

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 348.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Rachel P. Kovner, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

## CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative 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 Rachel P. Kovner, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, Rob Portman, Dan Sullivan, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, John Thune, Roy Blunt.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

## GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, the Permanent Subcommittee for Investigations just finished a major research project.

I happen to sit on that committee led by ROB PORTMAN. He has done a phenomenal job of trying to pull all the information together to study government shutdowns.

Government shutdowns are not new to us. We hear about them a lot lately, but in the last 40 years, we have had 21 government shutdowns—21.

We have seen this issue over and over again; that when we get to a point of contention and argument, we end up shutting the government down to be able to resolve it.

So the point of discussion is not just here in DC; it is all over the country. The question is, How does that really affect the country and how does that affect the U.S. Government?

The basic study PSI did to go back and look at this was they found that the Federal workforce in the last shutdown lost 57,000 years of productivity, if you spread out all the Federal work-

ers who were furloughed, the time they were furloughed, and the time that was lost.

The total economy lost about \$11 billion in productivity during that time period, and the Federal taxpayer lost right at \$4 billion in lost money that is just gone. The cost of shutting the government down, the cost of reopening, the cost of pay during the furlough time periods when there weren't actually people there—\$4 billion lost to the taxpayer.

Yet we will probably have another one at some point and probably have another one, and it seems they just keep coming—21 of these in the last 40 years.

There is a group of us who have continued to push this. ROB PORTMAN has done it for years, several others of us have worked on other projects to try to figure out how do we resolve this issue of government shutdowns.

MAGGIE HASSAN, a Democratic colleague from New Hampshire, and I a year ago started talking through how we could get to a bipartisan solution to end government shutdowns.

We have a very unique proposal to go with this. It is a proposal that is not trying to be novel; it is not trying to be cute. It is trying to solve the problem.

Our issue is that we have very serious differences when we get to budget areas. It is \$1 trillion in total spending that we are talking about when we do the 12 appropriations bills. It is no small argument. But we should be able to resolve these things in a way that actually works and is effective.

So here is our basic idea. The process works, supposedly, where you do a budget that determines an overarching number that everyone agrees to. This is what is called the top-line number.

Then you take that top-line number in the House and the Senate in their Appropriations Committees. It gets broken up into 12 smaller bills. Those are called the appropriations bills. Those 12 bills all have to be passed by the House, by the Senate, and then they have to conference them together and get that finished by the end of the fiscal year.

It sounds like a good theory. That was the plan, at least, that was made in 1974, when this was designed. But the plan that I just laid out has worked only four times since 1974. So if you think every year that the budget process didn't work again, you are correct. It didn't work again. It has worked only four times since 1974.

What MAGGIE HASSAN and I would like to insert into this process is the ability to have serious, hard debate on difficult financial issues where we have disagreements but contain the fight to Washington, DC, to do two things: Make sure that we get to the appropriations process, that it is done well, and to hold the Federal workers and Federal families and the rest of the country harmless as we argue through this.

Here is the simple idea: If we get to the end of the fiscal year, if we do not have any 1 of those 12 appropriations bills done—and we should have all 12 of them done. But if even one is undone when we get to the end of the fiscal year, there is a continuation of spending exactly as it was the year before. It just continues to run the same as it was the year before so that Federal agencies, Federal workers will continue to operate as they normally do. But because there is not an appropriations bill done for the next year, while Federal workers are being held harmless and agencies are being held harmless, Members of Congress and our staffs and the Office of Management and Budget of the White House would lose all travel ability. We would have no official travel ability at all. We couldn't go home and see our families, couldn't travel on codels, couldn't do other responsibilities. We would be here in Washington and be in session in the House and the Senate every day of the week, weekdays and weekends included.

It is literally the equivalent of when my brother and I would get into an argument when we were kids, which clearly didn't happen often. But when it did happen, my mom would say to my brother and me: The two of you go into one of your rooms. Work this out. When you get it worked out, you can come out.

That would basically put Washington, DC, inside the box. The rest of the country is not in it, but Washington, DC, would have to stay here, and we would have to work out our differences. When it is worked out, then we pass appropriations bills.

The other feature that is added to it is that we can't move on to other things. We couldn't get distracted and say that we are just not going to do appropriations bills and then just stay here and do other things. We would have to do appropriations bills during that time period.

This is a simple idea, though most people I have talked to have said: That is too simple. That would never work.

As I have talked to my colleagues in the House and the Senate, just about all of them have cringed when I have said that we are going to be here weekdays and weekends and keep going on one topic until we finish that one topic.

It is our constitutional responsibility to take care of the American people's tax dollars and to make sure it is done correctly. We can move on to other things when we fulfill our constitutional responsibility on that. Just about everyone I have talked to has said: That is an idea that I could vote for, that I can support.

I bring it up to this body to tell people that we are still negotiating the final language of this bill. If there is an idea that people have to say "I have one thing to ask about it," bring it. If you have one thing to suggest to change it, bring it. But in the next few

weeks, before we get to the November 21 deadline, which is the new deadline now for spending—before we get to that spot, I want this issue resolved. I want government shutdowns off the table. I never want to see on any of the news channels ever again the countdown clock to when the government shuts down. That hurts the American people; it hurts American companies; and it certainly hurts the Federal families who go on furlough during that time period.

Let's stay in the ring, boxing it out, and let's hold everyone else harmless as we go through the process.

I encourage my colleagues to bring their ideas, and let's get this resolved in the next few weeks.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BRAUN. 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 Ohio.

#### 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICORPS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, this fall we celebrate the 25th anniversary of AmeriCorps. Since President Kennedy challenged Americans to serve our Nation abroad in the Peace Corps in his famous University of Michigan speech, generations of Americans have recognized that our greatest strength as a nation is our compassion. But it wasn't until AmeriCorps was founded about 30 years later, 1994, that we truly addressed the need for service here at home.

When I think about the work AmeriCorps members do, I think about the words of a speaker at a Martin Luther King breakfast in my home city of Cleveland on a cold January morning, and the speaker said: Your life expectancy is connected to your ZIP Code.

