

have a little time before his well-deserved retirement to continue to draw on his wisdom and expertise over the course of the next year and a half.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. President, good news about the economy keeps pouring in. On Friday we learned that the economy created an impressive 263,000 new jobs in April. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate dropped to its lowest level in half a century. The last time unemployment was this low was 1969.

Wages are growing at the fastest pace in a decade. April marked the ninth straight month that wage growth was at or above 3 percent. Economic growth for the first quarter of 2019 was a robust 3.2 percent, which completely smashed expectations. Personal income is up, business investment is up, and the list goes on.

Importantly, the benefits of this economic growth are being spread far and wide. In fact, blue-collar workers are seeing some of the biggest benefits. The Wall Street Journal noted on Friday: “Believe it or not—and liberals won’t want to admit it—the evidence is that the faster economic growth of the last two years is reducing income inequality.”

Where did all of this growth come from?

Well, a little over 2 years ago, at the end of the Obama administration, the outlook wasn’t too rosy. American families were struggling. The economy was sputtering. The historically slow recovery had left experts predicting that weak economic growth would be the new normal. Republicans, however, did not think that we needed to resign ourselves to a future of weak growth. We knew that American workers and American businesses were as dynamic and creative as ever. We also knew that burdensome regulations and an outdated tax code were holding our economy back and reducing the opportunities available to workers.

So when we took office in 2017, we got right to work on improving our economy in order to improve life for the American people. We knew that our economy needed to thrive if American families were going to thrive. We were determined to give Americans access to the jobs, opportunities, and wages that they needed for a secure future. So we eliminated burdensome regulations that were acting as a drag on economic growth. We passed historic reform of our Tax Code to put more money in Americans’ pockets and make it easier for businesses to grow and to create jobs.

Now we are seeing the results: strong job creation, low unemployment, robust economic growth, higher wages, and more. American families are feeling the effects.

Last week, Gallup reported:

At the start of 2019, Americans’ optimism about their personal finances reached levels not seen in more than 16 years, as 69% expected that they would be financially better off in a year. . . . A majority of Americans,

56%, rate their current financial situation as “excellent” or “good”. . . . This overall positive rating has increased 10 percentage points since 2015 and is currently the highest since 2002. Likewise, the 57% of Americans who now say their overall financial situation is getting better has risen 10 points since 2016 and is at its highest numerical point since 2002.

That is from Gallup last week.

Republicans had one goal with tax reform: Make life better for Americans. That is exactly what tax reform is doing. Thanks to tax reform, workers have more money in their paychecks; they have better access to good jobs with good wages and good benefits; and they have better opportunities for advancement.

I am proud that Republican policies are making life better for Americans. We are not stopping here. Republicans will continue to make American workers and American families our priority. We are committed to making sure that every American has access to a secure, prosperous, and hopeful future, which is why I am hopeful that the President will soon be able to close the ongoing trade negotiations and create greater market access for U.S. exports, especially agricultural exports, which will correct trade abuses and kick our economy into an even higher gear.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATIONS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak in favor of confirming the three nominees before us for the Board of Directors at the U.S. Export-Import Bank. All three of these nominees are well qualified, with years of experience in relevant fields, and all three have received support from Democrats and Republicans. In fact, all three advanced out of the Banking Committee earlier this Congress by a voice vote.

We must confirm these nominees to ensure that the Export-Import Bank is once again fully operational. It is critical for jobs and for our economy, not just in my home State of Washington but throughout the United States.

I believe in an export economy. I believe the United States of America manufactures and makes great products, and we should be shipping them around the globe to customers in a growing middle class. To do that, we have to have a functioning export credit agency that works with the private sector as a tool to get more of our products to markets where that kind of banking and assistance does not exist. If the United States fails to participate here, customers receive products from other countries—other countries that may not necessarily want that foreign

product over our U.S. product, but clearly the foreign export credit agency support by creates an incentive for them to purchase other products.

