

The United States has free-trade agreements in place with 20 countries. One problem we have had with our agreements is that other countries don't always live up to the text and spirit of the agreement they signed. I will work with the administration to hold our partners accountable in order to improve outcomes for American businesses and consumers, but most important to American businesses and consumers is to get the proper respect for the rules of trade that come as a result of the WTO.

In short, the Finance Committee has its work cut out for it and for us on the committee next year. International trade is a force for good. Farmers and businesses in Iowa and across the country have benefited tremendously from international trade and are better off because they can sell their products around the world. I am committed to making sure they have access to open markets with the guarantees of fair treatment and enforceable protections.

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I now would like to go to a final set of remarks—probably the final set of remarks for this Congress as we draw to a close—to summarize some of the work of the Judiciary Committee, as I have been chairman for the last 4 years.

I have served on the Judiciary Committee for each of my 38 years in the Senate. Four years ago, I became chairman. Senator LEAHY, my colleague from Vermont, who served as chairman before I took the reins, marked the occasion by presenting me with a larger than life gavel. Of course, that was a lighthearted moment, and I appreciated his gesture of good will and collegiality. It is this spirit of camaraderie that sustains the Senate and has guided the bipartisan accomplishments of the Judiciary Committee.

The work we do on the Judiciary Committee shapes our way of life in America to a great extent. Its legislative jurisdiction includes constitutional amendments, bankruptcy laws, civil liberties, immigration, patents, copyrights and trademarks, antitrust laws, juvenile justice, criminal laws, and more. The committee conducts oversight of the Justice Department, including the FBI and sections of the Homeland Security Department. It also handles consideration of judicial nominees.

As chairman, I put forth a number of legislative priorities. I wanted to increase oversight efforts to hold government accountable and advance judicial confirmations. I wanted to strengthen whistleblower protections and increase competition in the pharmaceutical markets to lower the cost of prescription drugs. I wanted to enact juvenile justice reform and update our criminal justice system. I wanted to protect election integrity and bolster victims'

rights. At the close of this Congress, I am happy to report that the committee has made progress in all of these areas.

This week, the Senate passed the FIRST STEP Act, a historic criminal justice reform bill that had overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress and the backing of the President.

Earlier this month, the Senate unanimously passed bipartisan juvenile justice legislation, which legislation hadn't been updated since 2002.

The Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act, the Missing Children's Reauthorization Act, and Kevin and Avonte's Law to help families locate people with dementia and others who wander and go missing all became law during the 115th Congress.

Overall, 61 bills were reported out of committee, all of them bipartisan. Of those bills, 45 were passed in the Senate, and 29 became law in the past two Congresses under Presidents Obama and Trump. And if the House passes our criminal justice reform bill today, that figure will be 30 bills that have gone through Congress. Again, I want to emphasize that all were bipartisan.

The committee also delivered on judicial nominees. This wasn't so bipartisan. The Senate confirmed a historic number of lifetime appointments to the Federal bench this Congress. That includes 53 district court judges, 30 circuit court judges, and 2 Supreme Court Justices—85 Federal judgeships in the last 2 years. This reflects an alltime record for the first 2 years of any Presidency. These lifetime appointments will uphold the rule of law and preserve freedom and liberty for generations to come.

These accomplishments weren't easy. There was contention, and there was rigorous debate and, as I said, plenty of disagreement.

The confirmation hearing for Justice Brett Kavanaugh was the height of discord on the committee. As chairman, I was determined to uphold order and the rule of law, protect due process, and maintain credibility in our constitutional responsibility of advice and consent. I took the allegations that were brought forth very seriously. The committee conducted the most thorough, comprehensive, and transparent confirmation process in history. And if that word "history" bothers you, it is numerically justifiable by saying that we had more documents on Kavanaugh than we had on the previous five Supreme Court Justices combined. So I hope, after half a million documents, it is shown that we left no stone unturned. In the end, another extremely well-qualified Justice was confirmed.

However, the divisions that defined the Kavanaugh hearings do not define the body of work produced by the committee this Congress. The Judiciary Committee passed seven bipartisan bills to help families, healthcare professionals, and law enforcement address the opioid crisis in their local communities. The President signed

these measures into law with the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act. We also passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act in 2016 to rapidly respond to the opioid crisis and prevent others from falling into addiction.

With hearings and legislation, the Judiciary Committee also worked toward ending the pervasive problem of human trafficking. In all, the Senate adopted a series of five bills that were signed into law to enhance Federal efforts to protect victims and prevent and prosecute enslavement for forced labor and sex trafficking.

As a committee, we have made great progress on behalf of the American people. We tackled the priorities I outlined at the beginning of my chairmanship and achieved success on a bipartisan basis. That is what our constituents expect from those of us who are Senators. That is what I strive to deliver every day.

The 115th Congress is drawing to a close. Although I won't serve as chairman during the next Congress, I have every confidence that my friend Senator GRAHAM of South Carolina will build upon the successes we have accomplished. I look forward to continuing my service on the Judiciary Committee in the next Congress, and I am thankful to all of my colleagues on the committee and even some off the committee for their hard work and cooperation on behalf of the American people.

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 called the roll.

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

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

SYRIA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, yesterday, Christmas came early to the Kremlin. First, we have President Trump's announcement to pull our troops out of Syria. Second, the administration wants to delist three companies controlled by Oleg Deripaska, though, I am not sure he has adequately relinquished control of those companies. Third, the administration has done nothing to respond to Russian aggression in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. This is a trifecta for Vladimir Putin and sends a global message that creates real concerns. Christmas has indeed come early to Moscow.

The Trump administration's withdrawal from Syria lacks any strategy, is foolhardy, and it puts U.S. security in the Middle East—including our ally, the State of Israel—at great peril. This is not simply an error. It is dangerous. It is dangerous.

Let me be clear. Withdrawal from Syria without success is failure. American credibility will take a horrible hit