

by a group of brave high school students, the friends and classmates of the fallen, whom I will be sitting down with tomorrow. Their passion and eloquence have been a moral course for change.

Thank God for these students. They are urging us now to have a debate in Congress about something very straightforward: What can we do to stop very dangerous guns from getting into the hands of very dangerous people? How can we keep Americans safe at our movie theaters, at night clubs, at concerts and churches, and above all, at our schools?

We need to get something real and significant accomplished. The problem of gun violence in this country is too immediate for another delay, too severe for half measures.

President Trump has been talking about comprehensive background checks. We are glad to hear that. We are glad that folks are finally starting to talk about the real issues of gun safety again. Democrats believe that, at the very least, in the wake of Parkland, we should strive for comprehensive background checks—closing the loopholes that allow anyone, regardless of a violent history or a history of mental illness, to walk into a gun show or go on the internet and purchase a gun. More than 90 percent of Americans and the vast majority of gun owners support comprehensive background checks. What are we waiting for?

There seems to be a discussion about a more limited proposal, the Fix NICS bill, sponsored by Senators CORNYN and MURPHY, which improves the existing background check system in a few ways. I support the bill and I am a co-sponsor, but the Fix NICS bill is not what President Trump has been talking about this afternoon and at other times when he says “comprehensive background checks.” Fix NICS was written to address one specific issue that was brought to light after the horrific shooting in a church in Sutherland Springs, TX. It is a proposal to address that specific problem, but it leaves unaddressed a host of crucial gun safety issues, including, and especially, the loopholes in our background check system. If we only pass Fix NICS, we will be right back here after the next shooting in nearly the same place. If all Congress does in response to the Parkland shooting is to pass Fix NICS, we will not be doing our job. We must do much more than that.

This week, the Democratic caucus will discuss what policies we believe will most effectively curb the uniquely American epidemic of gun violence. We will propose them and work with our Republican colleagues to perfect and, hopefully, enact them. I sincerely believe we can make progress even on an issue as fraught as this one, but it will require our Republican friends to break free from the iron grip of the NRA.

Our Republican friends face a simple choice: Do something real on guns or please the NRA. Doing both is impossible.

The NRA's No. 1 goal is to make sure nothing meaningful on gun safety ever happens. When there are national issues, when there are horrible shootings, they make a feint as if they might try to do something, but then they pull right back because they want nothing to be done.

As an example, after the shooting in Las Vegas, Senators tried to do something here in the Senate about bump stocks, the modification that allowed the perpetrator to automatically fire his arsenal of assault weapons. The NRA and many Republicans said that they would be willing to work on it, but then what? The NRA pushed the weakest possible measure—a simple review of the issue by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, which had already said that they couldn't do anything about the bill. And then what happened? Nothing.

Now the NRA has pushed the House Republicans to attach the Fix NICS bill—the Cornyn-Murphy bill, a very modest improvement focused on one issue that happened in Texas, but it was not relevant to what happened here in Parkland. They tried to attach that to the NRA's No. 1 legislative priority, concealed carry reciprocity, a bill that undermines our existing gun laws, defeating the entire purpose of the legislation.

Even when it comes to the most modest improvements to gun safety laws, the NRA always finds a way to stand in the way of progress. If we are going to get something significant done to keep our schools and our kids safe from gun violence, for the first time in a very long time, President Trump and congressional Republicans will have to buck the NRA.

It is our hope that Republican leaders will work with us in a bipartisan way to pass legislation that makes a real difference—not half measures, not baby steps, and certainly not attaching good legislation to legislation that would make the overall problem even worse.

We hope Republicans will work with us to pass serious changes to our gun laws, whether the NRA supports them or not. That is the only way we will make progress on an issue that has frustrated Congress and the vast majority of the American people for far too long.

#### NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on another matter, last week the Republican-led FCC formally published a rule reversing net neutrality—the legal infrastructure that kept the internet free and open to all Americans. The FCC's rule will give the ISP—the internet service providers—the authority to restrict customers' access to their favorite websites by forcing consumers to buy internet packages, such as cable, and pay more for premium access.

In this new universe, big companies that can pay to play could get faster

internet service while startups and everyday Americans are stuck in the slow lane. It will mean the end of the free and open internet as we know it. The way the internet has driven innovation and entrepreneurship and the way it has provided unprecedented opportunities for Americans to learn and connect with one another could all change, with a profit-making organization at the toll booth deciding who pays what.

We have an opportunity to save the internet by undoing the FCC's ruling through the Congressional Review Act. All 49 Democrats have already signed on to the bill, and one Republican, SUSAN COLLINS, has joined us. We now need only one more vote, one more Republican, to reverse the FCC's ruling here in the Senate.

When we force a vote on this bill, for the first time, Republicans in Congress will have the opportunity to right the administration's wrong and show the American people whose side they are on—the average consumer or once again side with big corporate interests. Are they on the side of big internet service providers and corporations, or are they on the side of consumers, entrepreneurs, startups, and small business owners?

Tomorrow there will be a net neutrality day of action here on the Hill that I hope will focus the Senate's attention on the issue. We have 60 legislative days to pass the CRA, and I urge every single one of my Republican colleagues to join us and help save the internet.

I yield the floor.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Elizabeth L. Branch, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO MARIAN BENTON TASCO

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate Black History Month and to pay tribute to a Pennsylvanian who has dedicated her life to public service.

Today, we honor former Philadelphia councilwoman Marian Benton Tasco, whose 50-year career in public service has improved the lives of countless people in our State. Throughout her career, Marian Tasco consistently fought for the people of her community. From her first days as a typist working in the city of Philadelphia to the end of her seventh term serving on

the city council, Marian Tasco's life has been dedicated to helping people. Today we celebrate Marian's commitment to public service.

Born during the days of segregation in Greensboro, NC, Marian Tasco was joyfully raised through the love and care of her mother, Mazie Benton; her great-grandmother, Susie Short; and her grandparents, Alice and Thomas Benton. At an early age, Marian expressed an interest in community service through volunteer activities with the Brownies and Girl Scouts of America. Even as a child, Marian Tasco was inspired to help others.

It was at this point in her life that Marian imagined that she would go on to become an educator. With that goal in mind, she began her education at Bennett College, a historically Black liberal arts college for women, which is located in Greensboro. Marian worked during the summers to pay for her tuition. After 2 years, Marian had to leave Bennett when she could no longer afford to pay the cost of tuition. Later in life, Marian would return to Bennett College as a member of the board of trustees and actively work to support the growth of the college.

After leaving Bennett, Marian Tasco moved to Philadelphia to be with her family and to continue her education at Temple University. Again working to pay her way through school, she attended classes at night until her graduation.