Since 2015, the Bank has not been fully operational due to the lack of a quorum on the Board of Directors.

I am not going to go into a lot of why that has happened. I will just say that if you truly believe in an export economy, you believe in having a credit agency, such as the Export-Import Bank, existing as a fundamental tool.

Basically what it has meant is that, with a lack of Board of Directors, we have not been able to approve financing transactions over \$10 million—a situation that has left nearly \$40 billion in limbo. That is \$40 billion worth of American exports unable to reach those new markets and new customers. That is \$40 billion worth of exports supporting high-paying American jobs and economic output held hostage every day that the Bank is not fully operational.

According to the National Association of Manufacturers, since the Ex-Im Bank lost its quorum in 2015, American manufacturers have lost billions of dollars of sales, which meant the loss of at least 80,000 American jobs in manufacturing in 2016 and 2017 and a loss of at least \$119 billion in economic output.

Trust me, as I have followed this issue from U.S. equipment to impacts to GE and to other companies, I have seen people lose business simply because we haven’t had a functioning credit agency to take the best valued product—that is, some of the most high-priced U.S. manufacturing product—and help get it to overseas markets.

At least 95 percent of the world customers live outside the United States, and every day that the Export-Import Bank is not fully operational, American manufacturers and small businesses lose opportunities. These opportunities are lost throughout our country, from Mack Trucks losing out on an opportunity to export Pennsylvania-manufactured vehicles to Cameroon, to the aerospace industry in my State losing out on a commercial satellite deal in Asia, to impacts on small businesses in the supply chain.

Losing these opportunities means losing high-paying American jobs. In fiscal year 2013, when the Bank was fully operational, it supported nearly 39,000 jobs in my State of Washington and over 200,000 in the United States. In fiscal year 2018, without a quorum, the Bank only supported 650 jobs in Washington and only 33,000 nationwide. That is a decrease of nearly 84 percent. So we need to take action. Every day that the Bank is not fully operational, American businesses lose ground to their competitors.

I believe American businesses are some of the best in the world. They make great products, and they can compete on any stage with other countries. But without the Export-Import Bank, there is simply not a level playing field.

There are more than 100 other export credit agencies worldwide helping foreign companies reach new markets. Without the Export-Import Bank, American companies are forced to sit on the sideline and watch as other countries fill that void. In fact, China has done more export financing in the last 3 years than the Export-Import Bank has done in its 85-year history. What does that mean? It means that if other countries continue to use credit support financing as a tool to help products reach markets and the United States doesn't, they will have an unfair advantage.

So it is not only time to confirm these nominees to ensure the Export-Import Bank is fully functional, it is also important to make sure we have a functioning Export-Import Bank. With its authorization set to expire in September, we need to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank so it can continue to provide new financing that supports American jobs and American exporters.

For many U.S. companies, the Export-Import Bank guarantees financing in emerging markets where private financing is very difficult or impossible to obtain. These tools have been essential. For example, Spokane-based SCAFCO makes grain storage bins, silos, and other agricultural processing and storage equipment. It sells its product to more than 80 markets around the world. We are very proud of that company and what they have achieved. Financing from the Export-Import Bank helped SCAFCO sell a grain storage system to Cambodia. Cambodia is normally a very tough market for U.S. businesses to reach, but thanks to the Export-Import Bank, SCAFCO was able to make the sale.

The Senate should not be in the business of making it harder for U.S. companies to compete; we should be making it easier for them to compete. We should not be putting American companies at a disadvantage and costing American jobs. It is time to recognize that in order to compete in a 21st-century global economy where there is huge growth and economic opportunity outside of the United States, we have to have a very aggressive export strategy.

I hope my colleagues will not only help us get these nominees finally to support a functioning Export-Import Bank, but they will also work very collaboratively to make sure the Bank does not expire again this September.

S. RES. 144

Mr. President, I would like to turn to another subject. My colleague, Senator UDALL from New Mexico, was out here earlier, I believe—or maybe he is coming later this afternoon—to remember the honoring this past Sunday of the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls. This is an important day to recognize because this has become an epidemic in the United States.

