

NOAA, 2017 was the most expensive year on record for disasters in the United States. At some point, we have to acknowledge that the intensity of these storms is much greater than in past years and is a symptom of changing climate.

Climate change is real. It is being driven by human activity. It is happening right now. These are facts. They are not in dispute. Our scientists know it, our businesses know it, the world knows it, and the American people know it. But too many Senators on the other side of the aisle just put their heads in the sand. It costs us more and more and more. We are not going to leave these people high and dry, but if we would do more on climate change, we would have fewer of these hurricanes and other types of storms.

Everyone knows that, except a few. Why? Why don't they admit the truth? Maybe there are two words that explain it: oil industry.

Just this week the U.N. released a report on climate change, saying that the world has only a short time—maybe a little more than a decade—to get a handle on carbon emissions. So far, the current administration has done nothing but move the issue backward. It is amazing that we, the leading country that is supposed to be the moral force—the economic, political, and military leader—are the ones who pull out of the Paris climate accords, and then the administration has been repealing environmental protection after protection.

So while we are thinking about the people of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina and everyone in Hurricane Michael's path, let's remember we are running out of time to do something about climate change. The kinds of storms we are seeing now will only increase if this body continues to keep its head in the sand ostrichlike and ignore the scientific realities.

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#### HEALTHCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, on another matter—healthcare—yesterday, 50 of my Republican colleagues voted against ensuring protections for people with preexisting conditions—people with asthma and cancer, people with diabetes and all kinds of gynecological problems. Republican Senators sided with the Trump administration to expand the ability of insurance companies to sell cutrate, junk insurance to Americans—to dupe Americans. These plans will destabilize the healthcare market and raise the cost of insurance for people with preexisting conditions who may end up being priced out of insurance altogether.

Let me say that again. Republicans yesterday voted to let insurance companies offer junk insurance plans that don't cover essential health benefits, allowing them to nickel-and-dime patients out of the medical care they deserve.

Our constituents—Democrats, Republicans, north, west, east, and south—say they want better healthcare at a lower cost, and what do Republicans do? They offer worse healthcare coverage at a higher cost, ultimately, to people, because the plans don't cover anything and then you have to pay out of your pocket.

What did they do it in the name of? Freedom. Freedom. This is like the 1890s. Who is going to have freedom? The insurance companies, the big shots. Who is going to have no freedom from illness and disease? Average folks. It is terrible thinking, once again siding with big, powerful special interests, not the average person.

The only people who want these junk insurance plans are two groups—the insurance companies and the rightwing ideologues who believe the government shouldn't be in healthcare at all. They want to cut Medicare. They want to cut Medicaid. They want to cut Social Security. That is who it is.

So let us remember that the junk insurance plans are hardly worth the paper they are printed on. They lure consumers in with low premiums, but the deductibles are so high, the copays are so high, and the coverage so skimpy that the plans hardly offer any benefit to the consumer at all.

While every Republican save one voted to hand the keys to the insurance companies, every single Democrat—every single Democrat—stood up to the sabotage from the Trump administration and voted to not allow the expansion of junk insurance across America.

I warn my colleagues that these are the kinds of issues that voters remember come election time. Healthcare is the No. 1 issue in America to the broad majority of voters. The American people will head to the polls in November and ask themselves: Which party will defend the people's right to quality healthcare? Which party will not?

The answer to that question could not be clearer. Democrats have spent the past 2 years offering several plans to reduce the cost of healthcare while maintaining or increasing the quality, while President Trump and Republicans in Congress have done nothing but drive costs up and quality down in obeisance to the big special interests—the insurance industry.

They have tried to repeal the healthcare law. They have tried to gut Medicaid, eliminate healthcare for millions of Americans, and put the insurers back in charge. They have eliminated the program to help low- and middle-income Americans afford insurance and, worst of all, Republican attorneys general—including two running for the Senate, one in Missouri and one in West Virginia—are suing, as we speak, to eliminate protections for Americans with preexisting conditions.

These actions are undergirded by a belief on the other side of the aisle that the American people just don't deserve help affording adequate healthcare. Re-

publicans have believed, continue to believe, and have acted on, unfortunately, that insurance companies should rule the roost, just as in the 1890s. The consequences are severe.

As a result of the Republican healthcare agenda, premiums are up by double digits in several States and quality is down. As a result of the Republican healthcare agenda, Americans are paying more and getting less.

I say to the American people that in a few short weeks you will have a choice. You can vote for 2 more years of healthcare sabotage from a Republican Congress, more attempts at repealing the healthcare law, more premium increases and uncertainty, more actions that undermine protections for patients with preexisting conditions or the American people can vote to flip the script and support Democratic candidates who will not only protect the care that Americans have today but who will work every single day to make it better.

I yield the floor.

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#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

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#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

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#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

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#### 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 Jeffrey Bossert Clark, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

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#### FAA/CONSUMER PROTECTIONS

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I think by any standard, as we conclude this Congress, the House and Senate, working together, have put more legislation on the President's desk that has long-term impact than at any time in a long time, whether it was the opioid legislation or healthcare research funding.

I want to talk a little bit today about the Federal Aviation Administration extension that, just last week, the Senate passed and the President signed. I believe the 5-year reauthorization is the longest reauthorization since the 1980s. So the traveling public, the FAA itself, the Department of Transportation, and the airline carriers of both people and freight have an understanding of what the next 5 years should look like.

One of the things that will happen during the time that begins right now—the Senate and the House listened and the President listened to the traveling public about their concerns about what happens on airplanes and in airports. This is a bill that I worked on in the Aviation Subcommittee, along with Senator CANTWELL, Senator THUNE, and Senator NELSON. We worked for almost 2 years to get this bill to where it was when the President signed it, to address the safety, security, and comfort of the traveling public.

In the wake of consumer complaints about the shrinking seat size on airplanes, the law directs the FAA to set minimum legroom standards and width and length requirements for airline seat size to ensure passenger comfort and safety. I think all of us have had some experience with seeing seats get smaller all the time. Like every other Member of the Senate, when I am flying back and forth every week, usually in one of those coach seats, somebody says: I thought you came back and forth on a private plane. Actually, only a few Members—maybe less than a handful—are able to do that. Most of us fly just like everybody else does, with no particular benefit. But you can sense those seats getting a little smaller and the legroom getting a little tighter. We have given new responsibility for the FAA to set standards, so the traveling public knows somebody is paying attention to them and how long they are going to be in that seat and what it is going to be like when they are there.

We also have a provision that you can't take somebody off an airplane once they have been allowed to board because you somehow oversold. If somebody is on that plane, they can't be taken off that plane unless they agree to be taken off that plane or the passenger acts in a way that the safety and security and the health of other passengers could be a problem. So there is no more involuntarily bumping of passengers who are on a plane.

The law prohibits placing live animals in overhead compartments. More and more people seem to travel with pets, and people have had bad experiences with that in the last few years. So overhead storage is not appropriate storage any longer for your pet if you are traveling with a pet.

It also sets minimum standards for service animals that are allowed on flights. We all see that more all the time, too—a pet not in a cage but important to the individual who has a service animal. Many veterans now have a service animal. There are now standards on what that animal can be and how it has to behave on a plane.

It bans in-flight cell calls. If you have ever sat by somebody before the plane takes off and learned way more about them than you want to know, you can imagine what it would be like if you had to learn way more about them based on every call they could

make all the time you were flying. So that is not going to happen. The next time you are on the ground and somebody continues to talk until they are told they can't do that any longer, just be grateful that can't continue once the plane gets in the air for the whole time of the flight, which would technically have been allowed with Wi-Fi or whatever allowed that phone to be connected. That is not going to be the case now.

Airline fees have changed. I don't like airline fees. Most people don't like airline fees. But if you pay a fee and you don't get the service—if you pay for a seat assignment that doesn't work out to be the kind of seat you paid for or early boarding, and that didn't happen or baggage that somehow wasn't handled the way your special fee was charged—the airlines now have to keep track of that and get you that money back as soon as they reasonably can or face a penalty.

