here is what Jeff said: ''We couldn't conquer the cancer, but we just had to do something.'' He said he had heard about the American Cancer Society's ''Real Men Wear Pink'' campaign—a fundraising program that is held in October. October, as everybody knows, is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. About 3,000 men from across the country participated in the program this year, the ''Real Men Wear Pink'' campaign.

So Jeff started. He started with the pretty impressive goal of raising $5,000 for cancer research and an email list of about 70 people, most of whom were in Fairbanks. Within 90 seconds after sending his first email, he had raised $1,000. Pretty good. Then what happened? The community of Fairbanks, of Alaska—really of the whole country—started opening up to his plea. Donations kept coming in. The more donations he received, the more Jeff worked at raising funds. Many of the people he knew were donating, but what happened? Strangers from across Alaska and from across the country started to send money for this very worthy cause of breast cancer research—often with heartfelt stories of their loved ones, of their own struggles with cancer, or of those of their kids. Someone from a small town in New York State sent him $250.

As the weeks passed, he began to pay attention to how he was stacking up against others across the country. Jeff is a competitive guy. He is very successful. When he reached No. 10 in the country in terms of fundraising for this very important matter, he told one of his friends there was no way he could beat the No. 1 person ahead of him who had raised $30,000—no way. That was a high number. Now, Fairbanks is not a very big city, and the other people on the list above him were from much bigger cities from across the country and had what he thought were larger connections and larger networks. Yet his friend told him: ''Don't underestimate yourself, Jeff.'' After he read that, he said: ''Okay. I'm going for broke.'' This is what he did.

He was all in. He started fundraising everywhere. When it was all said and done, on this campaign, Jeff Cook, from Fairbanks, AK—a town of a little over 30,000 people in Alaska's interior—was the No. 1 fundraiser in America for breast cancer research this year—No. 1. In terms of the American Cancer Society's ''Real Men Wear Pink'' campaign, Jeff Cook raised over $120,000.

If my colleagues were down here, I would ask them for a round of applause.

That was for the entire country. Think about that. We come down to this floor a lot and debate cancer research, medical research—very important. Here is one individual in America who raised over $120,000 through his own energy and passion and for the love of his daughter. This is a testament to Jeff's perseverance, but it is also about the good people in Fairbanks, throughout Alaska, and really throughout the country.

As Jeff said, ''It says so much about our community. There was such an outpouring of love, goodness and generosity. That was the most touching part of [this entire experience].''

What else did Jeff learn? He learned that his daughter Chrissy, who underwent chemotherapy and a double mastectomy, is stronger than he ever imagined. She is recovering well, but she is still in recovery.

I am going to humbly ask my colleagues and those who are watching here and those who are watching on TV to put a prayer in for Chrissy and other cancer victims like Senator HIRONO, who was just on the floor. Put them on your prayer lists as they are in recovery—all of them.

I want to end with a big thanks to everybody in Alaska and across the country who are part of the ''Real Men Wear Pink'' campaign who are literally raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for breast cancer research.

I thank Jeff, of course, for not underestimating himself but for another—another—mission well done as a community leader in Fairbanks and throughout Alaska.

Congratulations for being our Alaskan of the Week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I would have joined Senator SULLIVAN in a round of applause. I thank him for sharing that inspiring story.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon just to talk very briefly about the real-world impacts of the decisions we are going to make in the next week or so regarding the future of the budget and to really implore my Republican colleagues here, most especially the Republican leadership, to get this job done and not put us on another continuing resolution. This is not a theoretical or a rhetorical exercise; this is about people's lives and our failure to do our job—our failure to pass a budget and to extend lifesaving programs, like the Children's Health Insurance Program. It is not about politics, and it is not about headlines. It is not about point scoring. It is about making people's lives better.

I really just want to share three stories from Connecticut to talk about the impact of the decisions that we are going to make with respect to the Federal budget. Let me first talk about this often esoteric-sounding concept of parity. One of the most important things that we are discussing is how many additional dollars are going to be in the budget for 2017 and 2018 versus in the prior fiscal year.

There seems to be fairly widespread agreement that we are underresourced when it comes to the Department of Defense. We have a multitude of kinetic challenges that are presented to the United States. A group of us just got briefed, once again today, by our military leadership on the scope and extent of the North Korean threat. I agree with many of my Republican colleagues that we need to increase funding for national security, but national security is not just housed in the Department of Defense. National security is also about making sure that our families are secure and that our communities are secure.