Last year, the Seattle Indian Health Board released a report that examined

the number of murdered and missing Native women in urban areas, where 71 percent of Native Indians and Alaska Natives reside. These are urban centers in which they found at least 506 cases of missing or murdered indigenous women and girls in 71 cities. One hundred and twenty-eight were missing, and 280 were murdered.

The report found that Washington State has one of the highest number of cases of murdered and missing Native American women. Two of my State's largest cities—Seattle and Tacoma—are in the top 10 nationwide of cities with the highest number of cases. Seattle ranks No. 1.

We are experiencing this crisis, and it is time that this report be a wake-up call to action. We can no longer ignore these huge numbers. We need to find answers.

One of the answers is in the legislation sponsored by my colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska, Savanna's Act, which will improve the response of local, State, and Federal-Tribal enforcement in cases of missing and murdered Tribal women and girls. This is so important, and that is why I have joined Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator CORTEZ MASTO as a cosponsor of this legislation and am urging that the Senate pass it immediately.

Right now, hours and days can be wasted in responding to this. Savanna's Act will streamline the protocols and process between our Tribes and law enforcement agencies, which will mean swifter action and a more rapid pace.

Why am I bringing this up now? I know we also have to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, but this legislation has good bipartisan support in the Senate. We can pass this legislation very soon and send it over to the House of Representatives. That way, it will be ready to be put into the hands of our law enforcement, if it passes and goes to the President's desk for signature—a tool that can be used now, not delayed another 7 or 8 months until we get the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

I thank my former colleague, Senator Heitkamp, for trying to push this legislation at the end of the last congressional session. I hope my colleagues will realize that the great bipartisan support that existed in the Senate to move this legislation still exists. What is different now is a House of Representatives that is very willing to take up and pass Savanna's Act, and we should do that as soon as possible.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Massachusetts.

MUELLER REPORT

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, a little while ago, the majority leader stood on this floor to speak about the investigation into the 2016 Presidential election. He triumphantly declared “case closed”—“case closed.” Wishing will not make it so.

I read the Mueller report. I read it cover to cover, every page. I read late into the evening on the day it was released and into the next morning. I didn't start reading by expecting to make a statement about it, but I was shaken by the evidence that the special counsel had gathered and by the conclusions that he drew.

The majority leader would have us believe that scrutinizing this evidence is a matter of Democrats refusing “to make peace with the American people's choice.” He wants to portray this as just an “outrage industrial complex” because some people don't like that President Trump won. Again, wishing will not make it so.

Sure, there is plenty to be outraged about in the special counsel's report, but no one here is pitching a fit that Democrats didn't win the election. No, what is at stake here is the Constitution of the United States of America. Will Congress do its job and fulfill its constitutional duty to serve as a check on the President? The answer from the majority leader and his Republican colleagues is no—“case closed.” “Case closed,” they cry.

Instead of reading the words of the special counsel's report, they just want to circle the wagons around this President. Instead of protecting the Constitution, they want to protect the President. This is a huge difference.

At the core of the Constitution is the principle that no one is above the law, not even the President of the United States. My oath of office is the same as MITCH MCCONNELL's. I swore and he swore to uphold the Constitution of the United States. Our Constitution is built on the principle of separation of powers precisely to prevent a dictator, an autocrat, from taking control of our government. This separation of powers is part of the brilliance of our Constitution, and it has served us well for centuries.

Yes, I took an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, and so did everybody in the Senate and the House, including the majority leader. Now we must act to fulfill that oath. There is no “political inconvenience” exception to the U.S. Constitution. If any other human being in this country had done what is documented in the Mueller report, they would be arrested and put in jail.

The majority leader doesn't want us to consider the mountain of evidence against the President. That is wrong. He and his colleagues have moved to protect the President instead of defending the Constitution. Maybe my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are confused or maybe they just didn't read the report. Well, I did, and there