

want, whatever special favors they can't secure in Congress and can get only through the courts. The world's largest companies already throw their money around this place with reckless abandon and try to buy the outcomes they want. They don't need any more help on the Supreme Court. It is time for Washington to start working for the people again, and that starts with defeating Judge Kavanaugh's nomination.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I have come back again for the past several weeks and for every week I have to draw attention to what I think is a great injustice; that is, about this man, Andrew Brunson. Pastor Brunson has been in prison in Turkey since October of 2016. He has actually lived in Turkey for more than 20 years. He is a Presbyterian minister who is associated with the same church as the Reverend Billy Graham, in Western North Carolina.

He has been in Turkey doing missionary work and connecting with the Turkish people. He is not forcing the Word on anybody. He is simply sharing it with those who want to hear it. He has a small church in Izmir that only seats about 100 people. That started long after he started his mission.

He was living peacefully with his wife, Noreen, until October of 2016. That was shortly after the coup attempt—an illegal coup attempt—where anybody who was actually responsible for it should be in prison. It is not the appropriate way to change a regime in the United States or Turkey or in any other Western nation. After the coup attempt, President Erdogan of Turkey decided to implement emergency powers, which gives him the power to put anyone in prison. In fact, he put tens of thousands of people in prison—people in the military, people in the press, missionaries, NASA scientists—a number of people that I believe are illegally in prison, just like Pastor Brunson.

When this was brought to my attention about a year and a half ago, we treated it like casework. We were doing everything we could to get this North Carolinian, this U.S. citizen, released. After attempting to go through the diplomatic channels and recognizing that we were not making progress, we decided that we had to take other action.

This is actually a point where I would like to thank Senator INHOFE,

who is now acting on Senator MCCAIN's behalf as the chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee. With the help of a number of Senators in this body and with the concurrence of the House, we have provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act that are trying to put Turkey on notice—in as respectful a way as possible, as a NATO ally—that Pastor Brunson should be released.

Pastor Brunson was arrested 663 days ago. Up until last week, he was in prison for the entire time. As a matter of fact, for about 17 months, he was in a prison cell that was designed for 8 people that had 21 people in it. Then, he was moved to a prison cell that he shared with one other person and had no access to any outdoors—none of the standards you would have for our prisons for the worst of the worst. He had been incarcerated and had very limited contact. His wife remained in Turkey because she was afraid if she left, they wouldn't let her back. His kids haven't seen him for 2 years because they were afraid if they went to Turkey, the Turkish Government wouldn't let them leave.

Through a lot of efforts of President Trump, Vice President PENCE, Ambassador Brownback, Senator SHAHEEN from New Hampshire, and a number of other Members—as a matter of fact, 72 Members of this body signed on to a letter that we sent to Turkey to express our concerns—we were at least able to get him into house arrest. Last week, he was released back in Izmir but limited to staying in the apartment he shares with his wife, Noreen.

That is a great step forward, but it is still an injustice. It is a better setting. The fact of the matter is, he is still incarcerated. He is incarcerated on some of the most absurd charges, and I firmly believe there is no first-year law student who couldn't derive a legal basis for saying that this person would not stay overnight in a U.S. jail. Yet he has been incarcerated for 663 days.

We are working very closely with the administration to try and take this positive step—his placement under house arrest—and to get him out of the country. I made a promise to Andrew Brunson. I visited him twice earlier this year, once in prison to let him know that he had people in Congress who cared about him and were going to share his story and make sure we didn't forget until he was released. Then, a little over a month later, I went back and spent 12 hours in a Turkish courtroom hearing the absurd charges levied against him. I am not going to get into the details now, but I will tell you that the indictment read like a fantasy. It is one that makes me so frustrated to think that this man could be kept in prison for 663 days.

I want to end my comments on a slightly more positive note. I want to thank the officials in Turkey who at least took the positive step to put him under house arrest. I spoke with him on Thursday afternoon. It was a very, very different experience. He had hope.

He was able to spend time with his wife.

I was thrilled to see that because, frankly, after my time with him in the prison earlier this year, I was worried about him. He had lost 50 pounds. He was under great stress, as anybody would be if they were in a U.S. prison, let alone a Turkish prison. I want to thank the Turkish government for taking positive steps. It is one step in a journey that needs to get Pastor Brunson home.