We believe that we should increase funds for the Department of Defense, and we should also make sure that our schools have teachers. We should also make sure that we have cops on the streets. We should also make sure that our bridges aren't falling down. That is national security as well. It is not too much to ask to make sure that our security is taken care of internationally and domestically as well.

Let me give you a perfect example of how you can't just plus-up defense spending and leave the rest of the budget unattended to. We love defense spending in Connecticut. Why? Because we make a lot of big ticket items for the Department of Defense. We make the helicopters at Sikorsky. We make the jet engines at Pratt & Whitney. We make the submarines at Electric Boat.

We are proud of all of them, but let me tell you what happens at Electric Boat if you plus-up the Defense Department at the expense of all of the other discretionary accounts. We are going to be building a lot more submarines over the next 10 years. We are now building two fast attack submarines a year. We are going to start building the new ballistic submarines, the *Columbia* class, and Electric Boat needs to hire 14,000 employees over the next 10 years. Much of that is because their workforce is older, and so they are going to have a lot of retirements. They have to find 14,000 new employees over the next 10 years. If they can't, we cannot make the submarines in the United States, or we cannot make the parts that go into

the submarines in the United States. Either the job will not get done, or the work will happen somewhere else in another country. You can't assemble the submarines anywhere other than at Electric Boat, but those parts will go to foreign companies rather than American companies.

The way in which we are going to fill the 14,000 jobs is through the Department of Labor. The Department of Labor has a partnership with an organization called the Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline. That is a public-private partnership that seeks to train hundreds of individuals in the skills necessary to build the submarines. They received 4,500 applications over the past year. They can't place all those people because they only get a certain amount of funding from the Department of Labor, but they were able to train 500 new workers for Electric Boat, putting them right into those jobs that are necessary to build these submarines. The problem is the money for that program is running out, and with another CR, they can't get renewed funding for that program. So if you plus-up the Defense Department without increasing funding for the Department of Labor, you can't get the stuff that you want to build for the Department of Defense because you can't get the workers in order to fill the contracts.

If you don't renew this contract, if you don't renew this funding agreement with the Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline, the work will not get done, and the jobs will go overseas. I just want my colleagues to understand that this isn't some philosophical belief that we need the same amount of money in the Department of Defense as we need in the rest of the budget. It is practical. It is practical because we need domestic economic security, but you also can't execute the Department of Defense contracts without funding in the rest of the budget.

Second, let me talk to you about the real-world implications of not funding the Children's Health Insurance Program. You know that healthcare more than any other issue has become a political football. Democrats toss it to the Republicans, and Republicans toss it back to Democrats. Yet there is no other issue that is more personal than this. If someone doesn't have healthcare for their family, nothing else in their life can happen.

I want to share one story. These letters and emails are flooding into our offices with respect to the real-world impact of not funding the Children's Health Insurance Program.

In Connecticut, letters have gone out to families whose children are insured through CHIP, telling them that by the end of this month—that is 20 days away—they lose their insurance. So here is what Tara from Washington, CT, writes. She said:

> Despite our full time employment—

She works as a small business manager, and her husband is a full-time electrical apprentice—

> my husband and I do not make enough money to buy health insurance for our children in addition to our other mandatory expenses.

She explains that her children go to daycare, which costs $1,800 a month, which she says is more than their mortgage plus taxes and insurance.

To go back to her letter, she says:

> This is where the [Children's Health Insurance Program] comes into play in our lives. I cannot even begin to tell you the anxiety I faced when I was pregnant with my daughter, crying every day because I didn't know how we were going to make ends meet. Thank God for a family friend who happened to be an insurance agent. She told us about [CHIP] and suddenly some of that anxiety was quelled.
>
> We have been blessed to have [CHIP] in our lives.

I say CHIP. She says in the letter HUSKY. HUSKY is the name of the CHIP program in Connecticut.

> We have been blessed to have [CHIP] in our lives. Last month my daughter got RSV and was prescribed a nebulizer. Two weeks ago, my son caught it from her and that developed into a double ear infection and pink eye, requiring two expensive medications. The co-pays and premiums are manageable though and they got the care they needed.
>
> I read in the [local paper] this weekend that letters were going out to parents of children . . . telling them that their coverage will end on January 31, 2018.

She is writing this in December.