While she maintained a strong interest in serving others, she decided that, rather than education, politics and government would be her venue for service. In 1959, Marian began her work for the city of Philadelphia as a clerk typist I in the Philadelphia Police Department's Pawn Brokers Division. As a result of her diligent work, not long thereafter, she was promoted to clerk typist II. In this new role, she was reassigned to the registrar's office of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Like many others who have served the public, Marian Tasco's story in politics began on the frontlines of the community—the community she would later go on to serve.

Under the leadership of a distinguished lawyer, Charles Bowser, Marian served as a task force coordinator for the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition. This is an organization that she continues to serve today as a board member. One of Marian's greatest accomplishments was the creation of a youth-focused summer work program that still exists today. Her experience at the Urban Affairs Coalition affirmed her interest in public affairs and community outreach and helped increase her understanding of the needs of the African-American community in Philadelphia.

As her career progressed and new opportunities emerged, Marian Tasco remained committed to the path of service. Following her work as an assistant to the former secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, C. Delores

Tucker, Marian brought her passion for service to the office of the late U.S. Congressman William H. Gray III. He also, of course, served as House majority whip and chairman of the Budget Committee. She worked as both campaign manager and director of constituent services for Congressman Gray.

Serving with Secretary Tucker and Congressman Gray made Marian Tasco worthy of recognition, but Marian wanted to do more. She decided that with her years of experience in community activism and public service, she would seek elected office. It was at the urging of Marian's mentor, former Representative, City Councilman, and Secretary of Public Welfare John White, Jr., that she made the decision to seek elected office.

In 1983, Marian became the first African American elected Philadelphia city commissioner. Instantly, she helped develop voter education and registration programs in the city and worked to grow civic education focusing on Philadelphia's young people.

In 1988, Marian began her first term on the Philadelphia City Council as a representative for the ninth district of the city. For over 27 years, she served in a number of communities, including East Oak Lane, West Oak Lane, Mount Airy, Olney, Logan, Lawncrest, and Oxford Circle. She would go on to be re-elected seven times and pioneer initiatives to improve the quality of life for Philadelphians young and old.

Throughout her tenure in office, Councilwoman Tasco's role continued to grow in responsibility and scope. She eventually rose to serve as Philadelphia City Council's majority leader, as well as majority whip.

Marian Tasco has served as ward leader for the 50th Ward of Philadelphia for the last three decades. She was also unanimously elected by the Pennsylvania Democratic State Committee to represent Pennsylvania on the Democratic National Committee. In this DNC role, Councilwoman Tasco's reach grew beyond Philadelphia into the national political arena.

She helped institute meaningful change in Philadelphia and literally across the Nation. Among other issues, she worked to fight predatory lending, and her work in that area positively impacted the lives of many Philadelphians. Her commitment to "protect Americans from unscrupulous dealings of financial institutions" spanned both Broad Street and Wall Street and helped inspire some of President Barack Obama's work. Her advocacy on this issue dates back to the early 1990s, when she worked with community organizations to alert Philadelphia residents about the potential harm of money offered by loan sharks. In 2004, she briefed then-State Senator Obama on the issue during his campaign for the U.S. Senate. In commemoration of her efforts, President Obama invited Councilwoman Tasco to join him for the signing of the historic Dodd-Frank legislation.

Marian Tasco's accomplishments in public office made Philadelphia a better place to live and work, and the people of Pennsylvania's largest city remembered. Her retirement celebrations had over 1,200 attendees, including elected officials, labor leaders, community leaders, clergy, and, of course, constituents—the people she served. Councilwoman Tasco is a beloved figure throughout the city of Philadelphia and beyond. She is beloved by her peers and those she represented as a councilwoman.

Marian's work in public service was a shining example for others to follow. Philadelphia mayor and former city council member Jim Kenney and former mayor and councilman Michael Nutter have both cited the councilwoman as a mentor. In fact, Mayor Kenney even noted that Councilwoman Tasco "raised him" from the age of 32, when he was a new council member.

She also has a proven legacy of recognizing and developing young talent on her own team. Two current members of the Philadelphia City Council, Derrick Green and Cherelle Parker, and the late Judge Brenda Frazier-Clemons all served as members of her staff.

Councilwoman Marian Tasco's lifetime of service has been the subject of commendation. She has received a notable list of awards and honors, including an honorary doctorate of laws degree from Lincoln University. Her years of work to improve the city of Philadelphia resulted in a lifetime appointment to the Board of Directors of City Trusts, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, and the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority Board, just to name a few. For her advocacy on behalf of behavioral health programs and work to push local healthcare reforms, the former Lindley Court senior living apartments were renamed in her honor.

Marian Tasco has spent the better part of her life working to improve her community, and she has inspired the next generation of public servants. As we celebrate this Black History Month, we honor those who have made a real commitment to serve others. Marian Tasco has always honored that commitment.

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the city of Philadelphia, and all those whose lives have been impacted and inspired by her work, it is my privilege on this day to pay tribute to Marian Tasco, a former member and leader of the City Council of Philadelphia and a devoted public servant who worked her way from clerk typist I to citywide leader with national impact.

Well done, Marian. Your adopted city and our Commonwealth are proud of your noble work.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today marks nearly 2 weeks since the murder of 17 students and staff in Parkland, FL. May today also mark the moment that we resolved to do something about school violence. May it mark the moment that left and right determined to lay aside their differences and work together to prevent future tragedies.

To keep our children safe from harm, there is no panacea, no one legislative solution, and it disheartens me when I hear talk about what can't be done. It is time to focus on what can be done.

Fortunately, solutions on the State level—including in my home State of Utah—can help show us the way forward. Working in the realm of the possible, Utah State legislators have come together to forge bipartisan solutions to stop school violence. When I was in Salt Lake last week, I learned firsthand about the Safe Utah smartphone app. The Safe Utah crisis text and tip line is a statewide service that provides real-time crisis intervention to use through texting and a confidential tip program. Licensed clinicians from the University Neuropsychiatric Institute at the University of Utah Health respond to all incoming chats, texts, and calls 24/7 by providing supporting or crisis counseling, suicide prevention, and referral services.

The Safe Utah Program—developed with funding from the Utah State Legislature in collaboration with the University Neuropsychiatric Institute, the Utah State Office of Education, the Utah Office of the Attorney General, and the Utah Anti-Bullying Coalition—is a testament to what can be done when mental health, education, and law enforcement agencies work together to prevent student violence.