Also, I want Turkey to realize that we know they are a NATO ally. We know that when you join NATO, we have an article 5 commitment. What article 5 means is that if any aggressor attacks you on your soil, the members of NATO are committed to sending their sons and daughters to defend your freedom. We are in agreement with Turkey right now that, if they were to be attacked by an aggressor, we absolutely would answer the call and go to Turkey to protect their homeland and protect their people.

All I am asking Turkey to do is, in the spirit of that agreement that we have had with Turkey since 1952, is to protect Andrew Brunson, to send Andrew Brunson home, and to get back and honor the tenets of the NATO alliance, the agreement we have with the family of nations in NATO. It starts first by respecting the individual liberties that each and every citizen in Turkey should have and each and every citizen in the United States enjoys.

I hope this is the last week you have to hear my speech. I hope that next week the speech is thanking Turkey for sending Pastor Brunson home. Make no mistake about it. For as long as Andrew Brunson is in prison, and as long as other people like a NASA scientist, like a DEA officer, like some of the Turkish Embassy staff who are Turkish citizens are in prison, we will continue to be a voice for people in Turkey who I think are illegally imprisoned.

Mr. President, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this today.

To the American people, I hope when you say your prayers tonight, you say one for Pastor Brunson.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, first, let me join my colleague from North Carolina in his request for humanitarian care and the release of Pastor Brunson. It is something we share on a bipartisan basis. I thank him for calling that to the attention of the Senate and to those who are following our proceedings.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we know that President Trump during the course of his campaign made immigration a major issue. Almost from the beginning, he made it clear that he would take a different approach to immigration than previous Presidents of either

political party. We can remember when he referred to those coming to the United States from Mexico as murderers and rapists. We can remember when he called for the construction of a 2,000-mile wall between the United States and Mexico, and quickly added: And Mexico will pay for it.

We can remember all of the statements that were made during the course of the campaign about immigration and terrorism. We knew we were in for a change in policy with this administration. Some of the things that have occurred have been stunning, and some of them have been horrible. One of those things was the subject of a hearing this week in the Senate Judiciary Committee, which I serve on. It was about the zero tolerance policy. Some may remember that last year President Trump decided to eliminate and abolish the DACA Program. That was a program for those young people brought to the United States as children—infants, toddlers, and children—who grew up in the United States and believed they were part of this country and future. They learned, probably about the time they became teenagers, that this wasn't true. They didn't have legal status. They weren't documented in the United States.

They have lived their whole lives here. They have gone through our schools, and some of them have been amazing students. They had planned to go on with their education and their lives, and they learned they had an obstacle in their path.

President Obama created an opportunity for them to continue to live in the United States without fear of deportation and to be able to work here. So 790,000 of them stepped up and paid a \$500 filing fee, went through a criminal background check, and were given, on a temporary renewable basis, this protection under President Obama's Executive action.

President Trump eliminated that order. In doing so, he eliminated the protection they had to stay here. Their fate and their future were in doubt because of the President's unilateral action. He challenged Congress to pass a law to save them.

We tried. At the last minute, a bipartisan bill, agreed to here in the Senate by a majority of the Members, was rejected by President Trump. It also included massive construction of his wall, but he rejected it nevertheless.

Today, the only thing protecting those young people—the 790,000—are court orders, which can change any day or any week. The President's effort on immigration and children didn't end with his elimination of the DACA Program. Just a few months ago, they announced something called zero tolerance. Here is how it would work. At our border, any person who presented themselves between ports of entry and wasn't a legal resident of the United States could be arrested and charged with a misdemeanor—a criminal misdemeanor—of trying to come into this country without legal documentation.

People can come in without legal documentation between ports of entry and claim asylum and refugee status, but no distinctions were made. If a person presented themselves and didn't have legal status, they face this misdemeanor criminal charge.

What flowed from that has created a humanitarian disaster. Because of that charge, the Trump administration then ordered the agencies to forcibly remove all the children who were with their parents who came to the border. That meant that almost 3,000 children were forcibly removed from their parents at the border under the zero tolerance policy.

That was the law of the land for some period of time, or at least that was the President's order for some period of time, until public reaction from both Republicans and Democrats was so strong that on June 20, President Trump did something very rare in his administration. He almost admitted he made a mistake. He decided to eliminate the family separation policy.

The elimination of that policy did not solve the problem for 2,700 children who were in the custody of the U.S. Government. These are children under the age of 18 who were basically spread across the United States, and are being held by government agencies and government contractor facilities.

The case went before a judge in the Southern District of California, Judge Sabraw, as to what to do with these children. A number of organizations, like the ACLU, came forward and said: These children should be reunited with their parents. Our government separated them. They should be reunited.