> We are a week away from Christmas, and what should be a happy time of year has now turned into stress and depression. How am I going to get insurance for my kids? My daughter turns two on February 10th, how am I going to pay for her well visit? I can't just skip it, they won't allow her back into daycare.
>
> I cannot believe the dysfunction going on in this country. I cannot believe tax cuts for the wealthy have taken precedent over the health of my kids. . . . What is Congress doing to ensure their continued healthcare?

This story is repeated literally millions of times over all across this country. People went through the holiday anxious and depressed because they were convinced that we weren't taking seriously the healthcare of their kids. When we debate the budget, it has to have attached to it a long-term, if not permanent, extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program because there are families just like Tara out there who are doing everything we ask them to. She is full-time employed, her husband is full-time employed, and they can't afford health insurance for their kids without CHIP.

Let me talk to you about the importance of making sure that we get the right amount of disaster funding to Texas, Florida, and in particular Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico matters to us in Connecticut because we have the largest percentage of our population with Puerto Rican roots than any State in the country. We are so proud of that. The Puerto Rican community in Connecticut is vibrant, economically and culturally, powerful politically, involved in our cities and towns and in State government.

The Governor of Puerto Rico has requested $94 billion for Maria recovery and rebuilding, and I am just back from Puerto Rico. I can report to you that the island is still in crisis. One hundred days after the hurricane hit, more than half of the country—half of the households—still don't have electricity.

If that were happening in Connecticut, Alaska, or Louisiana, there would be riots in the streets, but for some reason it is acceptable in Puerto Rico. We are 100 days after the hurricane, and we still haven't approved a disaster recovery package, and the Trump administration is nickel-and-diming the island.

I walked through the poorest, most densely populated neighborhood in San Juan, the capital of the Commonwealth. They have no power. Mold is growing in these homes because they can't dry out the moisture without electricity. Kids are enduring more frequent and more intense bouts of asthma. People are dying because they can't refrigerate their medication or keep their ventilation equipment running. This is what is happening in the United States of America. We need to authorize significant, robust funding for Puerto Rico and for Texas and Florida. We need to do it now.

We need to do it now because the day that I arrived on the island—I think it was January 2—it was reported to us that there was the highest volume of people leaving Puerto Rico since the hurricane—on that day, January 2. The exodus is getting more intense. More people are leaving, not less. Why? Because they don't think we are committed to rebuilding the island. Puerto Ricans don't think that Congress is serious about putting back on the electricity. They waited 1 month. They waited 2 months. They waited 3 months, and then they said: Enough, we can't put our kids in these conditions.

They started leaving in record numbers. They were leaving right off the bat, but they are now leaving in record numbers. While most of them are coming to places like Florida, many of them are coming to Connecticut. Why? Because when they make that move, they often go first to stay with friends. Because we have such a compassionate, large Puerto Rican community in Connecticut, many of these families are coming to Connecticut.

So let me just give you a couple of the numbers here. We asked our school systems to try to keep a rough track of how many new Puerto Rican students are showing up. Our cities are small in Connecticut. We don't have a city that is much bigger than 100,000. In Hartford, they have 388 new Puerto Rican students—''new'' meaning having come since the hurricane from the island. Waterbury, CT, has 268. New Britain, a very small city, has 213. Bridgeport has 179. These are kids who are glad to have shelter and schooling in Connecticut, but they don't want to be in Connecticut. They came under duress. They came to Connecticut as refugees. They want to be back in Puerto Rico.

The stress that this is putting on the schools is serious. We are in a budget crisis in Connecticut. Schools have already had their funding cut from Hartford. Yet these schools are now having to staff up to deal with this influx of students from Puerto Rico. We are glad to do it. We see it as our obligation, and we know that these kids will be a part of Connecticut's strength. But it is not easy to do when we haven't authorized any money to help States like Connecticut to deal with this influx of students. At McDonough Middle School in Hartford, these kids are thriving, but they have had to set up a new immersion lab to handle all these kids coming in. They have had to hire new staff to teach English as a second language. These are schools that were already seeing their funding hemorrhage from the State government.

The impact is real on McDonough Middle School. The impact is real on Tara and her family from Washington. The impact is real for an important supplier in our industrial base, Electric Boat. If we just continue to push CR after CR, these families, schools, and companies will not succeed. This isn't about political headlines. This isn't about numbers on a page. This is about real-world impact for businesses, families, and schools.