Not only is the app innovative, it works. Since the app was unveiled in 2016, 86 planned school attacks have been stopped. Think about that, 86 school attacks stopped in a relatively small State. That number translates to dozens of lives saved and hundreds of heartbreaks spared. For thousands of families across the State, this simple app made a world of difference. Imagine the potential if these kinds of technologies were available to students across the country. We could quickly get help for those who need it and, in the process, save countless lives.

That is why, later this week, I will introduce the Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing School Violence Act, or the STOP School Violence Act. My bill makes Department of Justice grants available to States to fund programs designed to reduce school violence.

To that end, the STOP School Violence Act will fund four initiatives. First, it will provide grant funding for evidence-based training to prevent stu-

dent violence against others and self, including training for local law enforcement officers, school personnel, and students. This is not just active shooter training but training designed to give students and teachers the knowledge to recognize and properly respond to warning signals or signals to stop school violence before it occurs.

Second, the bill will fund evidence-based technology and equipment to improve security and prevent school violence. This includes the development and operation of anonymous reporting systems like the Safe Utah app, as well as improvements to school security infrastructure to deter and respond to threats of school violence, and, when prevention efforts fall short—as they unfortunately will in some cases—locks on classroom doors, reinforced entryways, and other commonsense security infrastructure improvements will help.

Third, the bill will provide funding for the development and operation of evidence-based school threat assessment and crisis intervention teams, which may include evidence-based training for school officials in responding to mental health crises. Again, school personnel need the tools to assess and respond to threats before they materialize, including those threats that originate from individuals struggling with mental health issues.

Finally, the bill will provide funding for continued coordination with local law enforcement. Law enforcement alone cannot prevent school violence—just as no amount of prevention training, security infrastructure improvements, or mental health resources would be able to singularly prevent tragedies like that in Parkland, but law enforcement, and in particular those officers who already staff schools, have an important role to play in any comprehensive solution to prevent school violence.

Now, some of you may point out something my bill will not address, and that is guns. On this issue, many reforms have been proposed over the last 12 days—some old and some new. I believe we can find common ground here, too, such as that outlined in the bipartisan Fix NICS Act, which ensures that our background check system is operating as designed.

A background check is only as good as the records in the database. The FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System is currently incomplete because many Federal agencies and States have not provided all records that establish someone as prohibited from owning a firearm under current law, especially those related to mental health adjudications and involuntary commitment orders.

The bipartisan Fix NICS Act will ensure more of those records make it into the database by holding Federal agencies accountable for uploading relevant records and incentivizing States to upload all relevant information. Including these missing records will help

ensure more accurate and complete background checks, thereby keeping dangerous weapons out of the hands of felons, fugitives, drug addicts, persons with serious mental illness, and other prohibited persons.

I will be the first to admit there is no single, perfect solution—not the STOP School Violence Act and not the Fix NICS Act, but both of these bills can help save lives. Remember the 86 planned school attacks since the Save Utah app was unveiled and remember the 26 lives that might have been spared if the domestic violence offense of the shooter in Sutherland Springs, TX, had been properly entered into the FBI background check database.

Now is not the time for argument but for action. Rather than letting the perfect be the enemy of the good, I implore my friends on both sides of the aisle to come together for the safety of our children. Rather than resorting to recycled talking points, I ask my colleagues to heed Minority Leader SCHUMER's call to "pass real legislation that makes a difference." Rather than retreating to our partisan foxholes, I call on Republicans and Democrats alike to surrender their rhetorical weapons. For the good of the Nation, and the good of our children, all of us must look beyond the horizon of our political differences to find common ground.

Is this legislation enough to solve the problem of school violence? No. Quite frankly, it is not enough, but it is a start, and it is a start upon which we can all agree. We will not solve the problem of school violence overnight, but with incremental efforts—such as the legislation I have proposed—we can make a lasting difference and even save thousands of lives.

So let's not delay any further. We owe it to our children, and to all of those affected by gun violence, to take decisive action in those areas where we do agree. This is important stuff. We can't just throw in the sponge and act like we have this problem solved when we still have work to do. So I hope we will take heed to what I have just suggested—I think it can be very helpful to us—and we follow the suggestions I have made here today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### PARKLAND, FLORIDA, SCHOOL SHOOTING

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I bring a report to the Senate from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, a suburb of Ft. Lauderdale. The teachers and staff of the school returned to work today, which is less than 2 weeks after a former student walked on to the campus with an AR-15 and opened fire on all three floors of a classroom building.

I have spent time the past couple of weeks in Parkland, visiting with some of the families. Those of us who are parents can only imagine the grief and anger that they are feeling, just like the grief and anger after every one of these massacres. I have also spent time meeting with some of the courageous students who have turned this tragedy into a call for action. As I have suggested to them, their hope gives me hope. Their determination gives me all the more determination. These students have told us over and over that they don't plan to stop until Congress and the State legislators around the country start enacting commonsense gun reform. They have said that they are not going to stop, and neither am I.

What happened at that high school shouldn't happen anywhere in this country. It shouldn't have happened in Columbine. It shouldn't have happened in Newtown. It shouldn't have happened in Orlando. It shouldn't have happened at the Ft. Lauderdale airport or Parkland. It shouldn't happen, period. Now it is up to us to make sure that it never happens again.

This Senator grew up on a ranch. I have always had guns. I have hunted all my life. I still hunt with my son. An AR-15 or a SIG Sauer MCX, the gun that was used at the Pulse nightclub, is not for hunting; they are for killing. Yet, despite these horrific events, these devastating tragedies are occurring throughout our country over and over, and Congress refuses to act. Why is it that we can't enact the most commonsense measures to protect the people we represent?

We need a comprehensive background check on the purchase of a weapon, a commonsense background check that would not only include if there is a criminal record or if someone has been adjudicated mentally incompetent but all the other myriad reasons, all the other things surrounding mental health. Was the shooter on the terrorist watch list? Had Omar Mateen, the shooter, been on the terrorist watch list, he would have been caught. He was the shooter in Orlando. We need to get assault rifles off the streets.

Protecting our fellow citizens should be a top priority. If making it more difficult for someone to walk into a store and purchase a weapon of war will do that, why can't we get that done? Why? I will tell you why. Because there are folks who are more concerned about an A-plus rating from the NRA than they are about providing those commonsense solutions to the problems.

I want to read something that appeared in a national magazine, reprinted in the paper that is published in Broward County, where the shooting occurred. It is from a radiologist who is in the trauma center at Broward Health, which is a hospital chain organization in the area of Broward County. Her name is Dr. Heather Sher. She was working the day of the school shooting, and she went to work in the trauma center on some of the victims.