The law requires air carriers to submit to the Department of Transportation a one-page summary of passengers' rights, including compensation for flight delays, cancellations, and mishandled bags. Every airline has to have that available for you to look at.

By the way, the Department of Transportation is going to have a Consumer Aviation Advocate. There will now be somebody at the Department of Transportation—it will be their job, their only job, to respond to you; they and their team will respond to you if you have had a problem on an airline and want to see what can be done about it.

Provisions are included to address disability issues on planes, whether restrooms are accessible, whether anything happens that would harm a disabled passenger or damage their wheelchair or the other aids they have.

We have a 3-year reauthorization of the Transportation Security Administration. There are some real needs there in both TSA Precheck and TSA generally that are met with this. One of those needs is more access to dogs. We all see dogs in airports, but every study since 9/11—and there have been a lot of them—indicates that nothing is more effective than a dog for finding most of the things you are looking for. Some of us have gone through security lines lately where the line moves pretty fast, but a dog checks everybody in that line. We will see what happens there, but dogs generally are doing the kinds of things that need to be done.

So whether it is the FAA Reauthorization Act or America's Water Infrastructure Act, which we passed yesterday—I think the vote on that was 99 to 1, but that doesn't mean it was easy to get it to the floor, and it doesn't mean it normally gets done by a Congress. But that has happened as well.

The insurance policies that Democrats voted to take away yesterday have been mentioned here this morning. Those short-term health policies

were available until the very last days of the Obama administration. I don't know the reason the administration had to suddenly decide that it didn't want that ability that several hundred thousand—maybe a couple of million—people had to get short-term coverage at a rate they could afford. For people in a job transition or something else, those were available that entire time.

The Urban Institute says that 1.5 million people who otherwise would have no insurance will be able to have insurance under those short-term policies. The policies under the Affordable Care Act are still available; they are still subsidized; they still do everything that is the maximum of ObamaCare. If that is what you want to have, particularly if you are subsidized in that marketplace, that is probably where you should be. But a lot of people aren't, and a lot of people don't have immediate access, and a lot of people are in transition.

The Urban Institute is not normally seen as a conservative watchdog, but they said that 1.5 million people will have insurance with these policies, which will continue to be available for people who wouldn't have insurance if they hadn't have been. So you can say anything you want to say. You are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts, and I think the facts on the vote we took this week on those short-term policies are pretty clear.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I want to acknowledge what Senator BLUNT just said about the success of this Congress over the last 2 years. It has been remarkable. What they did on FAA is tremendous. I enjoyed working with them on that. But I want to rise and talk about our veterans and what we have done for our veterans and what we need to do for our veterans.

Before I do, my State of Georgia had a tough day and a tough night last night. The hurricane hit about 10 o'clock last night. Unfortunately, we lost one 11-year-old with a tree crashing through the roof. The Governor has declared a state of emergency for 108 of our 159 counties. We have 1,500 National Guard troops activated and ready to deploy if needed to help law enforcement, emergency medical, and hospitals to see to it that we meet the needs of the people in our State. There is a lot of search and rescue going on. We are blessed that a lot of things didn't happen, but we were certainly hurt by those that did.

For families who have lost property and families who need help, our sympathy is with them, and we are taking action. GEMA and FEMA are working hard. Governor Deal is working extremely hard. We have recovered a couple of times already in the last 5 years from hurricanes, and we will do it again. But on behalf of myself, Senator PERDUE, and the United States Senate,

I send our best wishes to our people back in Georgia and also to our people in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Florida. Florida was hit worse last night. But now the storm has passed Atlanta and is going over South Carolina, and then North Carolina, which just came back from almost the worst storm in history, in which we had 48 inches of rainfall in one county. I couldn't believe that much water fell in one day, but it did. They are recovering and doing it nicely. They have done a good job. But all of us know these acts of nature and acts of God we have gone through affect our citizens, and we need to keep them safe. I urge all of our citizens in Georgia and in every State in the Union to play close attention to what their Federal emergency management people say. If they tell them to evacuate, they should. If they tell them to hunker down, they should. They should do whatever they can to follow the rules the best they can. Everybody we have to rescue takes a law enforcement officer and a medical person out of play to help somebody else.

#### VETERANS

Madam President, as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have the honor of representing the U.S. Senate to our veterans and responding, along with the House committee chaired by Chairman ROE of Tennessee, on veterans' issues. All of us are for veterans. There is one place you never have an argument on appropriations, and that is for veterans. We don't have partisan arguments about veterans either. On the battlefield, you don't see Democratic veterans or Republican veterans; you see American veterans. We are all for the veterans.

We have had some great successes with our veterans, but we have had some failures over the last decades. Sometimes they are on the front page of the newspaper, most recently last week when the hospital ratings came out. Two of the three hospitals servicing my State fell from three stars to one star, which meant they failed in their performance for our veterans, and we want to work to see that improve.

But we also want everybody to understand how big the problem is, what we have done the last 2 years to address the problem, and what is coming soon for all of us, which I think is good news for everybody.

First of all, starting 2 years ago, Senator TESTER, the ranking member on the committee, and I sat down and made a pledge that we were going to work together from the beginning to address the tough issues that had been put behind the backdoor for a long time and hadn't been dealt with. We have done that. In fact, we have tackled every single one of them, except one that we are going to tackle in a couple of weeks. In so doing, we have helped our veterans.

We had the help of the President as well. President Trump embraced our committee's work from the beginning.

We had to find a new Secretary because the old Secretary resigned, and we worked hard to do that. We had a few bumps in the road. The President gave us his full support. Robert Wilkie, who is the new Secretary of the VA, is a terrific guy. He has a family history in the military. He loves the VA and worked for DOD, or the Department of Defense, which is the precursor in working for the VA if you are a veteran, because you have to be in DOD first to be a veteran, second. In fact, Robert Wilkie is a godsend for us. In a few short weeks, he has already proven to be a big help for our veterans. He is not unwilling to tackle the hard problems. In fact, he is willing to tackle them.

Interoperative software for medical information has been a problem at the VA for years. The DOD and VA software didn't talk to each other.

We have a guy who left the battlefield in Afghanistan, came back to Georgia, and went to Fort Benning. He decided to leave the military and retire and go into veteran status, and we couldn't get his records transferred from Active Duty to veteran status because we didn't have interoperable software. We didn't have a way to do it.

This committee worked hard. We developed the largest contract in history with Cerner, a great software company. Cerner has a tremendous medical outreach product, and they are now installing that. Hopefully, over the next 15 years, we will have an interoperative system around the world that services our veterans who need medical service and have their records available instantaneously and immediately.

We have a 20th century soldier in the battlefield, but we have a 15th century VA when it comes to information technology. We have invested the money now with Cerner to put in the system, and we are going to get it done. I will stay on their back every day to see to it they do it.

I appreciate the cooperation of the employees of the VA. I tell them, as I make these remarks, that we are going to see to it they have every bit of backing they can get from us. We had too many vacant spaces in the VA. We had too many "acting this" and "acting that." I hate it when we appoint acting directors and acting bankers and acting soldiers. We don't need them to act. We need them to take action. We will start to do that as soon as we fund the places that go vacant, where it hurts our veterans.

I thank President Trump and Secretary Wilkie for their work and their support. It has been complete and seamless. We signed the VA MISSION Act in the Rose Garden a couple of weeks ago. The President came out and talked about his pride in the VA and what the veterans did for all of us and what he was going to do as President, as long as he was there, to see to it that he gave them at least the best of all of us like they have given us the best as veterans.

President Trump has been a great leader for our VA, and he understands the problems and has been supportive of our trying to make the changes we want to make.