Think about that. Your life expectancy is connected to your ZIP Code. Whether you grow up in Appalachia or Ohio, Indiana, whether you grow up in a city, an inner-ring city suburb, a small city like I did in Mansfield, or a small town, your ZIP Code often determines whether you have access to quality healthcare or good education and the social support necessary to succeed. Whether it is through City Year or Senior Corps or VISTA—all parts of AmeriCorps—America works to fight that and ensure that so many Americans, regardless of their ZIP Code, have the opportunity not only to succeed but to thrive.

I have seen firsthand what a difference AmeriCorps makes in people's lives. My two daughters had amazing, life-changing experiences, teaching for a year through City Year. We all benefit when we invest in organizations that serve communities that are too often left behind and when these organizations are staffed by young Americans who care about those they serve.

In Ohio, we have a City Year in Cleveland and Columbus. I have met many of these City Year volunteers and see the work they do.

AmeriCorps in my State played a major difference in the Summer Feeding Program. Literally tens and tens of thousands of children are able to eat well in the summer because of the work that AmeriCorps does.

Since 1994, more than a million Americans have served in communities across the country, serving tens of millions of Americans. All of their work will have a lasting impact on children and families, and I can't wait to see what these good AmeriCorps members will do over the next quarter century.

#### TRIBUTE TO JENNY DONOHUE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today not very happily, if I can say, as my employee and my friend Jenny Donahue is leaving our office to take a really big job in the U.S. House of Representatives, especially at a challenging, difficult time, and she will serve there, I assume, every bit as well as she served in the U.S. Senate.

Jenny is a middle-class kid who grew up in small town Idaho. I have not hired a lot of people in my office from Idaho, but if the next person from Idaho is this good, that will be a great thing. She graduated from the University of Montana. Moving east, she went on to become a leader in the U.S. Senate. She is a leader among communications directors. She is a leader in my office, and she is a leader in this entire body. She has left an indelible mark.

Part of being a good leader is being a good mentor. She nurtures young talent. She brings out the best in the people she works with.

My wife, Connie Schultz, who is one of Jenny's greatest admirers—and there are many great admirers of Jenny—loves to say that she is one of the most fierce advocates for young women she has ever met in her life. She also says, oftentimes, that Jenny carries as she climbs. As she moves up in life and moves up into a new position, you can bet that so many people are going to benefit from her leadership and her mentorship.

She has earned my wife's respect. That speaks such volumes about our friend Jenny. She has earned the respect of many Ohio reporters. She understands how important their work is to Ohio communities and to our democracy.

She respects journalism, understanding that journalism is about comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. She knows that without journalism—good journalism—you can't have good democracy.

She has been with me through some of the biggest moments over the past 4 years as a friend, as an adviser, and challenging me sometimes and telling me when I am wrong oftentimes but always being there in the right ways.

She has been part of the dignity of work rollout. She was part of our trip to the border to bear witness to the hu-

manitarian crisis in part caused by the President of the United States. She was part of the historic 2016 Democratic National Convention.

She helped put my vision of dignity of work on the road earlier this year, including a trip to Selma, AL. Jenny has such courage of her convictions. She is not afraid to tell me when I am wrong. She is not afraid to challenge others, always coming from a place of integrity and honesty—always.

She never does anything halfway. When she says she will do something, when she sets her mind to doing something, she does it, and she does it fully. She does it well. She does it better than pretty much anyone else could.

The day after the 2016 election, my staff was pretty stunned that a human being like Donald Trump would be in the White House; that someone with his lack of character, with his inability to tell the truth, with his treatment of women, would be President of the United States. We were all pretty stunned.

I gathered the staff in my office and told them our jobs would become that much more important. Jenny took on this charge. Jenny, who was already good before the 2016 election, took on this charge of how our work mattered, how I was one of the only selected officials in Ohio who would challenge the President's dishonesty, who would challenge the President's illegal behavior, and who would challenge the President's mean-spiritedness at the border, on the overtime rule, cutting food stamps—all the things this billionaire has done. Jenny knew how important that was. She took on this charge with a sense of responsibility and a purpose that made me proud, just like I know her parents and her grandparents are.

As she moves on to her next job in the House of Representatives, a leader in the House, as she has been in the Senate, she moves on to continue fighting for justice and the dignity of work in her new role.

Jenny, Godspeed.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### TRIBUTE TO GENERAL JOHN KELLY, GENERAL JAMES MATTIS, AND GENERAL JOSEPH DUNFORD

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, this afternoon I would like to honor and recognize the important service of three men, three Marine generals who have served their country in uniform and who have served their country in the civilian world as well, who have served with honor and dignity in ways that I think deserve recognition on the floor of the U.S. Senate. They have done this service in a manner that is befitting of marines, with dignity, class, and honor. I am talking about

former Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, former Secretary of Homeland Security and the President's Chief of Staff at the White House, Gen. John Kelly, and, lastly, I would like to recognize Gen. Joe Dunford, who, on Monday, will be stepping down as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I intend to be there to honor him and to witness another remarkable transition of authority and power when U.S. Army General Milley takes over in what is the most important position for a military officer in the United States of America.

It will be the end of an era, a remarkable era, for the Marine Corps—the smallest of the military services, where these three Marine generals—Kelly, Mattis, and Dunford—served with distinction, not only in the Corps as four star generals but at the highest levels of government at a critical time in our country's history.

It is a remarkable story. It is a story of service, sacrifice, and friendship. These extraordinary men rose through the levels of command together and the ranks of the Marine Corps together. They served together all over the world, including in combat in places like Fallujah, Al Kut, and Baghdad. They fought together, and they sacrificed together for our great Nation as Marine Corps officers. They then went on to serve in other ways.

The three of them have spent their whole lives in service to our country, and they have left an indelible mark, certainly, on the Marine Corps but, I believe, other institutions.

Between the three of them, they have 130 years of Active-Duty military service to America—130 years. Think about that: 130 years of Active military service to the United States of America and the Marine Corps.