She has treated countless gunshot wounds in trauma centers throughout her career, but this one was the second time that she had treated someone shot by an assault rifle like the AR-15. Here is what Dr. Sher had to say:

Routine handgun injuries leave entry and exit wounds and linear tracks through the victim's body that are roughly the size of the bullet. If the bullet [from a handgun] does not directly hit something crucial like the heart or the aorta . . . chances are, we can save the victim. The bullets fired by an AR-15 are different.

She continues:

With an AR-15, the shooter does not have to be particularly accurate. The victim does not have to be unlucky. If a victim takes a direct hit to the liver from an AR-15, the damage is far graver than that of a handgun bullet injury. Handgun injuries to the liver are generally survivable unless the bullet hits the main blood supply to the liver. An AR-15 bullet to the middle of the liver would cause so much bleeding and tissue loss that the patient would likely never make it to a trauma center to receive our care.

She continues:

As a doctor, I feel I have a duty to inform the public of what I have learned as I have observed these wounds and cared for these patients. It's clear to me that AR-15 or other high-velocity weapons, especially when outfitted with a high-capacity magazine, have no place in a civilian's gun cabinet. . . . Banning the AR-15 should not be a partisan issue.

The senseless shootings are not going to stop until we change ourselves as a culture. I believe, with these students who have been so strong in their statements, so determined to make a change, that time might be now. It didn't happen after Sandy Hook Elementary. Nothing happened. It didn't happen after the myriad of others. It didn't happen just 2 years ago after the Orlando nightclub shooting. Again, it did not happen after the Ft. Lauderdale airport shooting.

Is it different now? It certainly is time for us to come together and enact commonsense gun measures to keep our communities safe. It is time for us to come together—not as Republicans or Democrats but as human beings—and to say that this time it is going to be different.

You hear so many different things. You hear about mental health, and that is certainly a part of it. You hear about school protection, and that is certainly a part of it. You hear about the miscues not only in the FBI, and that is certainly a part of it, but the miscues in the Florida Department of Children and Families a year prior that had noted that this shooter—all of those things ought to be a part of the solution. If you get right down to it, we ought to come together, not as Republicans or Democrats but as human beings, and say that if we want to solve the problem, the solution is commonsense background checks in order to purchase a weapon and getting assault rifles off the streets.

Let's do this. Let's use this tragedy as the catalyst to enact real change in our society—changes that are going to

have a real impact. Let's make what happened at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School a significant moment in this country's history, not because it was one of the largest mass shootings but because it was the last.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I wish to ask that before the remarks that I plan to make now are made and memorialized by the reporter, I be able to say to my friend from Florida, on behalf of the people of Georgia, who stopped me in the halls and corridors, at the grocery stores, the churches—everywhere we went—what happened in Florida was an attack everywhere in America, not just in Florida. The tragedy of school shootings has magnified itself, so much so that every one of us feels it more than anybody realizes.

I want to share with you the prayers, the hopes, and concern of the people of Georgia. It is a pleasure to work together with you and the other Members of the Senate so that we can find common ground as we move forward to address this situation. Having just been home, and being with the citizens I represent, I can say that the first and foremost item on the minds of every citizen of Georgia is the tragedy that took place in Florida. Our hearts and prayers go out to you and all the families and all those who survived the terrible tragedy.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I say to my friend from Georgia: Hallelujah that you have expressed that heartfelt concern and that your constituents in the State of Georgia have been very emotionally touched by this whole incident, this terrible incident that we have gone through again in this country. I am grateful for the comments of the Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. I thank the Senator from Florida.

Mr. President, I rise today with a great sense of pride and honor to commend to my fellow Senators Elizabeth "Lisa" Branch, who has been nominated to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit of the United States of America by President Trump.

There are significant reasons why I am so excited to do this. I am going to save the most significant for last. One of the things I am so proud of in our constitutional responsibility of advice and consent for the appointments of the administration is that, every time, we appoint someone who is the right person at the right time and the right place, and Lisa is certainly that for the court of appeals and for the bench of the United States of America and the Eleventh Circuit.

Lisa was a partner in the commercial litigation practice of Smith, Gambrell & Russell, a limited liability partnership in Atlanta, where she began her legal career in 1996. She moved on to work in the George W. Bush administration from 2004 to 2008 as the Counselor to the Administrator of the Office

of Information and Regulatory Affairs at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget and, for 1 year, as the Associate General Counsel for Rules and Legislation at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. She served for 2 years as a law clerk to Judge J. Owen Forrester of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. She received her BA degree from Davidson College in North Carolina—an outstanding institution—and her law degree from Emory University, which is one of the most renowned law schools in the United States of America.

She is a great lady and a great lawyer. She was named to the Court of Appeals in Georgia by Gov. Nathan Deal, the current Governor of the State, and will serve us in the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals with honor and privilege in the United States of America.

Most importantly, on a personal note, as I make these remarks, I am sure my father, Ed Isakson, and his best friend, Harold Russell, who is the Russell of Smith, Gambrell & Russell, are looking down from Heaven on this occasion today and recognizing it for the following reason:

When Lisa went with Smith, Gambrell & Russell, she went to work with a firm that represented my father and his company—a firm that represented me. She is not unknown to me as a person, as a lawyer, as a litigator. She is a great individual in our State and has provided a great service to our State. She will be a great judge for the United States of America. She also worked with Harold Russell, who was my dad's best friend, and Harold represented my father for years in business.

I know today, in Heaven, they are looking down during this special occasion of an outstanding Georgia jurist who is renowned in our State and is about to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate to be on the Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

I commend to my colleagues in the Senate Elizabeth “Lisa” Branch to be confirmed, and I urge their favorable votes to see to it that takes place.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum may be rescinded.

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

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I yield back all time on our side and ask unanimous consent that the cloture motion be voted on.

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

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The 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 nomination of Elizabeth L. Branch, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Pat Roberts, Roy Blunt, Tim Scott, Todd Young, Richard C. Shelby, John Boozman, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Mike Crapo, Steve Daines, Jerry Moran, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, David Perdue, John Cornyn, John Thune.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Elizabeth L. Branch, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 72, nays 22, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 37 Ex.]

##### YEAS—72

Alexander	Feinstein	Murkowski
Baldwin	Fischer	Murphy
Barrasso	Flake	Nelson
Bennet	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hassan	Risch
Capito	Hatch	Roberts
Cardin	Heitkamp	Rubio
Carper	Hoeven	Sasse
Casey	Inhofe	Schatz
Cassidy	Isakson	Scott
Cochran	Johnson	Shaheen
Collins	Kaine	Shelby
Coons	Kennedy	Smith
Cornyn	King	Tester
Cotton	Klobuchar	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Cruz	Leahy	Toomey
Daines	Lee	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Manchin	Warner
Durbin	McCaskey	Whitehouse
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young

##### NAYS—22

Blumenthal	Heinrich	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schumer
Brown	Markley	Stabenow
Cantwell	Menendez	Udall
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	
Harris	Reed	

##### NOT VOTING—6

Corker	Jones	Rounds
Heller	McCain	Sullivan

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 72, the nays are 22.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from North Dakota.