Senator TESTER has been a great ranking member and a great partner with me on those things, and we made sure everything we did was bipartisan. To be honest with you, we passed 22 pieces of legislation and made 14 appointments. We had one "no" vote on one bill. We had complete unanimity on the committee—Republicans and Democrats—all the way through because we worked together, we set our goals, and we decided to make this work as seamlessly as our military works for us.

Let me talk about a few of those things we have done because I think they are impressive when you look at them. We passed 22 pieces of legislation, which include the VA MISSION Act, most recently passed a month ago. We redefined the mission and the actions of the VA to see that it does everything it needs to do to be a 20th century benefit program, like the new modern-day GI bill, which is a part of that.

The new GI bill says the old rule in the VA that you have to use your VA benefits within 15 years or you lose them on education is gone. We all know people's skills are changing about every 5 years or 6 years. If a person doesn't keep up with their continuing education, they are going to lose their job. They would lose their benefits because they have been in the VA 15 years. That is ridiculous. We removed that cap. Now they can take new courses and new training with their GI benefits for 25 years if they want to, if they are still eligible. We are not putting any time limit on it. There is no time limit on education. Education is the necessary product we have to use to produce the military of the 21st century.

It used to be that we drafted our soldiers. We can't draft the soldiers anymore. The average draftee can't operate the type of equipment our men and women operate in the battlefield. You have to have people who understand technology, understand the STEM subjects, and are good with games. Video games is one of the biggest qualifications now for pilots because all of our airplanes are like video games. It looks like Pac-Man when you get in the cockpit. It is because of high technology, and they are training for that. We have to have an attractive job for them and attractive VA benefits for them if they want to come to work for the United States of America and stay with us, or else we will never be able to keep the military we have today as strong and powerful as it is.

We also put a new law in on accountability. I served in the National Guard, and I understand accountability. In the military, you really understand accountability. You don't ask questions in the military. You give answers. If

your drill sergeant tells you to do 20, you drop and you do 20. If you can't do 20, you practice until you can and you get it right. That is what we have to do in the military because you don't fight wars for people who say: I am not interested today; I am not going to fight. You have to know what we are doing and do it right.

We have to do the same thing and provide services to those veterans once they leave. We don't need to be casual about it. We need to be committed about it and make sure we are doing everything we can to see our veterans get the services they want, the services they need, and the information they need.

Veterans Day is coming up in about 4 weeks. Every Veterans Day we are usually here, but I don't think we are going to be here on Veterans Day this year, if I understand the calendar right. I will be making speeches back home. Every year I have been here, I have made a speech on this floor about our veterans and how important they are to us. I try to point out a few people I have known in my lifetime who are veterans of the U.S. military and made a difference in my life forever.

I talked about my friend Jack Cox, of the U.S. Marine Corps. He was killed by a sniper in Vietnam in 1968. He was my best friend. He volunteered. He came to the fraternity house. He was 2 years older than me. So I was still in school when he got out and graduated.

After graduating, he went from the University of Georgia into the Marine Corps recruiting office and signed up for OCS. He went to Parris Island. From there, he went to Vietnam. On the 12th month of his 13-month assignment, he was, unfortunately, killed by a sniper in Vietnam.

He went to Vietnam because he wanted to represent his country, fight for his country, pay his price, and do his due diligence. Jack was a great man.

I have a bracelet on—two, as a matter of fact. One is a bracelet for Matt Cooper, a law enforcement officer who was killed a couple of weeks ago. The other one is for John McCain—John McCain, a former Member of this body, who a few weeks ago was buried at the Naval Academy, and his funeral was at the National Cathedral. He was a pilot in the Vietnam war and was captured. He was held captive by the North Vietnamese for 6 years. When he got out, he was badly wounded, badly injured, badly hurt. He came back to the military, rehabilitated himself, and went into the VA healthcare, and they rehabilitated him from his broken arms, his broken back, and all the other problems he had. He ran for the U.S. Senate, came to the U.S. Senate, and was a star, as you know, in this Senate Chamber from the day he got in the Senate until the day he died. He had a pervasive commitment to his country. He was exactly for our country what I want all of us in the Senate to be for this body—committed to the job, committed to the task, always ready, al-

ways prepared. Marines are that way. The Army is that way. The Air Force is that way, and the Senate ought to be that way. We are committed that way to our veterans in what we do today.

We also have to hold them accountable in the military. Accountability is important. Veterans want us to hold the VA accountable. That is why we put in the accountability bill, which, among other things, allows us to fire senior executives in the VA for not doing their job. You can't do that in many government jobs. As a matter of fact, people were surprised that we were able to pass it, and we passed it bipartisan. It passed bipartisan because everybody knew if your job wasn't subject to your doing your job, you didn't have accountability.

The first person taken to court for violating the law by not doing their job was in Georgia. I saw to it we prosecuted that case and used our lawyers to be able to do it. I wanted people at the VA to know we are not going to take bad behavior—break-the-law behavior—or bad attitudes in the VA. We are only going to give the best to our veterans.

We have a number of title 38 veteran leaders who have been suspended, moved, or otherwise fired because they weren't accountable for their job. We have some openings now that need to be filled because we got rid of them. We got rid of people who weren't doing the job and put in people who did the job. In the military, your accountability is doing the job, and there are no excuses if you don't.

We have done a lot of other things to help our veterans and help our country. I commit that we will continue to do so and make sure this Congress is as helpful and beneficial as we can.

There are three quick things I want to talk about. I want to thank the private sector for its support of our veterans. Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, GA, is helping the Atlanta VA now with our doctor shortage in the VA. Yes, we have a doctor shortage. We need the doctors to do the jobs. Some of these waiting times you have heard about from a lot of our veterans are not because we are making them wait because we are slow. We are making them wait because we don't have enough doctors. We are working on joint ventures with medical schools to do so.

Seventy-two percent of the doctors in the United States did a residency or an internship at the Veterans Administration. It is the key training center of all our doctors, and we have to expand that and improve it.

On the appeals process for benefits, there are people who are having to wait 2 and 3 years. We have one veteran whose case has been on appeal for 25 years. You can keep it on appeal as long as you file new information every year. He has found a way to file new information for every year. For 25 years, he has been putting something new in his file. He is blocking other veterans

who need to get their attention to get their service because he is making the line longer than it should be.

We put an accountability on the Veterans' Administration, as well, to see that our benefits are handled quickly and expeditiously and that the appeals are fair, and veterans can get an answer. We are cutting the average time of wait, and we are going to get it down to below half a year pretty soon. Pretty soon, we will have it as instantaneous as you can make it. You shouldn't have to wait to have a benefit paid if you didn't wait to complete an order from the officer whom you worked for.

Lastly, I want to thank Shepherd Center in Atlanta, GA. That is my hometown and my home State. Shepherd takes the most seriously injured veterans in the United States who we no longer can help because we don't have the expertise. They take them and help them. More often than not, they turn their lives around and make it where they can communicate, they can work, and they can do their job. In other words, the veterans are getting the best of care and the best of attention because the Committee on Veterans' Affairs in the Senate is giving 100 percent of their attention to them.

I am proud of what we have done, proud of what the Senate has done, and I am proud of our military and proud of our country. I hope we continue doing in the Senate as we have always done: do our job, do it well, and support our country.

May God bless the United States of America.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

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

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

NO INTERNMENT CAMPS ACT

Mr. MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. President.

Today I rise to bring attention to the No Internment Camps Act. This is an important bill to make sure that America does not repeat the mistake of World War II and develop and expand internment camps here in the United States of America.

One may think that this is something that is farfetched, that of course the United States would not establish internment camps, but the fact is, we already have 3, and the House passed a bill to greatly expand those internment camps. We have 35 sponsors of a bill here in the Senate to expand internment camps. We have the President issuing an Executive order asking Congress to expand internment camps. Recently, the President put forward a draft regulation to expand internment

camps without the consent of Congress. So it is all very real.