They have given their all for us in a way that I think makes most Americans proud, emphasizing the ethos of the Marine Corps, which is honor, courage, and commitment, and I know they have inspired countless numbers of young men and young women across the globe in the Marines and beyond.

I am going to talk a little bit about them today.

Gen. John Kelly is a straight-talking, blunt, and fierce warrior. Before he was 16, he hitchhiked to the west coast and rode the rails back. He is then said to have joined the Merchant Marine for a year, where he is quoted as saying: "My first time overseas was taking 10,000 tons of beer to Vietnam."

In 1970, he enlisted in the Marines, where he found purpose and found a home.

Gen. Jim Mattis is a warrior, scholar, appreciator of mavericks, known for the reading lists he expects his marines to follow, who as a teenager was "a mediocre student with a partying attitude"—an attitude that landed him in jail a few times. But learning called, and then the marines called, teaching him and others how to "think like men of action, and to act like men of

thought." He is a legend in the Marine Corps. His motto in Iraq, when he led the forces there, was: "No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy than a U.S. Marine." He is the first and only marine to ever be Secretary of Defense.

Then there is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Gen. Joe Dunford, who has had the Marine Corps flowing through his veins his whole life. His father served as a marine in Korea, and three of his uncles were marines in World War II. General Dunford had no doubt that he would continue that tradition.

While earning a degree from Saint Michael's College in Vermont, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant. During his career, from infantry commander to Commandant of the Marine Corps and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he has been known for inspiring respect in combat and on the field of battle and in the corridors of Washington.

I had a brief opportunity to meet General Dunford a few times as a marine when I was in Afghanistan and he was the ISAF commander. The respect that not only marines and American servicemembers but all the allied forces there had for him was very, very apparent.

All three, as I mentioned, served in Iraq. In 2003, General Kelly was promoted to brigadier general and was the first known promotion of a Marine Corps colonel to brigadier general in an active combat zone since Chesty Puller in January of 1951. General Dunford, serving under General Mattis during the invasion, earned his own nickname of "Fighting Joe," which continued to serve him well in Washington.

So as you just saw from my colleague, the Senator from Ohio—there has been much talk today on the floor of the Senate from both sides of the aisle about character, integrity, patriotism, or, unfortunately, the lack thereof in Washington, DC, in the House and the Senate, throwing bombs at each other. But I think sometimes it is important to come down and talk about the other things—character, honor, integrity, service—because we have a lot of that as well. These three men have served our country with great distinction. They have all been succeeded by strong leaders who I am sure will carry out a similar tradition of service and dignity.

Last year, I had the great honor of being promoted to colonel in the Marine Corps Reserves. I love being in this job. It is a huge privilege to serve the people of Alaska as a U.S. Senator. But I have no doubt that the biggest honor in my life is earning the title of U.S. marine. I knew that I joined a force for good, with cords of memory and valor that stretch back to before the founding of our country. The battles that the Corps has fought in live in the heart of every marine: Montezuma, Tripoli, Belleau Wood, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, the Chosin Reservoir, Inchon, Khe Sanh, the Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The list is very long.

The greatest lesson I have learned as a marine is what true leadership looks like, and we have seen that true leadership in the trio of officers of Kelly, Mattis, and Dunford, and I have seen it in their lives after the Marine Corps in Washington, DC. Let me talk briefly about each of them.

From his early days commanding a rifle company and serving on two aircraft carriers to commanding Task Force Tripoli during the Iraq war and leading U.S. Southern Command, General Kelly exemplified the warrior ethos of the Marine Corps.

During the early days of Task Force Tripoli, then-Major General Kelly was asked about the ability of his force to handle the Iraqi military. His response was, "Hell, these are marines. Men like them held Guadalcanal and took Iwo Jima." He had confidence, and he was right.

General Kelly is a fighter, but he also understands sacrifice. He lost troops in the field, and tragically, in 2010, he lost his own son, 1st Lt. Robert Michael Kelly, when he stepped on an IED while leading a platoon in Afghanistan. General Kelly knows sacrifice. He became the highest ranking military officer to lose his son or daughter in Iraq or Afghanistan.

After he finished his military service with distinction, he took on two of the most challenging jobs here in DC: Secretary of Homeland Security and then the Chief of Staff at the White House. He didn't seek these jobs; he was asked to serve by the President, and he did. That is something unusual in a time where so many are crawling or scheming to climb up the ladder. It is refreshing to have leaders who are sought out or chosen to lead.

It should be noted that the jobs that General Kelly took on demanded a different skill set after he took off the uniform. However, on a daily basis, in these jobs, you still take incoming; it is just not with bullets and artillery. In my view, he did an outstanding job in these two very important positions at a critical time.

Then there is General Mattis, who became our Secretary of Defense. He also did not seek that job; that job sought him. I know this for a fact because, before the election, I had the privilege of sitting down with General Mattis when he was a scholar at the Hoover Institution. I talked to him about leadership and strategy. It was a big honor for me to be able to do that in October 2016.

After the election in November of 2016, when the rumors began swirling about his being the Secretary of Defense, my first phone call to the President-elect to congratulate him also mentioned how I thought it would be a great pick to pick General Mattis as Secretary of Defense.

I believe he did an excellent job. General Mattis, as the first and only marine to ever be Secretary of Defense, played a pivotal role in redefining our national security objectives and rebuilding our military. General Mattis

played a leading role in crafting the National Security Strategy with National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster in 2017 and then literally wrote almost entirely on his own the Pentagon's 2018 National Defense Strategy. Together, these two documents have shifted our Nation's strategic focus from countering violent extremism, as we needed to do after the September 11 terrorist attacks, to recognizing the return of great power competition as the leading national security challenge for the United States, with China as the pacing threat.

It is rarely recognized by the media, but these are very bipartisan documents in that Senators—Democrats and Republicans—all believe these are very, very important. They are almost universally applauded and supported in terms of American strategy for the next several decades.