CONGRATULATING THE U.S. WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the U.S. women's hockey team for their outstanding victories in the 2018 Winter Olympics. All told, the team won four games, including two 5-to-0 wins over Finland and Russia, and finished as champions after a 3-to-2 victory over Team Canada. Their achievement stands as a powerful example of hard work, perseverance, and collaboration.

North Dakota is proud to be represented among the talented members of this team by two athletes, the Lamoureux twins, Jocelyne and Monique. These sisters are natives of Grand Forks, ND, and alumni of the University of North Dakota, where they played three seasons of NCAA women's hockey.

This was their third trip to the Olympics with Team USA, having won silver medals in 2010 and 2014 and, of course, now the gold in 2018. They have a tremendous collegiate record and a tremendous Olympic record now, as well. Across their Olympic careers, they have scored 13 goals and provided 17 assists, for a total of 30 points. They displayed tremendous skill, tremendous work ethic, and a tremendous team spirit as leaders of a great women's Olympic hockey team.

Jocelyne holds an Olympic record now, as well, having scored two goals in less than 6 seconds in the match against Finland. However, it was in the final game where the Lamoureux twins really shined. It was a close game throughout. While Team USA started out with the lead, Team Canada came back in the second period with a 2-to-1 lead. Remember, Canada had won gold in the last two Olympics. It was Monique who brought the game to a tie in the final period, and then Jocelyne scored the game-winning goal in the shootout. How great is that? It was unbelievable and exciting. It was such a great representation of sportsmanship for our Nation, coming back after twice seeing Canada take the gold, ending up with silver, and now coming back and winning the gold. This ended Canada's four-time gold-winning streak in women's hockey. Obviously, it was a joyous occasion—certainly for my State of North Dakota but also for our whole country. It is uplifting and positive—all the things you want the Olympics to be.

As they arrive home from South Korea, we congratulate Team USA for their historic victory and thank them for representing our Nation with their incredible dedication, tireless effort, and tremendous sportsmanship.

I yielded the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

HONORING OFFICERS ERIC JOERING AND ANTHONY MORELLI

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, this month, Ohio laid to rest two remarkable public servants, Westerville Police

Officers Eric Joering and Anthony Morelli. Together, these men dedicated decades of their lives to the police force, giving the ultimate sacrifice to keep their fellow Ohioans safe.

Officer Joering and Officer Morelli were doing their jobs, responding to a desperate 9-1-1 call when they were tragically shot and killed earlier this month. In the days since their passing, we have heard stories of their incredible service to their community, their fellow officers, and their families.

Both men were married with children. Officer Joering was 39 and had three young daughters. His pastor, Reverend Hammond, spoke to the local news about Officer Joering's dedication to his family. He said that Officer Joering would do anything for his daughters. He let them style his hair. He let them paint his nails. Reverend Hammond quipped: "I heard he drew the line at makeup."

Officer Morelli was a 30-year veteran of the Westerville police force. Westerville is a Columbus suburb. He had two children. His daughter is getting married this summer. His colleagues remembered his infectious smile and his passion for life. Westerville Police Chaplain James Meacham said Officer Morelli "went to heaven and parted."

These two heroes were laid to rest 10 days ago with services at St. Paul Catholic Church in Westerville, drawing thousands of Ohioans and fellow officers to pay their respects. Thousands of people waited in line in the cold and rain to enter the church. Officers from around the country came to honor these men, as they so often do. The church parking lot filled with patrol cars from Illinois, Texas, West Virginia, Michigan, and so many other States. They had to use a TV at a gym next door as an overflow room to accommodate everyone. After the services, a long procession of police vehicles wound its way through Westerville. Ohioans lined the streets, waving American flags and wearing blue ribbons pinned to their raincoats.

The tribute to these officers won't end with that memorial service. In times of tragedy, Ohioans always rise to the occasion. A donation page for the families set up by the local Fraternal Order of Police has raised more than half a million dollars. The city of Westerville will honor Officers Morelli and Joering with a permanent memorial in First Responders Park. The Westerville City Council voted unanimously to retire Officer Joering's K-9 partner, Officer Sam, and send him home with Officer Joering's family. They were there last week to take Sam home. One of Joering's daughters wore Sam's badge around her neck. Otterbein University, the local 4-year, private, distinguished university very nearby, will offer full-tuition scholarships to each of the three Joering girls.

While none of these gestures can ever repay them or their loved ones for their service and sacrifice, today we

honor these heroes' memories and lift up the entire Westerville community and all those who knew them.

The best way for the public to honor these public servants is by supporting all Ohio officers and working to give law enforcement the resources they need to do their jobs. From the bipartisan legislation we passed last year to speed up claims processing for the families of fallen officers, to getting local police officers the resources they need to protect themselves as they fight the opioid epidemic, we must do all we can to support these women and men who sacrifice so much.

Let's honor the memory of Officer Joering and Officer Morelli by recommending ourselves to protecting and supporting their fellow officers and the families who sacrifice alongside them.

#### CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

Mr. President, this month, the toy company Hasbro announced that it is introducing a new version of the board game Monopoly. In this version—imagine this—players get rewarded, not punished, for cheating. It is Wall Street 2018.

It might be fun to be the banker in this new, rigged version of Monopoly when you are playing with game pieces and pretend money, but it is not so fun when you are a Wells Fargo employee. It is not so fun if you have been victimized by Equifax. It is not so fun if you are one of the millions of people who have had to go through the process to get restitution from their banks. Families get ripped off by shady payday lenders and by big banks. Families lose real money, not Monopoly money.

When you think about getting away with cheating and even rewarding cheaters, pretty soon, you might not have to use much imagination at all. There have always been shady corporations trying to get away with ripping off consumers. The difference is that now they have an ally in charge of the watchdog that is supposed to be policing them. It is called the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—a bureau that has done yeomen's work to protect consumers, to get restitution for consumers when they have been cheated by Wall Street, when they have been cheated by a payday lender, and when they have been cheated by some shady financial service operator.

In his short time heading the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Mick Mulvaney has done the opposite of what we used to see and the opposite of what we should expect of the person whose job it is to look out for consumers. It is called the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, not the "let's protect Wall Street in one more way" bureau.

This month, NPR reported that in a new memo, Mulvaney laid out a "revised mission and vision of the consumer bureau." What is that vision? That vision is to dismantle it and stop all the work it does to hold banks accountable. These are NPR's words: He is "making radical changes to deter

the agency from aggressively pursuing its mission"—a mission designed to protect hard-working people from banks and payday lenders who look to cheat them.