Where did this story begin? It began, as far as public awareness, on May 7, when Attorney General Jeff Sessions gave a speech. He called this his zero-tolerance policy. I listened to the description of the zero-tolerance policy on arresting people at the border, and I said: You know, when you take away the fancy rhetoric, it sounds like he has criminalized families who are fleeing persecution from overseas. I thought, that is a pretty stunning situation because we in America often look to Lady Liberty and the words inscribed on the base or pedestal of Lady Liberty that say "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

The idea that our Attorney General is saying we are going to criminalize flight from persecution—and it was found, furthermore, that they were going to immediately throw adults into jail and rip away the children from their families. That is not possible. That is not possible here in the United States of America.

So I arranged to go down to the border. I went down on June 3 and visited the McAllen processing center. The McAllen processing center is a location that the press had never been allowed into, so they were stationed outside saying: What are you going to find inside? What are you going to see? What is in there?

I expressed surprise that the press here in America was excluded from this facility to see what was going on.

I went in. I was given a tour. What I found was pretty shocking—a room in which huddled masses of families were shoved into wire link cages with nothing but an aluminum foil Mylar blanket. Then in an adjoining larger space, a warehouse space, we saw larger cages, 30-by-30 foot cages where families were being separated into fathers in one cage, mothers in another, daughters in a third, and sons in a fourth.

I stood in front of one 30-by-30 foot chain link cage and said: These young boys, who are lining up by height to prepare for being fed; these young boys, with the smallest being just knee-high to a grasshopper, maybe 4 years old; these young boys have been separated from their parents?

The answer was this: Well, Senator, not all of them. Some of them arrived unaccompanied.

I said: But many of these boys in this cage were taken away from their parents?

They said: Yes.

I said: Well, where did that happen?

They said: Well, we brought the family in that door over there, and then, with some explanation, we said, "We need to take your son away. We need to take your daughter away. We need to take your spouse away."

And they were locked up in these various locations inside that warehouse.

So it turned out it was real. The administration was criminalizing a flight from persecution, a flight that our ancestors know all too well, fleeing from civil war, from religious persecution, from famine to come here to the United States of America and see that beautiful, welcoming Statue of Liberty—"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"—but instead of that welcoming embrace, prison for the parents and, quite frankly, prison for the children, separating them.

I went from there up to Brownsville. I had been told by immigration advocates that many of these young men were being stuffed into a single building up in Brownsville, a former Walmart run by a nonprofit called Southwest Key. I had asked permission to visit this location, and I had been told: No, no, no. You have to give 2 weeks' advance notice.

They had a waiver system, so I asked for a waiver to be able to see what was going on inside this former Walmart. The waiver was turned down. Clearly the administration did not want any Member of Congress to see what was going on inside that building.

Since I was there in Texas, I drove up the road to Brownsville and said: Well, I will just call them up when I get there and say, "Surely you have enough members on your staff that one of them could come out and talk to me, or maybe one of them could give me a tour of what is inside."

When I arrived and walked up to the door of this former Walmart, there was a phone number posted on the front of it. I proceeded to call that phone number and talk to the assistant to the supervisor of the facility. The assistant said: Yes, the supervisor would be happy to come out and talk to you.

I waited 10 minutes. No supervisor appeared. I called again, and they said: Oh, no, the supervisor is on his way.

Well, what the supervisor was really doing was waiting for the police to arrive. They called the police to come and arrest me. Very interesting—you are arrested for knocking on the door and asking to have a supervisor talk to you? Well, they didn't arrest me. They hadn't actually formally asked me to leave the property, but they certainly weren't going to let me inside to see what was going on or even talk to me about what they were doing.

The immigration advocates have said: We have heard a rumor that possibly up to 1,000 young boys have been stuffed into that Walmart. I thought, that is not possible. As I was standing there and talking to the press, I repeated that. I thought, I shouldn't say this. I shouldn't say this because that is so outlandish. Surely no administration would try to stuff 1,000 boys into one building.

So I was refused entry. I brought attention to this scandalous child-separation strategy—this strategy of deliberately inflicting trauma on children in order to send a political message. No

one in the world can justify inflicting trauma on children to send a political message. It is not acceptable under any moral code. It is not acceptable under any religious tradition. But the dark heart of this administration had hatched this evil plan, and it was being implemented.

I went back 2 weeks later, on June 14, and I went back with reinforcements—other Members of Congress. We went to that facility, and this time they granted a waiver and said: Yes, you may see what is going on. They allowed the press in as well. So we went in for a tour.

I asked "How many boys are here?" thinking, at most a couple hundred.

They said: Well, we are now ready to put 1,500 boys in this facility, and we are one busload short of filling it.

I think they said there were 1,467 residents in this one building.

They took me out to the outside area, where they had set up a soccer field. They said: Isn't this wonderful? We have a soccer field.

Imagine how long it takes for nearly 1,500 young boys to circulate through a soccer field.

They took me to a game room, and there was a broken Foosball machine. I thought, how long does it take 1,500 boys to circulate through a single broken Foosball machine? Maybe there were a couple of them; I remember seeing one. They were very proud that they had this soccer field and this game room.

I said: You know, you expanded so fast. At the beginning of the year, how many boys did you have?

They said: Well, we planned for 300. We had 300 bedrooms and 300 boys.

They said that 2 months ago, they had increased to 500, and now they have 1,500 or almost 1,500.

I asked: This rapid expansion—did you plan carefully for this?

They said: Oh, yes.

I said: Was there anything that you needed that you fell short on?

The director of Southwest Key said: Yes. We don't have mental health counselors, or at least we are short.

I said: How many are you short?

They said: Ninety mental health counselors.

Ninety? Wow. That is a big shortfall. Realize that these boys were fleeing persecution from overseas. So they had experienced trauma in their lives abroad, they probably experienced trauma en route, and now they are experiencing the trauma of being ripped away from their families and shuttled off to this warehouse. Yet there was no plan to have the mental health counselors needed for this population. This is one feature of the incompetence and callousness of this administration in implementing this policy.

Public outcry was significant. I thank all Americans who participated in that public outcry, saying that this is not our America—criminalizing a flight from persecution, locking people up while they await asylum hearings—

that is not our America and you must stop. The courts said the same thing because it is actually illegal to lock up children for more than 20 days under the Flores consent agreement.

So President Trump sent a message. He sent an Executive order titled “Affording Congress an Opportunity to Address Family Separation.” Oh, how nice. The President is giving us an opportunity to address family separation. And what did the President ask for in that Executive order? He asked for us to pass a law to overrule the Flores consent agreement and allow the administration to establish family internment camps. Imagine—family internment camps here in the United States. That is what the President was asking for, that is exactly what the House of Representatives passed, and that is exactly what 35 Members of this body have signed on to cosponsor—family internment camps in the United States of America. That is absolutely wrong, it is absolutely unacceptable, and it is absolutely unneeded.

You may say: Wait. You are saying that the children shouldn’t be separated from their parents and that you shouldn’t lock up families together, so what do you propose, Senator MERKLEY? What do you propose that we do?

Well, the answer is, we had a very good program. It was called the Family Case Management Program. This Family Case Management Program said that when a family comes and is seeking asylum, they will be placed into the community and they will have intensive case management with somebody who speaks and writes their language, an individual who is in continuous contact with them, who makes sure they know exactly when their check-ins are and how to attend them and who knows exactly when the court hearing is and how to get to those court hearings.

So I wondered, did this work? How well did this program work? It turns out that there is an inspector general report from Homeland Security that came out—I think the date was November 30, 2017. Here is what the inspector general found: “According to ICE, overall program compliance for all five regions is an average of 99 percent for ICE check-ins and appointments, as well as 100 percent attendance at court hearings.” So 100 percent—you can’t get better than that. The Family Case Management Program—the inspector general under this administration said that there was 100 percent attendance at court hearings. So if you hear a Member of the Senate say “Well, we are concerned about this catch-and-release because people don’t show up for their hearings,” that is a lie. That is inaccurate.