So let's get the job done. Let's write a budget. Let's at least agree to the overall budget numbers. Let's fund the Children's Health Insurance Program. Let's get Puerto Rico, Florida, and Texas everything they need. News flash: That is our job.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO EARL BUSH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Earl Bush, the judge-executive in Bracken County, KY, who will retire at the end of his current term. In my home State, a judge-executive is the highest elected county official, and since 2011, Earl has earned a reputation for accomplishment on behalf of the people of Bracken County.

After graduating from Western Kentucky University, Earl served our Nation in the U.S. Air Force, earning the rank of captain. For the next three decades, Earl worked at Dayton Power and Light in various construction management positions.

In 2010, Earl decided to put his efforts to work for his neighbors because, like so many of us in public life, he wanted to make a difference. Along with his team, Earl has spent his time in office working to help the men and women of Bracken County. As a former county judge-executive myself, I know firsthand about Earl's wide-ranging responsibilities. Looking at his results, Earl seems to have found success.

In addition to equipment upgrades and road improvements, Earl has also championed the addition of recreational trails and a fishing lake at a local industrial park. Working with other officials, Earl also lowered taxes and helped the county's largest employer bring new jobs to Bracken County. By nearly any standard, that is an impressive record of accomplishment for a public official.

I have enjoyed every opportunity I have had to work with Earl. Throughout his time in office, he has been a strong partner as we serve the people of Kentucky. In retirement, Earl looks forward to spending more time with his wife and grandchildren. He also plans to work with his brother to restore classic cars. Along with many in Bracken County, I wish him a relaxing next chapter, and I am confident that my Senate colleagues will join me.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for votes relative to the nominations of Michael Lawrence Brown to be a U.S. district judge for the Northern District of Georgia and Walter David Counts III to be a U.S. district judge for the Western District of Texas.

On vote No. 7, had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on confirmation of the Brown nomination.

On vote No. 8, had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on the motion to invoke cloture on the Counts nomination.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for the votes on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 389, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 435, and the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 435.

On vote No. 7, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 389.

On vote No. 8, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 435.

On vote No. 9, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 435.

Mr. President, I was also necessarily absent for the vote on the motion to proceed to the House message to accompany S. 139.

On vote No. 10, had I been present, I would have voted nay on the motion to proceed to the House message to accompany S. 139.•

250TH ANNIVERSARY OF SANFORD, MAINE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the city of Sanford, ME. Sanford was built with a spirit of determination and resiliency that still guides the community today, and this is a time to celebrate the generations of hard-working and caring people who have made it such a wonderful place to live, work, and raise families.

The year of Sanford's incorporation, 1768, was but one milestone in a long journey of progress, a journey that is inextricably linked to the history of our Nation. In 1661, British Army General William Phillips purchased large tracts of land from two chiefs of local Abenaki Tribes for his growing lumber business. Called Phillipstown, the lands remained largely uninhabited due to the ongoing conflict between England and France for control of the northern American Colonies.

Hostilities in the region ceased in 1739, and the new community grew rapidly, reaching a population of 1,500 within just a few decades. At the time the town was incorporated in 1768, Maine was a province of Massachusetts, and the Governor of Massachusetts used the occasion to honor Peleg Sanford, stepson of William Phillips and former four-term British Governor for the State of Rhode Island.

When the American Colonists fought for independence, Sanford stood with them. The city's cemeteries contain the headstones of 33 patriots who joined freedom's cause.

With the Mousam River providing power, Sanford was home to more than a dozen sawmills and gristmills. In the 1860s, Sanford truly became a city of industry when Thomas Goodall established a massive textile mill that produced everything from material for clothing to railroad car upholstery. Skilled textile workers poured into Sanford from Europe and French Canada, giving the city an international flavor that still exists today.

In the 1950s, the owners of Sanford's textile mills began moving operations to southern States, leaving behind thousands of jobless workers and vast, empty factories. Local business and community leaders responded with the energy and determination that defines the city, traveling throughout the country to entice new employers. Noting this remarkable effort, LIFE magazine called Sanford ''the town that refused to die.'' Today Sanford has a diversified industrial base, from textiles to technology.

Sanford is among Maine's oldest municipalities, but it also is Maine's newest city, having changed its charter from the town form of government to that of a city in 2013. It is also new in the sense of embracing the technology of the future through the construction of both the largest municipally owned broadband network in Maine for economic development and a 50-megawatt solar array for renewable energy generation. The new Academic and Career