He set a time table and schedule for that to occur. A lot was done, but not nearly enough. We had a hearing this week in the Senate Judiciary Committee, which went on for several hours with representatives from five different agencies of the Trump administration trying to explain how we created this policy and what we have done ever since to reunify these parents with their children.

All of us know it is not healthy to take kids away from their parents. The pediatric physicians in America—the American Academy of Pediatrics—came forward and called it institutional child abuse. If that sounds like an exaggeration, imagine if it were your child who was being taken away by our government, or your grandchild, for that matter. I know how I would feel as a parent and a grandparent, and I am sure most people realize it would be a traumatic experience for any parent—or for grandparent, for that matter—to go through. Then, from the side of the children, we know that kind of separation can cause real psychological problems for these kids.

I met some of these kids—they were 5 and 6 years old—in Chicago. They had been transported 2,000 miles from the border to Chicago and were being held by our government in a contractual facility—5 and 6 years old. These little

kids couldn't figure out what had happened to them in their lives.

I will never forget the scene of being in a room with 10 of them and watching 2 little girls walk into the room who were hanging on to one another for dear life. I thought they were twins. They weren't. They weren't even sisters. One of them said: "No, amigas." They had really latched on to one another because they were so uncertain about where they were and what their future would be. Doctors tell us that isn't healthy for children. Yet it continues for too many of these kids.

At the hearing we held, we talked about how many kids are still out there who haven't been reunited, who have been separated from their parents by our government agencies under this Trump zero tolerance policy. The numbers change almost by the day, but they estimate that over 700 children are currently separated, and in over 400 of those cases, their parents have been deported. So the parents come to the border, the kids are taken away, the parents are invited to leave the country, and the kids remain. Where are the parents? No record was kept as to where they were going. How will we reunite these kids with their parents? No one really knows. It was clear at this hearing that nobody had even thought in advance about what that meant.

When you listened to the testimony of the sworn government witnesses there, it was clear that no one from day one even envisioned what this policy was going to do. One of the people who testified before us—a man whose degree and expertise are in public health—said that he warned this administration. He told them that this was not a healthy thing to do to children, to separate them and put them in some institutional setting. Yet they went forward with this plan, and not a single one of them could point to any effort made to keep track of the kids and the parents so that someday they could be reunited.

In fact, what we found was that the head of the Department of Homeland Security, Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, on June 17, sent out the following tweet. It said: "We do not have a policy of separating families at the border. Period." The sworn testimony this week tells us that is not true, and it wasn't true from the beginning of the zero tolerance policy. There was a policy of separating children from parents. What this member of the Trump Cabinet said was just wrong, just plain wrong.

Listen to what the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security said on June 23. In a fact sheet that they sent out across the country, they said: "The United States Government knows the location of all children in its custody and is working to reunite them with their families." Here we are, 6 weeks later, and they have fallen 700 children short of what they claim they already knew back in June.

These were two falsehoods that were promulgated on the American people to try to get them to believe this wasn't a serious problem. Well, we know better, because this Federal judge got serious about it, and he said: I am going to set a deadline for you to put these kids back with their families. Our government failed to meet the deadline.

Now read what this Federal judge had to say about it. This judge, incidentally, was appointed by a Republican President, lest you think this is some Democrat who is trying to make political hay. Here is what Judge Sabraw said: "The practice of separating these families was implemented without any effective system or procedure for tracking the children after they were separated from their parents, enabling communication between the parents and their children after separation, and reuniting the parents and children." That is what the Federal judge said about the zero tolerance policy.

I can't remember a more heart-breaking and embarrassing chapter in American Government history in recent years—to think that our government set out with a policy to separate these kids from their parents, forcibly removing them and separating them without any plans to reunite them.

They argued afterward: We can't send these kids back to parents who might be dangerous.

No one argues with that.

We can't send them back to smugglers who are pretending to be parents.

Well, we can't argue with that either. But the United States accepted responsibility when we took custody of those children. We became what they call in law in loco parentis. In other words, we accepted a parental responsibility for these children. We have not met that responsibility.

I asked at some point, who is going to accept responsibility for this humanitarian disaster in this Trump administration? Absolutely no one has. I believe Secretary Nielsen should. I believe she should step down because this policy—this disastrous policy—has given a black eye to the United States.

What we have seen happen here is not consistent with our values as a nation. It is not consistent with the kind of treatment we have given to those who have come to our border over the years. Think about the refugees who presented themselves to become part of the United States and our history.