General Mattis recently published a memoir, "Call Sign Chaos," that centers on leadership and the need to sharpen the mind and the body. I think this book, which I am reading right now, is a great service to our country. "You are part of the world's most feared and trusted force," he tells his marines. "Engage your brain before you engage your weapon."

Indeed, much has been written about General Mattis's keen intellect, but, as he makes clear, reading and intellectual pursuits are not an end to themselves. They are part of the mission. They are at the heart of shaping the world's most fearsome fighting force.

In his book, he says: "If you haven't read hundreds of books, learning from others who went before you, you are functionally illiterate—you can't coach and you can't lead."

I also believe that General Mattis/Secretary Mattis did an outstanding job as Secretary of Defense. He rebuilt our military readiness, which had plummeted when defense spending was cut 25 percent from 2010 to 2015. I have walked with General Mattis/Secretary Mattis in Alaska with our military forces there, and I can tell you the troops loved him and respected him.

Finally, I want to talk about General Dunford. As I mentioned, Monday will be the last day we get to call Dunford America's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. He is the second marine to hold this highest leadership position in the armed services. Also a student of history, he is known to be fearless and an unflappable commander.

General Mattis told a great story about how when they were serving together in Iraq—Dunford and Mattis—General Mattis watched a rocket-propelled grenade fly over Dunford's humvee and blow up about 100 yards behind him. Mattis wrote: "He [Dunford] barely glanced up and then went right back to writing his orders."

In his book, General Mattis talks more about General Dunford. He said:

He had a gift of synthesis; he could coolly evaluate the larger picture. Joe reminded me of Emperor Justinian, consistently reaching

fair conclusions and able to summarize a complex situation in a few words.

It has been precisely this ability that has allowed General Dunford to so effectively navigate the tricky, political, and military worlds in both this administration and the last one. He was nominated to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs by President Obama and did such an outstanding job that President Trump renominated him.

These are the kinds of men and leaders I am talking about, and these are not easy times. Our country and our military are facing unprecedented challenges, and wise counsel from those in these positions is paramount—those who understand what it means to fight, what it means to be on the frontlines of conflict, and what it means to have the wisdom sometimes not to fight. General Dunford has provided that wisdom.

Harlan Ullman, a combat veteran and a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, was recently quoted in an article about General Dunford where he said: He has been one of the best Joint Chiefs of Staff America has ever had.

According to Ullman, Dunford has been able to successfully navigate difficult times with regard to national security and challenges to our Nation in civil and military relations.

With all the other challenges this country has to face, it is important to recognize these kinds of leaders.

I also want to mention how General Dunford is known not only for his keen intellect but also for his compassion. He was known to personally write letters to the parents of his marines who were killed in action. He was the person who went to General Kelly's home to tell him that his own son had been killed in battle in Afghanistan, and later, he wore a Team Kelly shirt when he ran the Boston Marathon.

I have seen that personal compassion in my own life. It is a story I will end with with regard to all three of these men, and it involves a young lance corporal from Alaska named Grant Fraser.

Who is Grant Fraser? In high school in Anchorage, he was an actor who loved the works of Homer and Shakespeare. He was a mountain biker, a skier, a pianist, a scuba diver, a rock climber, a tennis player, a light-hearted, mischievous young man, and then he surprised family and friends when he joined the Marines. While still in college, because he wanted challenges and he knew he would thrive in the Marine Corps—and he did thrive in the Marine Corps—he planned on coming back home to work as a paramedic with the Anchorage Fire Department.

On August 3, 2005, in Anbar Province, Iraq, Grant Fraser was on a mission—Operation Quick Strike—to avenge the killing of his fellow marines when his vehicle was hit by a massive improvised explosive device. He was 22 years old when he made the ultimate sacrifice.

I love our military, but sometimes it can be bureaucratic and very bone-

headed. It took 11 long years and the tenacious, beautiful spirit of Grant Fraser's mom, Sharon Long, for this young marine to get a proper burial at Arlington Cemetery.

Two days before the funeral in 2016, I was sitting next to General Dunford at a dinner. I told him about Grant's heroism and Sharon Long's heroic perseverance to get her son buried at Arlington.

On an overcast day, September 30, 2016, as friends, family, and fellow marines were gathering to put Grant Fraser to rest at Arlington National Cemetery, a marine four-star general in his dress blues appeared solemnly on the sidelines. The most important member of the U.S. military decided to move his schedule and come to the funeral of this lance corporal.

I had the opportunity to introduce him to Sharon Long. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs told me that he couldn't sleep the night before, thinking about how long it took for her to bury her son, and he felt that he just had to attend to pay his respects to this marine.

I have been to a lot of funerals in my Marine Corps career, but this was the most moving funeral I ever attended. It was moving because on that day, rank didn't matter and medals didn't matter; we were all just Americans—with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—grieving the loss of one of our own.

General Mattis wrote, "No Marine is ever alone—he carries with him the spirit passed on from generations before him. Group spirit—that electric force field of emotion—infuses and binds warriors together."

These three men—Mattis, Kelly, and Dunford—have brought that spirit, that higher calling, not just to the Marine Corps but to America and the highest levels of government, and we should all be thankful.

We in the Senate confirm these men and women on a regular basis—people willing to serve their country—but we rarely thank them on the floor. So from one U.S. Senator who has watched the careers of these remarkable three men closely and appreciates what they have done, not just in uniform but after they have taken off the uniform, I want to thank them for their honor, courage, commitment, sacrifice, and example to thousands if not millions of Americans and marines and for keeping us safe.

So to Generals Mattis, Kelly, and Dunford, thank you. Semper Fidelis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I want to start by saluting my friend, our colleague, the Senator from Alaska, for his moving and powerful statement and for his service as a marine and now a Senator from Alaska. It has been a great honor to work with him on many issues, including national security issues.

I thank you.

FUTURE ACT

Mr. President, earlier today on this Senate floor, our colleague, the junior Senator from Alabama, Mr. JONES, asked unanimous consent for the immediate passage of the FUTURE Act.