In his memo, Mulvaney actually said that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau should be "acting with humility and moderation." He is saying that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau should be acting with humility and moderation, but does he ever admonish Wall Street to act with humility and moderation? It would be laughable because of the way Wall Street so often acts. We shouldn't want moderation when it comes to going after big banks and corporations who are cheating consumers. We should want aggressive actions.

Those two words, "humility" and "moderation," are not the first two that come to mind when you think of the administration. To the surprise of many, the White House now looks like a retreat for Wall Street executives. When you talk about humility and moderation with regard to this administration, when translated in this context, it seems as though they mean to go easy on the fraudsters who are ripping off the American people.

This is the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. This isn't a Wall Street regulator who is captured by Wall Street, where you see people from Citibank and other big Wall Street entities—the \$1 trillion, \$2 trillion, \$2 trillion-plus banks—going in and out of the revolving door, working for the regulators, and working for the banks.

This is the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Its job was created 8 or 9 years ago to fight just as hard for American families as Wall Street lobbyists fight for their big banks. Believe me, these lobbyists don't exactly act with humility and moderation. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau can't afford to.

Since it was created, this consumer bureau has returned \$12 billion—that is \$12,000 million—to 29 million Americans who were cheated by banks and who were cheated by payday lenders, and moderating that now is literally taking money out of the pockets of working families. Because the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has been so effective, the administration has now put the fox in charge of the chicken coop—the chicken house.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which helped 29 million Americans return \$12 billion because the banks were cheating them, is now run by Mick Mulvaney, who clearly doesn't even think the Bureau should exist. Nothing in this memo that he wrote should surprise anyone who has watched Mr. Mulvaney over the past few months or, frankly, his career. Although he has been running the CFPB on a part-time basis, he is supposed to be overseeing the Federal budget, so I am a little curious that the full-time Budget Director—my friend from my State of Ohio, Senator PORTMAN, used



to run that, so he knows it is a full-time job. The administration scooped up Mr. Mulvaney and said: Well, you keep doing that, but you are going to run the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Mr. Mulvaney had no real interest, apparently, in running the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, but he has managed to do a lot on behalf of Wall Street cheaters. His first action was to freeze payments from the Civil Penalty Fund to families who were scammed by big banks and other financial institutions. Think about that. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has levied these actions against people who cheated consumers. Mulvaney walks in the door on the first day, assembles a staff, and says: Freeze those payments. We are not going to pay them. These were actions taken by people who were looking out for consumers. They were actions they took to penalize these banks and to get restitution from these financial institutions that had cheated the public. So on his first week on the job, on his first day, he took back the hard-earned money of Americans who had been ripped off. He followed that by delaying a rule that protects consumers from predatory payday lenders, dismissing a lawsuit against those shady loan sharks.

Senator JACK REED was out in Ohio the other day. Senator REED and I sit on the Banking Committee. He is a West Point graduate. He is the senior Democrat on the Armed Services Committee. He talked about what happens at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base right outside of Dayton, where the payday lenders prey on these men and women who are young and perhaps not as experienced as some in having the financial sophistication to deal with some of these loan sharks, and he knows that payday lenders and others prey on these generally low-paid and underpaid men and women who have sacrificed for their country. Sometimes they initiate foreclosures on the homes of people who are overseas serving our country. But the new Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau doesn't seem all that interested in any of this.

After delaying the rule that protects consumers from predatory payday lenders, after dismissing a lawsuit against these shady loan sharks—we are talking about lenders who have been accused of deceiving customers, sometimes with payday lenders charging 9 percent interest and trying to collect debts people don't even owe. Those people should be protected. You don't protect Wall Street; you protect people who have been defrauded by Wall Street.

It is not that complicated, but apparently at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, it is now. Most payday lenders are getting an even better return on their campaign donations than they are on their predatory loans.

Mulvaney has put on ice another case that has been pending against Wells

Fargo, this time for wrongly charging borrowers fees when they took out a mortgage.

At his day job running another Federal agency, Mulvaney proposed a budget earlier this month that would defund the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau entirely for a year—defund it—basically saying: We are spending no more money on this Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Philosophically, he just doesn't like the idea of somebody standing up for customers, standing up for consumers, standing up against Wall Street, standing up against the payday lenders, and standing up against the loan sharks that he seems to be in alliance with.

We shouldn't be surprised by any of this. Mr. Mulvaney, the person heading the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau now, is a man who doesn't even think the Bureau should exist. He said some time ago that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is “a sick, sad joke.” He sponsored legislation to repeal it.

How do you explain to 29 million Americans who have gotten \$12 billion in restitution because they were cheated that this is a sad, sick joke and it shouldn't exist? It is no joke to the servicemembers who rely on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to fight for them against bank abuse. It is no joke to the 3½ million—3½ million—victims of Wells Fargo's fake account scam or the 145 million Americans, with 5 million in my State alone—145 million Americans, that is pretty much half the adult population in our country—who had their data breached by Equifax. The Equifax executives had little contrition and didn't apologize much, and they are skating free. What is Mick Mulvaney doing to help roughly half of the adult population in this country who were the victims of the Equifax breach to make sure it doesn't happen again? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau was investigating this massive breach, but Mulvaney ordered them to close the investigation. This is malpractice or worse. We are talking about a data breach that exposed birthdays, Social Security numbers, and addresses. People's identities could be stolen and their credit scores ruined. Did Mr. Mulvaney care? Apparently not. He was on the side of Equifax when he wasn't on the side of Wall Street, when he wasn't on the side of payday lenders, when he wasn't on the side of scam artists—and maybe he is on the side of all of them. But apparently he thinks it is more important to protect the corporations that let it happen than it is to protect the American people he is supposed to serve. I guess we shouldn't be surprised.

Once again, Mick Mulvaney and this administration are making it clear whose side they are on. Over and over, they side with Wall Street. They side with the largest corporations. They side with companies that shut down

production in Gallopolis, Mansfield, and Zanesville and move their companies overseas. They side with them instead of with hard-working Americans who are struggling. We see it at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau with Mulvaney's determination to protect corporate special interests. We see it with other bank watchdogs who are putting Americans at risk of another financial crisis just to help Wall Street pad their pockets.

Mr. President, as you know, America's financial system has had a really, really, really good couple of years, even though we bailed them out. Ten years ago, this Congress bailed out these huge banks—\$1 trillion, \$2 trillion banks. We bailed them out.