That is inaccurate. If you hear the President saying, well, we are going to lock families up if they don’t appear for their court hearings, that is inaccurate. That is a lie. The inspector general of this administration found 100 percent attendance at court hearings.

Fortunately, Members of this body have come to their senses and rejected the language from the House establishing internment camps, expanding them, authorizing them. Fortunately, Members of the Senate have come to their senses and abandoned their effort—for now, at least—to establish permission, authorization, and funding for internment camps, as well they should because it doesn’t fit the vision of America: a nation where most of us are the children of immigrants, if not immigrants ourselves; a nation where in our family tree we have individuals who fled persecution, religious persecution, who fled famine, who fled conflict to be welcomed by the vision of the Statue of Liberty.

The story, unfortunately, doesn’t end here. The President has now issued a draft regulation. That draft regulation says we in the executive branch are granting ourselves the authority to establish internment camps without permission or direction from Congress.

Are you kidding me? A lengthy regulation designed to authorize themselves, without Congress acting, to establish family internment camps is totally out of sync with the traditions of America, with the values of America, or the law as it exists under the Flores consent agreement.

Let me put this as simply as I can: Children belong in homes and playgrounds and schools. They don’t belong behind barbed wire. I will fight as fiercely as I possibly can any proposal to put children behind barbed wire as they wait their asylum hearing. It is wrong. It is morally wrong. It is, from a policy perspective, totally unjustified, as was child separation.

That is why I am introducing the No Internment Camps Act. Let us not repeat the mistakes of World War II. This act ensures that no Federal dollars will be used for the operation and construction of family internment camps. It creates a 1-year phaseout of three family detention centers currently in operation, and it saves money from the family detention centers and transfers it to the Alternatives to Detention Program in order to reestablish the Family Case Management Program—the program that had a 100-percent success rate in getting people to their hearings. Put money into programs that work, not into prisons that afflict children.

There are many groups that have said how important this is and have endorsed the no internment camps legislation: Japanese American Citizens League, Human Rights Watch, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Women’s Refugee Commission, the Anti-Defamation League, the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, the American Immigration Lawyers Association of Oregon, Human Rights First, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Karen Korematsu, the daughter of Fred Korematsu, the lead plaintiff in the Supreme Court case that challenged Japanese internment camps in World War II.

Let us put an end to the prospect of the administration expanding on its own, through Executive order, internment camps in the United States. Let’s do so by passing the No Internment Camps Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### REPUBLICAN AGENDA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, after the vote was called on the Kavanaugh nomination—I should say immediately before it—the minority leader, the Senator from New York, told America that the most important thing they could do in response to that vote is go to the polls in the midterm elections. It is true that on November 6, Americans will head to the polls and select their Members of Congress, including the Senate, and as Ronald Reagan’s famous speech said, it will be “a time for choosing.”

Many people are wondering how they should choose, how they should exercise that most fundamental privilege of American citizenship, and that is the right to vote. Should they choose to vote for mob rule or do they choose to vote for the rule of law? Do they choose to endorse threats, intimidation, and incitement or do they choose to treat everybody—no matter how much you disagree with them—with dignity and respect? I believe those are our choices.

I was very disappointed to hear the former Secretary of State Mrs. Clinton say that you cannot be civil with a political party that wants to destroy what you stand for and what you care about. She said civility is only possible if Democrats were to win back the House or the Senate. In other words, her commitment to civility in our political discourse is contingent upon political outcomes. Did you notice the verb she used? She used the word “destroy,” which I think is telling.

It is not that people may disagree with her or her party, it is that people who disagree with her want to destroy what you stand for and what you care about. In other words, this mindset, I think, is very disturbing and should be of concern to all of us who want to restore some civility, and decorum, and bipartisan cooperation.

We are going to have our differences, there is no doubt about it. I welcome the opportunity to debate those differences. That is what the Senate is all about, but there is a line we saw crossed last week during the confirmation hearing. We learned it is our Democratic colleagues, unfortunately, who have associated themselves with special interest groups that are willing to go to just about any length to achieve their desired ends. In other words, the ends justify the means. That includes climbing statues, disobeying Capitol Police, getting arrested, chasing Senators and their spouses from restaurants, screaming at Members in elevators, sending coat hangers to Senators at their offices, and offering what amounts to a bribe. That doesn’t sound very civil to me.

Then you have former Attorney General Eric Holder, who was captured on video saying things that I, frankly, am shocked about. You would think the former head law enforcement officer for the U.S. Government, the Attorney General, would understand the need to be careful with your words and not stoke the ambers of conflict and civil unrest, but apparently disregarding that, he intentionally poured gasoline on the fire. He said last week, it is time to ditch the old slogan “when they go low, we go high.”

He attributed that to Michelle Obama, and good for her.

He said instead: “When they go low, we kick them.”

That is what the new Democratic Party is all about. The Washington Post has said Holder is proposing “the party pursue a meaner, more combative approach,” and noted he was alluding to metaphorical violence. This is from the former Attorney General of the United States.

I believe former First Lady Michelle Obama rightfully condemned this ugly and shameful statement.

Meanwhile, one Democratic Member of the Senate has recommended activists get up in the face of your Congresspeople. Another one has justified mob rule as entirely appropriate to our current political situation.

We had members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, during the Kavanaugh hearings, say: I am violating the rules intentionally. I am releasing committee-confidential information in violation of the rules, and, apparently, they were proud of it.

I hope the voters are listening. I think they are. They are coming from some of the most powerful voices of the Democratic Party, voices that could represent you in the next Congress. That is the choice—between incitement, intimidation, mob rule, or civility and treating people you disagree with, with the respect all of us are entitled to in a democracy.

I don't think the voters will reward a party that is spitting out this sort of venom about what our politics should be about: sowing division, alluding to violence, rejecting civility. Is that what supposedly passes for leadership? Should the voters reward that in this midterm election? I think our forefathers would be shocked, but this election is about more than just the rhetoric.

I think the voters also have a choice when it comes to looking at who is interested in solving the problems that confront our country, who is willing to work on a bipartisan basis together with the administration to make the country a better place, more prosperous place, a safer place. All they need to do is look back at the last 22 months.

Yesterday, for example, we passed a major water infrastructure bill that will keep our communities safe by maintaining dams and levees and addressing drinking water and waste-

water systems across the country. It will also expedite, in my part of the world, an important coastal study and authorize flood mitigation projects back home.

Then the President signed, just 2 days before that—I am sure most of this was lost in the furor over the Kavanaugh nomination—but just 2 days before that, the President signed another bipartisan bill I cosponsored called the Justice Served Act that will provide funds to prosecute cold cases solved by DNA evidence obtained from rape kits.

Then, of course, there was the Supreme Court confirmation last Saturday.

In the last 6 days, we have accomplished three major things: water infrastructure, funding cold case prosecutions, and filling Justice Kennedy's seat on the U.S. Supreme Court.

I would say that is a pretty good week, but our record of success is much lengthier than that. Judge Kavanaugh was far from the only Federal judge we have confirmed. Last year, we confirmed another superb Justice, Neil Gorsuch. On top of that, we have confirmed 69 judges under President Trump. That includes three Texas judges on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and four that preside over Texas district courts.

Those numbers begin to show you that since President Trump took office in January of last year, we haven't taken our foot off the gas when it comes to doing the people's work. Under this Congress, we have confirmed the most appellate judges ever during a President's first 2 years. Of course, these nominees, once confirmed, have a lifetime tenure, so they will be there long beyond this President's term or maybe our term in the Congress.

Our work extends far beyond filling the courthouses of this country. What we have done, working together with the entrepreneurs and the investors and the small businesses of America, is we helped reenergize the state of the American economy.