The FUTURE Act is an important bill that is essential to the success of minority-serving colleges and universities across the country, including historically Black colleges and universities.

The House bill passed within the last couple weeks. The bill number is H.R. 2486, and it is at the Senate desk, meaning we could take it up and pass it at any moment if the leader would simply allow us to vote on that measure. What it does is it extends an existing mandatory funding program that provides essential resources to these underresourced schools.

We, as the Congress, the Senate and House, Republicans and Democrats, recognize on a bipartisan basis the value of these institutions of higher learning and the importance of this mandatory funding because we enacted this program a number of years ago on a bipartisan basis. The goal was to make sure that we provided additional resources for academic pursuits, to improve management, and to ensure that they had the resources for high-demand areas of study in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math—the STEM disciplines.

In my State of Maryland, we have four terrific HBCUs: Morgan State, Bowie State, Coppin State, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. We also have a number of other schools with a high number of students receiving need-based aid, like Allegany College in Western Maryland and the College of Southern Maryland. All of these colleges and universities need the resources that are provided through the FUTURE Act.

It not only has a bipartisan heritage, but right now in the Senate, it has a bipartisan cosponsorship. In fact, Senator SCOTT is the lead Republican on this bill. It passed the House of Representatives unanimously on a voice vote.

The reason I am on the floor now and the reason the Senator from Alabama, Senator JONES, asked for unanimous consent to take this up and vote on it earlier today is because the current mandatory program expires on Monday. It expires at the end of this month. There is no reason for delaying action. It is possible that we can buy ourselves a little bit more time with respect to the funding, but there is no reason that we should put this important program at risk.

I have a number of letters. In fact, I have 43 letters from 34 schools and advocacy organizations supporting this bill. I ask unanimous consent to have some of them printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION,

September 1, 2019.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR LEADER MCCONNELL AND LEADER SCHUMER: In less than two weeks, congressional authority and vitally needed funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSIs), Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander-serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), will end, unless Congress acts by September 30, 2019, to extend the authority and funding. Yesterday, the United States House of Representatives moved the Nation toward extending the funding for another two years, when it voted with bipartisan support, to pass the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act, a bipartisan measure to preserve funding for the referenced quintessential American equal educational opportunity institutions.

I am writing as President & CEO of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO). I am writing to respectfully request and urge that you schedule for a vote the Senate companion of the House-passed FUTURE Act, introduced by Senators Tim Scott (SC) and Doug Jones (AL), and that you support this measure that has made critical investments in HBCUs and MSIs, enabling them to graduate more excellent and diverse students, disproportionate low-income, first generation and under-represented minority students, in growth and high need disciplines. With your support the Senate FUTURE Act will pass.

The FUTURE Act will be wholly paid for. It preserves and extends vital investments in institutions that collectively enroll more than 4.8 million undergraduate students in the U.S.—one-quarter of all students—and represent over 800 richly diverse American universities: 106 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), 50 Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs); 523 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and over 200 Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), including Kentucky State University, and CUNY Medgar Evers College, CUNY York College, CUNY LaGuardia, CUNY New York City College of Technology, Metropolitan College of New York, and Long Island University-Brooklyn Campus.

As you know, HBCUs, PBIs, HSIs, TCUs, and AANAPISIs are an essential part of America's higher education system. For the past decade, Title III, Part F has played a vital role in strengthening their capacity and increasing credentialing and degree attainment, including in important STEM fields. If this critical funding stream is allowed to expire on September 30, 2019, millions of students will be left behind, in the margins of our nation, without the opportunity to earn a college degree or credential. Please do not let this happen. Title III, Part F is the lifeblood for these institutions. The most certain way, the most effective and efficient way of extending the only mandatory congressional funding for HBCUs and MSIs, is to vote for the Senate companion of the House-passed FUTURE Act, introduced by Senators Scott (SC) and Jones (AL). Please

lead the United States Senate in making this happen.

Sincerely,

LEZLI BASKERVILLE,  
President & CEO.

UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND, INC.,  
September 19, 2019.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,  
Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor,  
and Pensions (HELP) Committee,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. PATTY MURRAY,  
Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education,  
Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, MINORITY LEADER SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN ALEXANDER, AND RANKING MEMBER MURRAY: UNCF (the United Negro College Fund, Inc.) submits this letter urging you to cosponsor, support, and pass the House-passed H.R. 2486, the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act. This bipartisan, bicameral bill passed the House Floor on September 17th by voice vote and has now been sent to the Senate for consideration.

UNCF is a non-profit organization with a mission to build a robust and nationally recognized pipeline of underrepresented students who, because of UNCF support, become highly-qualified college graduates and to ensure that our network of 37-member, private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is a respected model of best practice in moving students to and through college.

The 101 HBCUs that exist today are valuable institutions with a large economic footprint. Despite only representing 3 percent of all two- and four-year non-profit colleges and universities, HBCUs (1) enroll 10 percent of all African American undergraduates; (2) produce 17 percent of all African American college graduates with bachelor's degrees; and (3) graduate 21 percent of all African Americans with bachelor's degrees in STEM fields. Moreover, these institutions have a strong economic impact, especially on the regions in which they are located, by creating 134,090 jobs, producing \$10.1 billion in terms of gross regional product, and having a total annual economic impact of \$14.8 billion.

Despite the large economic impact of these institutions, they continue to be underresourced and have endowments that lag behind those of non-HBCUs by at least 70 percent. Unfortunately, this is common for HBCUs and Congress has recognized this and sought out ways to find parity between HBCUs and non-HBCUs. One strategic way in attempting to help HBCUs receive adequate resources was initially through the College Cost and Reduction Act of 2007. This bill allowed for HBCUs, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) to receive \$255 million annually in mandatory funds for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 and FY 2009. These mandatory funds were directed in the Higher Education Act of 1965 to be used solely for science, technology, education, and mathematics (STEM) education, among other uses largely centered around STEM. Instead of allowing this funding stream to expire, Congress continued to recognize the need of these institutions to offer quality STEM programs on their campuses and continued this funding stream in the Student Aid Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA) of 2009. SAFRA extended funding

for these institutions from FY 2009 to FY 2019 at \$255 million annually and was included in the Health Care Reconciliation Act of 2010 that ultimately passed both the House and Senate to become law. Every vote taken on the mandatory funding stream for these institutions has been bipartisan, and it is our desire to have the same outcome for H.R. 2486.