Congress passed a tax bill in which 81 percent of the benefits go to the richest 1 percent of people in this country. It is believed that the financial services industry did better under that tax bill than anyone else in the country—any other industry. Now we see Mick Mulvaney and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau doing even more for the banks by representing them instead of representing workers and consumers.

As I said, it is increasingly clear whose side the administration is on. We have seen it with the rollback of rules that protect Americans from the fine print in contracts, the fine print that few of us read and even fewer of us could understand. When we sign up for a credit card, when we sign up for a car loan, when we get a job and we sign a contract with our employer, these fine print, forced administration clauses—you know what they did? They denied customers and employees who were cheated their day in court. So when you sign up for a credit card and you sign a bank document and then you want to sue because they did something to you that you thought was against the law, you are out of luck. You have lost your right because you signed that document.

We see it right here in the Senate with bills to dismantle Wall Street reform, to make it easier for big banks to take big risks that could wreck the economy all over again.

At the 10-year anniversary of the biggest financial crisis since the Great Depression, there is already a collective amnesia that has settled over this town. The Republican leaders in Congress, people down the hall in the office of the majority leader, Senator McCONNELL—over and over, they side with Wall Street instead of with workers.

Ten years ago we saw what Wall Street and the financial services industry, particularly Wall Street, did to our country. My wife and I live in Cleveland, OH. Our ZIP Code is 44105. Our ZIP Code 10 or 11 years ago had more foreclosures in the first half of that year than any other ZIP Code in the United States of America. I still see the blight because of the Wall Street abuse in the loss of retirement

savings, the lost jobs, the closed factories, and the foreclosed homes. I see all of that in my neighborhood. I see all of that throughout my State. We all see it in all 50 States. Yet there is this collective amnesia in this body, as if none of that ever happened to this country. This administration and Republican leaders, again and again and again, side with Wall Street over workers, side with Wall Street over customers.

The lessons of a decade ago are clear. You don't grow the middle class by letting big banks take massive risks or by letting shady lenders prey on hard-working Americans. That is why we passed Wall Street reform, and that is why we created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—to hold big banks and other bad actors accountable when they cheat, to deter them from bad and risky behavior in the first place.

We need a new permanent Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau who will protect the consumers instead of handing big corporations a “get out of jail free” card. A cheater's version of Monopoly might sound like fun on game night, but we have already seen what it looks like in real life. Powerful special interests on Wall Street win big every single time, and everybody else loses.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

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

#### TAX REFORM

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the impact that tax reform is having in my home State of Arkansas.

Despite what you may have heard from those who opposed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, including House Minority Leader PELOSI's infamous description of the tax plan's benefits as “crumbs” and the passage of the plan as “the end of the world, Armageddon,” the economy is responding incredibly well to the changes we made to the Tax Code.

I have long believed our economy has struggled under the weight of an outdated, inefficient, and ineffective tax system. Now, businesses are beginning to do the math and are realizing that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will mean more savings. As a result, many have announced they are passing some of these savings on to their employees or will now be seeking to grow and expand operations.

As of today, more than 350 companies have announced pay raises, bonuses

and/or 401(k) increases, benefiting over 4 million Americans. According to a recent National Federation of Independent Business survey, 32 percent of small businesses believe now is a good time to expand—the highest level ever recorded by this survey.

This is happening across the country and in Arkansas. Here are just a few examples of the companies headquartered in Arkansas, with a sizable presence in the State, that are passing along savings to their employees through wage increases, bonuses, and other benefits, are giving to charity, and/or making investments to grow their businesses and better serve customers:

BancorpSouth Bank is giving pay increases and/or one-time bonuses to nearly all noncommissioned employees. The investment of over \$10 million in 2018 will benefit 96 percent of the company's noncommissioned workforce. Pay increases were effective as of January 1, 2018.

Home Bancshares, Inc., of Conway, AR, is distributing a one-time bonus of \$500 to more than 850 full-time, tenured employees. Home Bancshares' chairman, John Allison, said “investing in these individuals is an important step to help support them, their families and the communities in which we operate.”

People's Bank of Magnolia, AR, provided a \$500 bonus to employees and contributed \$50,000 to its charitable endowment.

Little Rock, Arkansas-based Bank of the Ozarks is giving up to \$1,200 annual bonuses. Approximately 2,300 employees will be eligible under the plan.

Walmart, whose headquarters is located in Bentonville, AR, is a significant economic force not only in our State but nationwide, is increasing starting hourly wage rates in the United States to \$11 an hour, expanding maternity and parental leave benefits, and providing one-time cash bonuses of up to \$1,000. It also has created a new benefit to assist associates with adoption expenses.

Regions Bank is increasing its minimum wage to \$15, contributing \$40 million to the company's charitable foundation, and increasing the company's capital expenditures budget by approximately \$100 million, or 50 percent over the 2017 level.

Springdale, AR, is home to Tyson Foods' headquarters. The company recently announced that it is giving bonuses to more than 100,000 employees whose compensation does not include an annual bonus. Eligible full-time team members will receive a bonus of \$1,000, and eligible part-time team members will receive \$500.

In addition, Tyson will use savings resulting from tax reform to improve training and education opportunities for employees, including teaching English as a second language and general education development classes, and it will also be accelerating capital projects.

FedEx, whose freight headquarters is located in Arkansas and which employs over 3,500 Arkansans, is investing more than \$3.2 billion in growing its business, including raising wages and investing \$1.5 billion in pension plans.

Finally, UPS is investing \$12 billion to expand the company's Smart Logistics Network, and it also made a \$5 billion tax-qualified contribution to the company's three UPS-sponsored U.S. pension plans. This represents about \$13,000 per participant. The company has more than 2,200 active employees in Arkansas in addition to around 390 retirees who reside in the State.

The numbers speak for themselves. Clearly, when Washington helps to create an environment that makes businesses more globally competitive, it benefits Arkansas, and it benefits the entire country.

The law is already helping hard-working Arkansans keep more of their money in their own pockets. By nearly doubling the standard deduction, lowering rates, eliminating loopholes, and creating a climate that incentivizes business to boost wages and give employees bonuses as a result of the reduction in the corporate tax rate, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is providing much needed tax relief to Arkansans.

Additionally, our Governor, Asa Hutchinson, has instructed the Arkansas Public Service Commission to examine how the new lower tax rates will benefit utility providers in Arkansas. He is encouraging the commission to instruct utilities to pass savings down to ratepayers, which could mean possible lower utility rates for those in the Natural State.

That is not all. Arkansas-based companies like ArcBest and Murphy USA are already reaping the benefits of the new tax system with higher revenues and incomes.

This is only the beginning. I believe we will continue to see positive trends and reactions to the tax law that will help grow our economy and spur even more investment in Arkansas and across the country.