This started with tax reform, which has been the biggest game changer. This is the first major overhaul of the Tax Code in 31 years. It lowered rates, doubled the child tax credit to help working families, and made American businesses more internationally competitive. I am sorry we had to do that all by ourselves without a single Democratic vote, but we thought it was so important to do that we stepped up, and we did it. I think the benefits are pretty manifest.

Ms. PELOSI likes to say the savings individual taxpayers got were merely “crumbs,” but I would like to tell her about some of my constituents and what they told me.

One of them, Kim Ewing from Mesquite, wrote me and talked about how tax reform was hugely helpful because she hadn't had a raise in 7 years. Now she enjoys a boost in her paycheck

each month. She called tax reform a no-brainer or what she referred to as merely “common sense.”

Then there is Claudia Smith, owner of the Aggieland Carpet One in College Station, who told me earlier this year that she has been able to reinvest the savings she received under the new tax law to buy new equipment for her small business, as well as provide healthcare coverage for her employees. She says she will also have enough left over to hire more people.

Claudia's story is the same one that is being told all across the country. More than 700 businesses have used the tax savings to benefit their employees and customers. They have announced pay raises, 401(k) match increases, cuts to utility rates, bonuses, and other benefits to American workers.

These developments are just part of the reason this economy is growing again and why people have renewed confidence and optimism in their future.

As the majority leader reported yesterday, unemployment in this country has now fallen to 3.7 percent, which is the lowest rate since 1969. People are going back to work; they are earning more; they are keeping more of what they earn; and they are investing. This is what it looks like when that sleeping giant of the American economy wakes up and is unleashed from the constraints of high taxation and overregulation.

It is not just the economy that deserves mention. One of our accomplishments has been repealing burdensome regulations—I have mentioned that overregulation—and we have done that through the Congressional Review Act.

Previously, it had only been used 1 time, but we have used this device 16 times to eliminate Agency rules which really had been the ropes that tied down that sleeping giant of the American economy. It allowed it to come roaring back.

We have repealed the Independent Payment Advisory Board under ObamaCare, which will allow seniors and their families to take greater control of their healthcare decisions without being subject to the whims of unelected bureaucrats. We have also eliminated the root of ObamaCare—the individual mandate. This was literally a coercion by the Federal Government, forcing people to buy something that, in many cases, they couldn't afford, and they didn't want.

We literally made ObamaCare voluntary now so people have choices, but this was essentially a tax on some of the most disadvantaged people in the country who were coerced into buying healthcare they didn't want or couldn't afford, and if they were unable to even do that, they were forced to pay a tax or a penalty.

Recently, we have been accomplishing a lot more for our men and women in uniform, our intelligence officers, and our veterans. We have helped restore America's defense with

the greatest investment in the military in decades, including the largest troop pay raise in nearly 10 years.

We have reauthorized important intelligence-gathering tools, like section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—a vital tool in tracking foreign terrorists abroad who try to hurt us at home.

For our veterans, we passed the VA MISSION Act, which will make significant reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs by strengthening healthcare and community care options that are available to those who have served our Nation in uniform.

Last, but not least, is our series of accomplishments. We have taken other important steps, like passing the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act just last week. It is legislation that modernizes our airports, improves service for travelers, enhances safety, and boosts industry innovation.

Then, almost without anybody paying any attention at all, we passed a huge bipartisan bill to address the opioid crisis. Senator ALEXANDER, the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, ushered this bill through the House and the Senate, along with Senator MURPHY and others. It has contributions from 70 Members of the Senate and 5 standing committees. That takes a lot of hard bipartisan effort, but it is important because it combats the nationwide epidemic that has led to the death of 49,000 Americans in just 2017 alone.

We have done important work in terms of improving public safety by enacting a bill I sponsored and that was supported by our colleagues here called Fix NICS; that is, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. We also passed a bill sponsored by Senator HATCH called the STOP School Violence Act.

The Fix NICS bill helped fix our broken background check system and ensures that criminals aren't able to purchase or possess firearms after they are convicted.

In the wake of the Texas shootings at Santa Fe and Sutherland Springs, we know there were a lot of people crying out for Congress to do something, and this was the one thing we could all agree to, on a bipartisan basis, across the ideological spectrum. These two bills—mine and Senator HATCH's—are a part of the way we have answered that call.

We have tried to protect our young people—especially women—in another important way as well. We enacted what is known as SESTA, the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act. This legislation by the junior Senator from Ohio helps to stop online trafficking and adds to a bill I sponsored called the Abolish Human Trafficking Act. It strengthens programs and supports survivors of human trafficking and provides resources to law enforcement officials on the frontlines of the fight against modern-day slavery.

I understand why most Americans have not heard of all or many of these accomplishments, but I think it is important to note what we have been able to do while we have fought mightily over some things, like judicial nominations.

We have also worked in a bipartisan way to get the people's work done. I believe we have done so mainly by treating each other respectfully and by demonstrating civility, not by yelling at each other, by making threats, or inciting people to violence. That is not the American way.

I am hopeful that after the scenes we saw here last week during the confirmation proceedings for the Supreme Court, that the American people will reject that sort of conduct and demand that their elected officials act in a way they can be proud of.

Yes, we put money back into America's pockets. We have rolled back regulations to make their lives a little bit easier. We have strengthened our military, given our veterans access to better healthcare, and protected our communities from harm.

As the minority leader, the Senator from New York, said right before the confirmation vote on Judge Kavanaugh, the people need to vote. They will, I hope, exercise that franchise—that right of every American citizen to determine the direction of our country and who will represent them in the Halls of Congress.

It is my sincere hope that they will remember some of these accomplishments we have made together during this administration and know we can continue to do more for them in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

#### FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning the front page of the Washington Post tells the story about our intelligence agencies intercepting some communications among the Saudi Government officials. It appeared they were exchanging information about how to lure a man named Khashoggi back into Saudi Arabia. Khashoggi is a person who has been openly critical of the Saudi Arabian leadership. He has published articles around the world, including in the Washington Post.

We have a video that shows Mr. Khashoggi entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. We have no video that shows him exiting that same building. He has disappeared.

This intelligence data, as well as other information, leads us to believe he has been assassinated—assassinated because he was critical of the leadership of the Saudi Arabian kingdom. That is what happens in a country of authoritarian rule that does not protect the right of dissent.

We see it over and over in history—strong authoritarian rulers can't stand dissenters. Many of them are killed, imprisoned, tortured, or run out of the

country. It still happens in China. It still happens in Russia. It happens, obviously, when it comes to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and other countries.

We are different. I hope we are. The reason we are different is because of 45 words—45 words—that were written over 200 years ago. They are worth repeating. These are 45 words that have guided our country and still should guide us today.

I am going to take a minute to read them. It is the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the First Amendment to our Bill of Rights, credited to James Madison. Here is what it says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

These are 45 words that distinguish us from virtually every other country in the world, where we expressly guarantee to ourselves and our posterity freedoms that are fundamental to being an American.

I have heard my friend the senior Senator from Texas come to the floor repeatedly now to talk about what happened last week during the Kavanaugh nomination and in the weeks before, during the committee hearing, and there were people who came to this Capitol because of their intense personal and political feelings about that nomination and what it meant to them personally and what they believed it meant to the country. They brought their emotions to this place, and they did it because they are guaranteed the right to do it in this Constitution.

Each of us is guaranteed the right to peaceably assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. The Senator from Texas has referred to this as "mob rule." I will tell you, if you believe these 45 words and what the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights instructs us in terms of this democracy, then it gives these people—all people in this country—the right to speak, the right to express their opinion, and the right to petition their government for a redress of grievances.

Now, of course, that should never—never—condone violence nor the incitement to violence. That is where we must draw the line.

If you are going to stand and defend this article of the Constitution, which we have all taken an oath to defend, then you are going to defend the right of individuals to speak in this country and say things that are unpopular and maybe even unacceptable to you personally.