It is imperative that the Senate pass the FUTURE Act because funding for HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and other MSIs expires September 30, 2019. While we support a permanent extension of mandatory funding, H.R. 2486, due to its passage in the House of Representatives, is the surest way for these institutions to maintain funding for FY 2020 and FY 2021. We strongly believe that passing this bill now will address the immediate funding needs of our institutions and allow Congress to continue to work towards a permanent extension of this funding moving forward.

Should you have any additional questions regarding this letter, please feel free to reach out to Emmanuel Guillory, Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL L. LOMAX, PH.D.  
President and CEO.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY,  
September 25, 2019.

Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,  
Chairman Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, Member, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR ALEXANDER: I am writing to you in my official capacity as President of Tennessee State University, and as a member of the Board of Directors of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). I ask you to join in the effort calling for unanimous consent to vote to pass the Scott-Jones FUTURE Act, the Senate companion bill to the FUTURE Act that passed the House last week by unanimous consent.

I understand and appreciate the noteworthy components to the bill you are proposing, however my request is for you to consider the timing aspect which presents a challenge that threatens the Title III F provision in the Higher Education Act that will end on September 30th unless it is extended. Again, I am appreciative of the various provisions that you are proposing that will have a positive effect on HBCUs. In fact, I am personally excited that you are advancing HEA reauthorization as a priority, as well as broadening Pell eligibility. Hopefully, that proposal will be debated shortly after the immediate future of HBCUs and MSIs are secured.

My primary issue at this point is the timing of your legislation which could cause an inordinate delay that would affect Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). I am quite concerned that with only a few days remaining before Title III F ends, the only way we can ensure passage of this FUTURE Act is by a unanimous consent by the Senate.

Based on your long, illustrious and rich record of service to our state as Governor of the State of Tennessee, and to the country as Secretary of the United States Department of Education, I am sure you would agree that it is a priority to continue the Title III F funding for HBCUs, thereby providing much needed assistance to students around the

country. Many of this population are low-income, first-generation college students, all with a strong desire to be successful in college. If Title III F sunsets on September 30, 2019, it will cause irreparable harm to the very students you represent in our great State of Tennessee. I urge you to support the FUTURE Act today and engage in further discussions on other aspects of the legislation in the near future.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

DR. GLENDA GLOVER, JD, CPA  
President.

AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
CONSORTIUM,  
September 19, 2019.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. PATTY MURRAY,  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, MINORITY LEADER SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN ALEXANDER, AND RANKING MEMBER MURRAY: On behalf of the nation's 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities, which are the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), we respectfully request that you to support swift Senate passage of the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act, H.R. 2486, as passed by the House with strong bipartisan support, while working to secure a permanent extension of Title III Part F of the Higher Education Act 1965.

Since FY2010, the Strengthening Institutions—Tribal Colleges and Universities program (HEA Title III Part F) has provided \$30 million per year to help TCUs address the higher education needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students, TCUs use this funding for vitally needed student support services, faculty development, curriculum and program development to strengthen tribal nations, library services, facility modernization and construction and other important education activities. Without these funds, TCUs will be forced to reduce services, jeopardizing student completion and success, and some of our smaller institutions may face closure.

Tribal Colleges and Universities truly are developing institutions—the oldest TCU recently reached its 50th year; we are located in some of the most rural, remote, and economically challenged regions of the country; we are severely under-resourced; and yet, we are committed to affordable, high quality, place-based and culturally grounded higher education. Our ability to achieve our collective vision—strong sovereign Tribal nations through excellence in Tribal higher education—would be impossible without the Title III Part F program.

We have always supported and worked for permanent reauthorization of the Title III Part F program for Tribal Colleges and Universities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions,

and other minority serving institutions. We are not wavering from this critical goal. However, the House-passed FUTURE Act, H.R. 2486, is the best path forward at this time. Indeed, the House-passed FUTURE Act is the only tangible strategy before us, and time is running out.

Thank you for your attention to this request and for your support of our institutions and the students we serve.

Sincerely,

CARRIE L. BILLY,  
President & CEO.  
DAVID E. YARLOTT, Jr.,  
Chair, AIHEC Board of Directors.

THURGOOD MARSHALL COLLEGE FUND,  
September 18, 2019.

RE: Title III Part-F Funding to HBCUs and MSIs

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate.

Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate.

Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,  
Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education Labor and Pensions.

Hon. PATTY MURRAY,  
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education Labor and Pensions.

DEAR SENATORS:

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) is incredibly pleased and grateful that the Title III, Part F funding that is currently slated to expire on September 30th has garnered considerable interest from and corresponding action this week in Congress. As you may be aware, his critical stream of funding helps eligible colleges and universities enhance their fiscal stability, improve their institutional management, and strengthen their academic programming, including, in particular, programming focused on high-demand careers, like careers in STEM fields.

As you may know, on Tuesday, September 17th, the House of Representatives passed the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act by voice vote. If passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Trump, the FUTURE Act will renew Title III, Part F (a/k/a SAFRA) funding for an additional two years, and thereby preserving critical funds upon which our HBCUs and other MSIs rely to improve the lives of our students.

TMCF strongly encourages the Senate to take-up the FUTURE Act immediately and pass the bill before the opportunity slips away. While we appreciate the prospects of a longer-term or "permanent" solution to Title III, Part F, we are skeptical that such a proposal would receive the requisite approval by Congress before September 30th. Therefore, it is imperative that the Senate to act with all deliberate speed on the bipartisan and bi-cameral FUTURE Act. Following the Senate's passage of FUTURE Act, TMCF is willing to work with leaders on both sides of the aisle to develop a longer-term solution for Title III, Part F and for other HEA-related issues.