Think about the thousands of Cubans who came to this country saying: We want to escape communism. We want to come to the United States. Think about what a valuable contribution they have made. Did we punish them when they came into the United States? We accepted them. Have Cuban Americans been an important part of our country? Ask three U.S. Senators who are Cuban Americans. The answer is in the affirmative.

Think about the Soviet Jews, those of the Jewish religion who were living

in the Soviet Union and facing all sorts of prejudice and discrimination. They asked for an opportunity to come to the United States, and we opened our arms.

Think about the Vietnamese who worked with us during the war trying to protect our soldiers, trying to be a part of the solution to their problems, risking their own lives in the process. We welcomed them to the United States too.

Time and again, this country has opened its arms to refugees who needed a helping hand and a place of safety. We did not put them in internment camps. We didn't take their children away to punish them. We said: We will hear you out, and if you have a legitimate claim, a fear of where you live, we will stand by you.

We know what is happening in Central America—in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. At this point, there are higher rates of murder, domestic violence, and rape than almost anywhere in our hemisphere, and these people are bringing their kids here for their safety.

I met in Chicago with one of the immigration lawyers who represent some of these immigrants, and she said to me: "Senator, they believe their children will die if they leave them in these countries. They are willing to put their entire life savings on the line to get them to our border in the hope that they can be treated as refugees or people seeking asylum, and they are going to keep coming because the alternative is to accept rape and murder on their children."

Think about if that were your choice in life, what you would do. Would you do everything in your power to protect these children? Well, they have done it, and they have come to the border, and we answered them by separating them from their children and deporting many of them back to these dangerous countries. This isn't consistent with what America is all about.

We should stand together, both political parties, and not only condemn zero tolerance but make a solemn commitment to return these children to their parents. These lost children sadly reflect on our Nation, and we need these children to be with their parents as quickly as possible. That needs to be our highest priority.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, today the Senate voted 87 to 10 to pass the National Defense Authorization Act named for JOHN S. MCCAIN, Senator MCCAIN.

I want to do two things. I want to tell you a little bit about what is in the bill and a little bit about JOHN S. MCCAIN.

This increases the size of our military by 24,000, which is desperately

needed. Too few have done too much for too long. Having a larger military means people can stay with their families longer and takes a lot of pressure off those who are serving. And we need more troops, given the threats we have.

The equipment they are going to be receiving is the most modern that we have available. We are buying 77 F-35s, which will make enemies of our Nation think twice. We are improving the F-18, which has been a great airplane.

The bottom line is that we are helping the Ukraine, which is standing up to the Russians.

There is so much in this bill to relieve the pain and suffering from the defense cuts of the last 6 or 7 years. This begins to restore a hollowed-out military and improve their equipment, gives them more training, more time at home, and the largest pay increasing in 9 years—2.6 percent is the largest pay increase in about 9 years, and God knows they deserve it.

There are a lot of good things in this bill to make our military stronger. There are reforms in this bill to make the Pentagon act more efficiently.

In terms of Senator MCCAIN, when you mention JOHN MCCAIN, most people think American hero. They are right to do so. He suffered for his country in a way that few have. He was in prison for over 5½ years. He came back home with honor and dignity, like every other POW he served with. He had a chance to leave early because his father was a four-star admiral, and he said: "I will wait my turn."

Since then, he has been a force of nature as a Senator. He has taken on the Pentagon to make it more efficient. He has never lost sight that his primary obligation as a Senator is to defend the Nation. The men and women in uniform have never had a better friend than Senator MCCAIN. The Pentagon has never had a more worthy adversary than JOHN MCCAIN. Reform and commitment to those who serve go hand in hand.

From a personal point of view, I want to thank all of my colleagues for bestowing this honor on Senator MCCAIN. He is in a tough fight. Never count JOHN MCCAIN out.

I have had the pleasure of traveling the globe with this man, hours and hours on airplanes going to some of the most difficult places in the world to carry the message of what America is all about. I have never known anybody in my life—and very few in the history of this country could explain to others what America is all about. JOHN MCCAIN has been in love with this country since he was 17 years old and he went off to Annapolis. He has been willing to die and suffer for his country, like many others. But when it comes to explaining America, I have never known anyone as articulate and as sincere as JOHN MCCAIN.

JOHN, I hope you understand that the reason we named this bill after you is that we all love you. I hope you understand that this bill, my friend, repairs