I have found myself in that position, gritting my teeth and thinking I wish to heck that person wasn't saying what they were saying, but they have a constitutional right to do so. They don't have a constitutional right to be violent or to incite to violence.

I might add, I think they cross the line when they go after politicians'

family members and others. That clearly crosses the line. I have seen it happen in my political life, and I am sure all my colleagues can tell a similar story.

To call this mob rule is to take the actions of a few and to really use those as a standard to judge everyone. That is fundamentally unfair. There were people on both sides of the Kavanaugh nomination who had intense, strong personal feelings and used their constitutional rights under the Bill of Rights to express that. They did it peaceably. They did it in a constructive way. As far as I am concerned, they have a constitutional right to do it.

For those who crossed the line, they need to accept whatever consequences come their way. For some, it means being arrested and maybe more, but for those who complied with this article in the Bill of Rights, I think we all ought to stand up and say, regardless of party, this is the Constitution both parties swore to uphold.

To say that what happened last week—even in this Chamber and even in this Gallery here—is really the whole story is ignoring the obvious.

When the Senator from Texas asks about mob rule, my response is to say three words: “Lock her up.”

This week in Iowa, the President held a rally. During the course of that rally, he was critical of the senior Senator from California. As he was critical of her, the people attending the rally started chanting “Lock her up. Lock her up,” referring to my colleague from California.

I am sure the Senator from Texas heard about this. I hope that when he heard about it, he realized that an incitement to hold someone criminally liable for using their office in a legal way really steps over the line.

Let’s be honest about this. In the last 2 years, we have seen a coarsening of the rhetoric in politics in America. Things are being said now that have never been said before. Oh, they were said in private or maybe on some website, but now they are being said openly on a regular basis.

If someone speaks up at a rally, to have a Presidential candidate say: Let the crowd take care of that, and I will pay the legal fees of whoever does it—that happened. It suggests to me a coarsening of our rhetoric in this political world that we live in that is not conducive to a civilized and constructive democracy. As the Senator from Texas suggested, we need to really reward civility, and we need to show it ourselves in the things we say and do as Members of the U.S. Senate.

No, I don’t think it is evidence of mob rule in America. It wasn’t a mob that voted here on the floor of the Senate. One hundred Senators voted, as the Constitution requires us to do, and we did it in an orderly, democratic way, regardless of whether you agree with the outcome. The mob didn’t rule; the Constitution ruled, and the Constitution needs to continue to rule.

There are limits to speech. The courts have talked about this for 200 years. But let us never forget that the first 45 words of the Bill of Rights guarantees to us the right of free speech, peaceful assembly, and the right to petition our government for redress of grievances.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Madam President, on Monday, two things were made clear. This last Monday, we came to realize that we need to take immediate action—immediate action—to deal with human-caused global warming. Secondly, American innovation has already given us many of the tools to do so.

I know there are those who think that climate change is an issue that will only affect us in the far-distant future or that the challenge is so big that we can’t really do much about it, but the truth is that we are already dealing with the effects of climate change, and we have it within our power to address them with technology that already exists.

Earlier this year, rainstorms and melting snow caused flooding across my State of Illinois. More than 20 counties throughout the State were placed under flood warning. As the water level of rivers continued to rise, several communities in Illinois had to evacuate their homes for their own safety. Illinois farmers know all too well that changing weather is impacting the way they farm and the crops they produce.

As I speak, recovery efforts are already underway after Hurricane Michael left the Panhandle region of Florida in ruins. Our hearts go out to the families who are waking up this morning and don’t know whether their loved ones are safe or whether they have a home to return to.

Earlier this summer, in the western part of our country, we saw vast acreage destroyed by wildfires, and it has been one year since Hurricane Harvey hit Texas and Hurricane Maria devastated the entire island of Puerto Rico.

It is obvious to anyone that natural disasters are becoming more powerful, more costly, and more deadly, and it is time we take climate change’s role in causing them seriously, or it will get worse.

On Monday, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report stating that we have just over a decade—less than 10 years—to drastically reduce our carbon emissions if we want to maintain life on Earth as we know it today. It is an ominous warning but a serious one. The U.N. report states that we must reduce global emissions by 45 percent by the year 2030 and reach net zero emissions by 2050 if we want to avoid a world where deadly storms, unbreathable air, widespread famine, and multiyear droughts become the norm.

According to the national security community that we count on to keep

Americans safe, failing to address climate change will inundate our military bases and installations, and it will incite international conflicts and put our military—the men and women serving our country—at risk in terms of readiness, operations, and strategy.

The fact is, no one can claim to be serious about our national security if we don’t face the reality of climate change. That isn’t a declaration by the Sierra Club or some liberal Democratic Senator; it is a declaration of our defense community.

We will continue to face weakened states and unprecedented refugee migration in the decades to come if we ignore this reality.

There is good news, though. We have the tools and the technology to prevent this dystopian future, and the United States can lead in this effort. America is already showing the world how to reduce emissions and grow our economy by increasing energy efficiency measures and renewable energy usage and switching to electric vehicles.

Think about the gains we have made, the progress that has been made when it comes to the fuel efficiency of the cars and trucks we drive today. There was a time in the Senate not that long ago when Detroit automobile and truck manufacturers were in complete denial. They said that there is just no way to hit these targets in terms of miles per gallon. We are doing it, and we see it every day. It is the same American innovation that can power us to make the far-reaching transitions in energy and infrastructure we need to limit our emissions to meet the recommendations of this United Nations panel.

On Monday, the Nobel Prize in economics was given to two Americans—William Nordhaus and Paul Romer—for their work on innovation, climate, and economic growth. Their work shows that addressing climate change can be an incredible opportunity for job growth and new investments in American competitiveness. New jobs can be created designing more efficient solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries, as well as manufacturing the components for export all over the world.

If you visit downstate Illinois—an area which is one of our most bountiful agricultural areas—you can’t help but be struck by the number of wind turbines that have been built all around my State. The farmers love it because they are receiving monthly checks for the wind turbines located on their property, and the wind turbines are generating electricity for nearby communities without polluting. Twenty years ago, no one would have thought of that as a serious alternative. Today, it is. It is an alternative renewable source of energy that is not going to make the world worse for future generations.

There was a Paris Agreement in terms of setting global goals that all the countries in the world would sign up for to reduce carbon emissions and

to work together to develop a world-wide clean energy economy, and 195 countries—every country in the world—has agreed to this Paris Agreement and signed on, including the United States. However, last year President Trump decided that the United States would step away from the rest of the world, step away from our allies and trading partners, and leave this agreement.

When I think about the decisions being made by this Trump administration, this may be one of the most long-term, disastrous decisions he has made. To think that this great Nation, with its great economy, its great technology and innovation, would step away from an agreement that every country in the world has signed to deal with our climate challenges is unthinkable.

I hope that after this week's announcement from the United Nations, at least someone at the White House will have second thoughts about this disastrous decision. We should not give up U.S. leadership and risk the world moving forward without us. If we step aside from this responsibility, others will step into our place—starting with China—leading the rest of the world outside of the United States into new technology innovations to deal with climate change.

It is clear that it is in America's best interest to take immediate action to limit our greenhouse gas emissions and face the realities of climate change head-on. Will it result in a change in our lifestyle? Perhaps, but only on the margins. Is it worth it? This weekend, I am going to get a treat: I get to visit my grandkids. They are 7 years old, twins, a little boy and a little girl, and I have a lot of fun with them. I think about what I do for a living and how it might impact the world they will live in for years to come. I would like to let them know that I am doing my part in the Senate and others are doing their part in Washington to leave them a world that they can live in—one that is not compromised by the selfishness and political agendas we see today.

The livelihood of people in my State, including the farmers in my home of Illinois, depend on us.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). All time has expired.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 60 additional seconds.