We greatly appreciate your attention to this matter, and thank you for your historic and, we anticipate, continued commitment to our Nation's HBCUs, other MSIs and our students.

Sincerely,

DR. HARRY L. WILLIAMS,  
President & CEO.

HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES  
AND UNIVERSITIES,  
September 19, 2019.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate.  
Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Edu-  
cation, Labor and Pensions.  
Hon. CHARLES SCHUMER,  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate.  
Hon. PATTY MURRAY,  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor, and Pensions.

DEAR LEADER MCCONNELL, LEADER SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN ALEXANDER, AND RANKING MEMBER MURRAY: In just 10 days, on September 30, 2019, Title III, Part F of the Higher Education Act of 1965 will expire unless the Senate acts before then to extend it. I strongly urge you and your Senate colleagues to act swiftly in passing the FUTURE Act (H.R. 2486), which was passed by the House two days ago, to ensure that critical funding is uninterrupted for the more than 4.5 million undergraduate students enrolled at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) alone. In addition, hundreds of thousands of students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) would be impacted.

The House-passed FUTURE Act represents the best path to ensure the above institutions don't lose critical funding on September 30, 2019.

HSIs, HBCUs, TCUs, and other MSIs are an essential part of America's higher education system and workforce development. For the past decade, Title III, Part F has played a vital role in strengthening the STEM pipeline at these institutions and increasing their capacity for credentialing and degree attainment.

The mandatory funding for Title III, Part F was initially included in the 2008 College Cost Reduction and Access Act for two years and was extended until FY 2019 in the Health Care Education and Reconciliation Act of 2010. Title III, Part F of the legislation has always had bipartisan and bicameral support because of its important role in increasing student persistence and graduation rates, particularly in STEM fields, at HSIs, HBCUs, TCUs, and other MSIs. Thus, it is imperative that Congress extends Title III, Part F via the FUTURE Act since it is a lifeline for these institutions.

HSIs alone account for 15 percent of all non-profit colleges and universities, and yet enroll 66 percent of all Hispanic students and nearly one-fourth of all U.S. students. Despite having access to fewer resources compared to other institutions, HSIs impressively produce 40 percent of the STEM bachelor's degrees earned by Latino students. Their future is in the balance.

As our nation becomes increasingly diverse and the number of HSIs continues to grow, Title III, Part F funding is more essential than ever to ensure that we can prepare today's students for tomorrow's jobs and reduce our nation's dependence on foreign talent.

With time running out, we appeal to you to use the power and influence of your leadership positions to pass the House-passed FUTURE Act before September 30, 2019. We look forward to continuing our shared efforts to find a permanent extension of Title III, Part F.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Alicia Diaz, HACU's Interim Chief Advocacy Officer.

We thank you in advance for your time and look forward to a timely passage of the FUTURE Act.

Sincerely,

ANTONIO R. FLORES,  
President & CEO.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I am going to read from just two of those letters that expressed the urgency of Senate action on this.

This is a letter from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, from the president and CEO, stating that the Thurgood Marshall College Fund "strongly encourages the Senate to take-up the FUTURE Act immediately and pass the bill before the opportunity slips away. While we appreciate the prospects of a longer-term or 'permanent' solution to Title III, Part F, we are skeptical that such a proposal would receive the requisite approval by Congress before September 30th."

I think we can understand their skepticism given the fact that the 30th is Monday and the Senate is going to be out this afternoon.

They go on to say:

Therefore, it is imperative that the Senate act with all deliberate speed on the bipartisan, bi-cameral FUTURE Act.

Mr. President, I have another letter from the UNCF, which is another organization dedicated to supporting these important institutions.

Quoting from the letter from their president and CEO:

It is imperative that the Senate pass the FUTURE Act because funding for HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and other [minority-serving institutions] expires September 30, 2019. While we support a permanent extension of mandatory funding, H.R. 2846, due to its passage in the House of Representatives, is the surest way for these institutions to maintain funding for FY 2020 and FY 2021. We strongly believe that passing this bill now will address the immediate funding needs of our institutions.

This is a bill that has broad support. This is a bill where—the program expires on Monday, just a few days from now. There is really no excuse for not taking this up and voting on it now. I hope, since that is obviously not going to happen—my colleague tried to get unanimous consent earlier today to take up and vote on this bill—I hope we will move with all deliberate speed as soon as the Senate reconvenes so that we can get this important work done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

THE WORKING CLASS IN AMERICA

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, earlier this week, the Missouri Department of Health issued a new report that shows that life expectancy actually declined in the State of Missouri last year. Worse than that, the report shows that life expectancy has been falling in my State for almost a decade. Death rates for Missourians between 15 and 34 years old rose by almost 30 percent between 2012 and 2018. The death rate for Missourians who are between 25 and 34 is at its highest levels since the 1950s. We know what is causing it. It is an epi-

demic of drug overdoses and suicides, along with a spike in crime, in our cities.

Here are the facts. Opioid-related deaths in Missouri have more than doubled in the last decade. The number of suicides is up by over 50 percent, and there is no end in sight. And it is not just Missouri. New data shows that deaths from suicides and drug overdoses are exploding nationwide. Suicides in this country haven't been so common since 1938. Alcohol-related deaths haven't been so high since the 1910s. Meanwhile, the surge in deaths from drug overdoses in this country is completely unprecedented.

These numbers are tragic, but they are more than that—they are the signs of a crisis. We are witnessing the slow-motion collapse of the working class in America.

All Americans suffer from the depths of despair, but we know from the evidence that it is working people and working families who are hit the hardest. So now the working middle of this Nation is facing a struggle to survive. You don't have to look far to see it.

I have seen it in the small towns of my State, in the places where TV cameras never go, where town squares sit half empty, where businesses stand shuttered, where you can buy fentanyl with the snap of a finger on any street corner.

I have seen it in country places where meth is so common, they tell me that dealers hang bags of drugs from tree branches for their buyers to retrieve—a literal landscape of despair and addiction.