One provision included in the law that I believe can have an enormous impact on average Arkansans is a new incentive for employers to offer paid family leave benefits to their employees. Now employers can offer 12 weeks of paid family leave in exchange for a tax credit.

My friend and colleague from Nebraska Senator FISCHER fought to get this idea included in the bill. Thanks to her vision and perseverance, families in Arkansas and across the country who most need access to this type of benefit will now have that chance. This is just one more example of tax reform delivering results that will help the middle class.

I want to reiterate how well tax reform is working for my State. We are seeing growth, higher wages, and other positive benefits. Employees are getting bigger paychecks and businesses are investing in their workforces and



expanding their operations. Those are not “crumbs.” It is “not Armageddon.” It isn’t an attack on working Americans. It is opportunity, it is upward mobility, and it is what Americans deserve. I am proud to have cast my vote for tax reform.

Learning about how it is helping our economy and benefiting American families just confirms what we predicted would happen if we made American businesses more competitive and let average individuals and families keep more of what they earn.

Moving forward, I am committed to ensuring that the changes we made to the Tax Code help increase economic activity and spur growth, address our national debt, and create jobs. I am confident it will have lasting, positive effects on our economy.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for 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.

### KENTUCKY FLOODING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, over the last week, heavy rains and strong winds caused widespread destruction across Kentucky. Sustained rainfall has led to devastating flooding in many communities, especially along the Ohio River.

The high waters have closed dozens of roads, and some areas are reporting dangerous mudslides. The extent of this flooding hasn’t been seen in my State since the 1997 flood.

In addition, the National Weather Service has confirmed that three tornadoes touched down in western Kentucky. The entire Commonwealth is under a state of emergency because of the damage caused by this severe weather.

I was saddened to hear reports this morning that these destructive storms have claimed the lives of three Kentuckians. Many are still struggling to stay safe.

As they always do, Kentucky’s emergency personnel responded quickly and professionally to the storms and the aftermath. Rescuing many individuals from their homes or their cars, these dedicated men and women continue to do everything they can to protect Kentuckians in need. They have our sincere gratitude.

Although the sky has cleared, there is more rain in the forecast for this week.

My staff in the State and I will continue to monitor this situation as it develops throughout Kentucky.

### HONORING COMMANDER PAUL BAUER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise with a heavy heart to pay tribute to Chicago Police Commander Paul Bauer, who gave his life to protect the city he loved. We use the word “hero” far too often, but in this case, that word is fitting. Commander Paul Bauer is a true American hero, and his loss is a tragedy.

On February 13, Commander Bauer was at an “active shooter” training session in downtown Chicago, but he didn’t hesitate to help out his fellow officers when they were pursuing a fleeing suspect. Commander Bauer was shot several times by the suspect and died from his wounds. Commander Bauer’s story is a reminder to us all that our heroes serving in blue risk their lives every day, and even routine calls can turn into tragedy in an instant.

A 31-year veteran of the Chicago Police Department and the commander of the 18th Police District in the Near North Side, Paul Bauer was a pillar of that community. Last year, he was commended by the city council for a charity holiday party he helped host for underprivileged kids. Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson said it best: “This department didn’t just lose an exemplary police officer. The City lost a piece of itself.”

Last week, when the charges were announced against the alleged shooter, an impromptu memorial developed outside the Thompson Center. People brought flowers, left crosses, and displayed signs reading, “RIP CDR Bauer.” One woman on her lunch break even left a plush stuffed dog that she hoped would make it in to the arms of Paul’s teenage daughter. It was a tremendous show of love, respect, and gratitude.

A few years ago, I gave a commencement address and asked the students to think about what they wanted people to say about their lives. I asked them, “What will you be remembered for? What service did you render to your community? Your nation? Your world?” The great thing about living in America is we can choose the answers to those questions. Commander Bauer will be remembered for his service to his community. He gave what Lincoln called, “the last full measure of devotion” and did so for the people and city he loved and served, but he will be remembered for so much more. A friend described Paul as “every bit the good guy he’s being made out to be,” but also added: “You can’t capture his goodness.” What a beautiful legacy.

For all Paul Bauer’s professional accomplishments, the highlights of his life were his family. Paul met his wife, Erin, met at a fundraiser for a Chicago police officer who was also killed in the line of duty. The Friday following Paul’s death, February 16, would have been the couple’s 16th anniversary. Together, Paul and Erin raised a bright and wonderful 13-year-old daughter

Grace. Paul’s family will carry on his legacy of love and his devotion to service and community.

Commander Bauer was the quintessential officer, a role model in his department and his bravery inspires the rest of us, especially his friends and family. After his memorial service Commander Bauer’s wife, Erin, sent a touching message to all who paid tribute to her husband. She wrote: “One man almost stole my faith in humanity, but the City of Chicago and the rest of the nation restored it, and I want to thank you for that.”

We are all humbled by her strength, and our thoughts and prayers are with Erin, Grace and all who loved and knew Paul. Commander Paul Bauer was one of our best.

### REMEMBERING MAURY DUANE GEIGER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on February 18, 2018, New Hampshire lost one of its finest lawyers and humanitarians, Maurice Duane Geiger. He was 83 years old.

Some might ask why, as a Senator from Vermont, I would call the Senate’s attention to a resident of our neighbor to the east. In fact, Maury Geiger not only had close ties to Vermont where, in 1982, he cofounded the Rural Justice Center in Montpelier, he was in every respect a global citizen. Over his long career, he worked to improve access to justice in Haiti, Bangladesh, Rwanda, and several other countries.

I met Maury Geiger years ago and will never forget going with him, my wife, Marcelle, and my staff member Tim Rieser to visit the national penitentiary in Port au Prince, Haiti. A more squalid example of a corrections facility would be hard to imagine. It was overflowing with thousands of impoverished men of all ages, sweltering in the heat and humidity, crammed into cement rooms with nothing to sleep on but the floor, with little food and vulnerable to AIDS, tuberculosis, and other dangerous diseases, and the vast majority had never been formally charged with any crime. Some had languished there for 2 or more years, far longer than any sentence they would have received if tried and convicted. Almost none had lawyers.

After first laying eyes on that unforgettable scene of inhumane neglect, Maury returned to Haiti year after year, determined to do whatever he could to help improve the lives and protect the rights of those caught up in Haiti’s corrupt, dysfunctional justice system. It was that same passion for justice that took him to the courts and jails of rural America and to distant places like Addis Abba and Tbilisi.

As his obituary describes, Maury was born into poverty, and that experience, and his mother’s guidance, shaped his character. He served as a naval aviator and then at the Department of Justice. He was as patriotic and as fierce a defender of the Constitution and Bill of