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

Mr. DURBIN. The livelihoods of farmers in my home of Illinois depends on our acting and preventing an endless cycle of historic storms, floods, and droughts, causing millions of dollars in damage and crop loss. We have a moral obligation to our kids and grandkids to leave future generations with a planet that is not plagued by catastrophic drought, famine, wildfires, hurricanes, and sea level rise. We have the tools, and we know how to do it. It is time we rise to the challenge.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak.

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

#### FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I am here to speak and once again highlight the importance of aviation to my State, to the country, and to the world, but also to point out the significance of the 5-year FAA reauthorization bill the Senate passed last week. I have come to the floor many times on this topic.

I am pleased to be here today to tell about the many wins that are included in this legislation. They are beneficial to the country, and they are certainly beneficial to my home State.

I am most pleased to highlight the fact that this legislation does not include—excluded from this legislation are any efforts to privatize our Nation's air traffic control system.

Kansas is the air capital of the world and for good reason. Kansans have built three out of every four general aviation aircraft since the Wright brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk. Today, over 40,000 Kansans make a living manufacturing, operating, and servicing the world's highest quality airplanes. I cannot overstate the importance of this reauthorization and the stability it provides to the aviation community.

We are doing something that we have been unable to do for years: a long-term FAA reauthorization. In the ongoing efforts to pass the long-term bill, Republicans and Democrats in both Chambers of Congress have found common ground and consensus among the entire aviation community on a wide range of important issues. The chairman of the Commerce Committee, Senator THUNE from South Dakota, as well as the ranking member, Senator NELSON from Florida, deserve credit for the bipartisan manner in which they have worked through the FAA reauthorization process in recent years and their efforts to negotiate a final piece of legislation with the House that was strong enough to receive 93 votes in the Senate.

I am pleased that included in this legislation are numerous provisions that I have introduced and supported and advocated for since the reauthorization process began, and I look forward to sharing these accomplishments in short fashion. I thank the many aviation and aerospace leaders in my State for informing my work on this topic.

First, the FAA reauthorization bolsters FAA manufacturing by streamlining the aircraft certification process.

With the short amount of time before a vote, I will highlight these for the RECORD.

In addition, it authorizes the FAA Center of Excellence for Advanced Materials at Wichita State University. This research has played a critical role

in the evolution and integration of aircraft materials and technologies by providing valuable research to validate the safety and integrity of new aircraft to the general public.

This bill helps close the skills gap for the aviation workforce. Senator INHOFE and I have worked to provide legislation to create a pilot program within the FAA through which grants would be authorized to support tech education and career development. The grants would encourage collaboration between businesses, schools, and local governments, and these entities would develop innovative workforce programs to help close the skill gap in the aerospace industry.

The FAA Reauthorization Act reduces regulatory barriers for educational use of drones—unmanned aerial vehicles or systems. Last Congress, I was co-lead on this legislation with Senator PETERS of Michigan to reduce barriers for the use of small UASs at institutions of higher education. This bill accelerates the safe integration of innovative UAS technology, another significant development.

This legislation strengthens the Federal Contract Tower Program. Kansas is home to eight air traffic control towers that participate in FAA's FCT Program, which provides important safety services at small airports nationwide in a cost-effective manner that saves the taxpayers \$200 million annually. This FAA reauthorization includes several reforms that strengthen the Contract Tower Program, and I am pleased to be able to report that.

It provides access and flexibility for additional airport construction funding. Again, this is something that is important in all of our communities that have an airport. How do we make certain that we have the latest infrastructure available for safe flights to and from our airports?

It improves child safety on commercial airlines, legislation that Senator SCHATZ from Hawaii and I introduced to advance the safety of children who fly with their parents.

This bill reauthorizes the FAA's Essential Air Service Program, connecting rural airports to the national system. That is something which is important to many of us who represent rural States.

It safeguards small airports in the event of sudden loss of commercial service.

Last Congress, I sponsored the Small Airport Regulatory Relief Act that is included in this legislation. It is to make certain that certain airports, such as the Hays Regional Airport and the Liberal Mid-America Regional Airport, would not lose Federal Airport Improvement Program funding due to inconsistent commercial service through no fault of their own.

Unfortunately, regional airlines continue to struggle because of a lack of pilots. There is a pilot shortage, and our airports and the traveling public ought not be damaged as a result of the

inability of the airlines to hire a sufficient number of airline pilots.

It also increases the fairness and reduces regulation for general aviation projects and activities. This is legislation that was originally introduced, which I am a sponsor of, called the FLIGHT Act. It effectively targets AIP funding to general aviation airports and provides those airports with flexibility on their use of passenger facility charges. It has a provision that fosters the exchange of aircraft through fair regulatory treatment in airplane joint ownership—again, another small but important development. It includes provisions that preserve the Contract Weather Observers Program, something that was at risk over the last several years.

There are many things to highlight in this legislation. I would also point out that it has provisions to help provide for talented women in the aviation workforce and facilitate their recruitment. Women currently comprise only 4 percent of flight engineers, 6 percent of pilots, and 26 percent of air traffic controllers, representing a huge untapped pool for talent in the aviation industry.

I am grateful to my colleagues for coming together and creating this compromise bill that will have a positive and immediate effect upon the economy and the Kansas aviation community. It is a good day for the Senate, it is a good day for Congress, it is a good day for the country, and it is especially a good day for me and for Kansans.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF JEFFREY CLARK

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, Mr. Clark's nomination is yet another example of the Trump administration nominating individuals to lead government offices whose missions they have opposed.

The Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice is uniquely charged with the "stewardship of the nation's natural resources and public lands." Yet, in the face of the overwhelming evidence of climate change, Mr. Clark says the science is debatable. It isn't, and this is not the time to have someone in this position who refuses to acknowledge facts and confront the costs and risks of inaction.

In addition, like many Trump nominees, Mr. Clark is skeptical of the long-standing Chevron doctrine which states that courts must give deference to agency regulations because agencies are staffed with subject matter experts and that judges, who are only supposed to interpret the law, are not qualified to substitute their opinions. Large corporate polluters frequently challenge EPA regulations designed to safeguard our waters, endangered species, and natural resources, and we need a person in this position who will side with the scientists and public health experts, not big polluters.

Americans deserve an associate attorney who is committed to protecting

their interests and not big-monied special interests. I do not believe that Mr. Clark is that person, and I will be voting against his nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Clark nomination?

Mr. ROUNDS. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 228 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Gardner	Murkowski
Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Perdue
Boozman	Hatch	Portman
Burr	Heller	Risch
Capito	Hoeven	Roberts
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Inhofe	Sasse
Corker	Isakson	Scott
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Kyl	Thune
Cruz	Lankford	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Toomey
Enzi	Manchin	Wicker
Ernst	McCaskill	Young
Fischer	McConnell	
Flake	Moran	

NAYS—45

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Harris	Reed
Blumenthal	Hassan	Sanders
Booker	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Jones	Shaheen
Cardin	Kaine	Smith
Carper	King	Stabenow
Casey	Klobuchar	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Heitkamp	Nelson	Rubio
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the

Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant bill 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 Eric S. Dreiband, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Mitch McConnell, James Lankford, John Hoeven, James M. Inhofe, Johnny Isakson, David Perdue, John Cornyn, Steve Daines, John Barrasso, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Lamar Alexander, James E. Risch, Jeff Flake, Richard Burr, Roy Blunt, Deb Fischer.

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 Eric S. Dreiband, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 229 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Capito	Heller	Roberts
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rounds
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Corker	Inhofe	Scott
Cornyn	Isakson	Shelby
Cotton	Johnson	Sullivan
Crapo	Kennedy	Thune
Cruz	Kyl	Tillis
Daines	Lankford	Toomey
Enzi	Lee	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	Young
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—47

Baldwin	Harris	Peters
Bennet	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Jones	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Casey	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Duckworth	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murray	