

contracting arrangements, like those between TransDigm and its 100 subsidiaries, are effectively a monopoly. It is like an octopus with 100 arms putting the squeeze on the Pentagon. Effectively, the Pentagon is at the mercy of TransDigm—which owns the intellectual property—to buy the spare parts it needs to build the Nation's critical weapon systems. That leaves the American taxpayer on the hook for exorbitant price gouging.

The inspector general report found that TransDigm's choke hold has added up to tens of millions of dollars overcharging to the taxpayer. This is a good time to refresh people's memories about my legislative and oversight work with anticompetitive business practices. It is pretty simple. Monopolies invite government regulation. If that is the road TransDigm wants to continue following, I am here to deliver a message. The jig is up on this cozy relationship. The buck stops here.

I have written a letter to Acting Secretary Shanahan about these flawed contracts and failures to identify price gouging. I have asked him to make measurable recommendations on how to restore accountability and end this price gouging. One thing is crystal clear. Transparency and competition are MIA—missing in action—when the Pentagon buys spare parts from TransDigm and its subsidiaries. Now, thank God the other body, the House of Representatives, its Committee on Oversight and Reform, called an oversight hearing this week to examine TransDigm and its price-gouging shenanigans.

Congress has a constitutional duty of oversight to keep check on taxpayers' money and hold government accountable. As I said earlier, we need all hands on deck to root out wasteful spending.

Once again, we are back to square one. The Pentagon has flunked a fundamental benchmark of fiscal responsibility and stewardship. It is one of Washington's worst kept secrets. Year after year, Congress shovels more money into the Pentagon coffers to ensure we maintain the best military in the world, and I express my support for the military. I express my support that a strong department of national defense is also a strong keeper of the peace because we might not be challenged, and we are going to be able to help keep peace around the world, but year after year, the Pentagon squanders hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. Some people at the Pentagon seem to think that paying \$16 million in excess profits somehow seems to be small potatoes.

In my letter to the Acting Defense Secretary, I made it clear that I am not one of those people. I have asked him to answer a direct question. That question is this: What specific steps is he going to take to stop the profiteers from pilfering taxpayer money?

Contracts like I have described today between TransDigm and the Pentagon

are shortchanging the troops, fleecing the taxpayers, and tarnishing its reputation.

As Justice Brandeis said, "sunshine is said to be the best of disinfectants." So I am here today to pull back the curtains on the TransDigm audit. The American people need the sun to shine in on price gouging at the Pentagon so we can root out the wasteful spending here and elsewhere.

Transparency is the best ammunition that we have to chase away the dark fiscal crowd looming along the shores of the Potomac.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Iowa for always staying on top of things like this.

Mr. President, first, I would like to talk about Police Week. Today we observe Peace Officers Memorial Day, the heart of National Police Week. We all remember the men and women in law enforcement who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and we pause to say thank you to all of our police officers who work day and night to keep our communities safe.

I want to share a special thanks to all of our law enforcement members visiting from New York, who, in my view, are the gold standard in police work.

I grew up in a neighborhood where police officers lived. I played with their children at their houses. You would always know sort of instinctively, even as a kid, when that phone rang and the spouse—almost always, in those days, the wife of a police officer—heard the phone ring, what went through her head a little bit is this: I hope that is not the call I dreaded. This is the job of police officers and their families—that is, to risk their safety for our safety—and they do a great job.

As we recognize their contributions, we should acknowledge what we could do in Congress to make their jobs safer and easier. We can make our streets safer by passing comprehensive background check legislation. We can help law enforcement combat foreign opioid trafficking by passing the bipartisan Fentanyl Sanctions Act and the POWER Act, which provides handheld scanning devices. When a police officer is on a drug bust, they can tell if fentanyl is part of a crime scene there, and they can take precautions to protect themselves, because we know how deadly fentanyl is, even if it gets on your skin or in your nostrils. We can also do more to care for the families of fallen officers.

That is why I have been so proud to fight alongside my colleague Senator GILLIBRAND and so many others to make sure that the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund has the necessary funding.

Last Friday, the New York Police Department, or the NYPD, added the names of nearly 50 police officers to

the 9/11 memorial wall, all of whom died in 9/11-related illnesses. It is our duty to take care of these families, and the first step is making sure that the Victims Compensation Fund has enough funds to compensate them.

I say to our law enforcement officers two words: Thank you. Thank you for your service. It is an honor to represent you in the Senate, and we are all grateful for the sacrifices you make every day.

#### NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, now on judges, during the same week that we mark the 65th anniversary of the historic "Brown v. Board of Education" decision, Leader MCCONNELL has scheduled votes on nominees whose views directly contradict the spirit of equality and justice that Brown represents.

It is appalling. These new people we are putting on the bench turn the clock so backward after we have made so much progress, many of it through the courts.

Consider the nomination of Michael Truncale of Texas. He has peddled conspiracies of "widespread voter fraud" and once called President Obama an "un-American imposter" who "bows to Arab Sheikhs and other world leaders." This is a man who we are putting on the bench, a man who is supposed to be judicious, thoughtful, and sees both sides. What we are putting on the bench is hard-right ideologues who will do damage to this country for a generation. Mr. Truncale was approved by the Republican Senate yesterday for a seat on the district court in Texas, and he is going to sit on that bench for life—a man who says things like this and who thinks like this.

I have always tried to put on the bench people who are moderate. So many of us have. Bill Clinton did. Barack Obama did. Here we have a parade of narrow ideologues, and that is not who should be on the bench because they will make law rather than interpret the law.

Here is another one, Kenneth Lee of California. His past writings reveal shocking positions on race and diversity, affirmative action, educational opportunity, and women's reproductive freedom. He once wrote that multiculturalism is a "malodorous sickness" and that sexism—sexism, which we have all seen and heard about and a little more than half of our population experiences—is "irrelevant pouting." That is a man who should be on the bench? If confirmed today, Mr. LEE may preside over cases dealing with gender discrimination.

Consider Wendy Vitter, nominated to the Eastern District of Louisiana. She once promoted the idea that contraceptives caused cancer and claimed that Planned Parenthood kills 150,000 women annually. She also refused to acknowledge that Brown v. Board was correctly decided. On this very anniversary, that is who is on the floor to be voted on in lockstep by all the folks here on the Republican side. She refused to acknowledge that Brown v.