

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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