I have seen it in the faces of young farmers who put a crop in and pray for rain and pray for Sun and pray for fair prices and then wonder if generations of family farming are going to end with them.

I have seen it from young mothers raising kids alone, working a job and trying to go to school at night, trying to shield their children from drugs and from the pathologies online.

I have heard it in the words of young men who graduated high school only to find no jobs, no place to learn a trade, and no hope for anything that is better.

This is the struggle of working life today. In my State, it is a struggle shared by White and Black alike, by everybody of every race, because of the breakdown of family and neighborhood, the loss of good work, and the epidemic of addictive drugs, which don't know racial boundaries.

This is a struggle we are in together. It is a struggle that brings us together. It is a struggle for the things we love together—for home, family, and country—and the future of this country will be defined by how we meet this challenge.

You can see all of this if you will look. The problem is this town will not look. This town is obsessed with partisan theatrics. This town is obsessed with money and influence and status. This town wants to keep its own good

times going. The political elite here live in a world where the struggle of working Americans is just a human interest story that you read about right along with the gossip page.

But it is time for this town to take some responsibility. It is time for the governing class to admit that the policies it has pursued for decades on trade, on immigration, and on finance have helped to drive working people to this crisis. And it is time to acknowledge that a crisis for working America is a crisis for all of America. It is not enough for wealthy people in Silicon Valley to do well. By the way, those people don't need any more advocates in this city. They have lots of them already. It is working people who need advocates here, and it is working families who need a voice.

You know, working folks don't ask for much. They work hard. They love their families, they love God, they love the place where they live, and they want the opportunity to build a home there and a way of life that is prosperous and that is secure and that is meaningful and that they can pass on to their children. That is not too much to ask. In the America of the 21st century, that is not too much to expect. It is not too much to stand for and to fight for because it is the working people of this country who built this Nation. They are the ones who keep it going now, and they are the ones where this country's strength is found. It is the working people of this country—their future and their families—who are going to define the future of our country.

I would just say that this is what we should be debating. This challenge is what we should be confronting. This crisis is what we should be looking to and addressing because this is what is going to define our time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. JONES. Mr. President, I have to admit that I haven't had a heck of a lot of sleep the last few nights, and I don't think anyone has. If anyone has rested well the last few nights, it is because they are either not paying attention or they are here for the wrong reason.

We are in some troubled times. Events of the past 2 weeks have been nothing short of stunning. They have been stunning in the speed in which they have unfolded. They have been stunning and disturbing in the allegations that have been made regarding the conduct of the President of the United States. These are allegations that go to the heart of national security and allegations that go to the heart of whether or not the President is upholding his oath to the Constitution of the United States or abusing the power of the Presidency.

We have to remember in this body, and we have to remind our colleagues, we have to remind the media, and we have to remind the public that we are

just now beginning this process. The facts have not come out. We are just now beginning to see facts and determining what happened over the course of this past summer—where things were, what happened, what was said, and who said it. We have to determine the allegations and whether or not they have merit based on the facts that come out, not just reports in the media or even the allegations in a complaint. I am a lawyer. Allegations in a complaint are just simply allegations made, but they have to be proven.

The reason I rise today is that already we are seeing this becoming political. People are going to their political corners. The partisan tribalism is taking over already, and that is unfortunate. It is a sad commentary when a process that is so rooted in the Constitution of the United States—something so fundamental to our democracy—is almost immediately cast in political terms. My colleague and friend, Senator SASSE from Nebraska, used the term “partisan tribalism” in today's world that is “insta-certain.” No matter what you see, no matter what you read, it doesn't matter because you are going to take a side, and when we take sides, the American public immediately take sides and no one listens to the facts.

We are called as Senators, we are called as Members of the House, and we are called as Members of this body to a much higher duty than that—a much higher duty. Our duty is to carefully analyze and review the facts—facts, not mere allegations; facts, not reports or leaks; facts, not what some political talking head on the television says their opinion might be. Our duty is so much higher than that.

We have seen already some of what appear to be very disturbing facts. We have seen a summary of a telephone call between the President of the United States and the President of Ukraine. Ukraine is a country dependent on countries like the United States. The balance of power between the United States and Ukraine is not balanced at all. We have so much more power, and in the summary of that call, the President of the United States noted that to the President of Ukraine. He said, essentially: You are dependent on us. No one else helps you, but you can count on the United States of America. And, by the way, I need a favor. I need you to do me a personal political favor.

In that conversation, he talked about not only having his personal lawyer but also utilizing the Attorney General of the United States to help benefit them politically. Those are initially the facts, and they are very disturbing. For anyone to say that they are not is shirking their responsibility to their constituents, to the public, to the Constitution, and to the very oath that we took when we came into this body.

But again, it is but one piece of a puzzle. We have now also seen the contents of the so-called whistleblower

complaint. “Whistleblower” is a term of art. A whistleblower is just simply somebody who has come forward, but they are given the name whistleblower because they are given legal protections. These people who come forward are concerned citizens of the United States. It is a concerned citizen of the United States who saw something happening that disturbed him so much that he felt compelled to bring it to someone's attention. They are documented fairly well, but again, these facts have not come out. They are just statements in an allegation in a complaint that have to be determined.

I have been asked over and over by the media in the last 2 days: Do you support the House doing this? Do you support impeachment? Do you support this or that?

My comment is always the same: I want to know the facts. It doesn't matter to me what the House of Representatives, in their prerogative, calls their processes. I want to know the facts. The American people deserve to know the facts. This body deserves to know the facts, whether or not anything comes over from the House of Representatives. We deserve to know whether or not the President is abusing his office. We deserve to know whether or not he is placing our national security at risk because, remember, Ukraine is under threat from Russia every day. Every day they are looking over their shoulder. Every day they are looking over their shoulder. That puts us at risk, as well. We have to make sure that we are deliberate, that we move forward with a process that is deliberate. We owe it to the American people to be deliberate, to be somber, to be making sure that we know the facts before we make our judgments.

It doesn't matter what side of the aisle you are on. This is not a Republican process. This is not a Democratic process. And for God's sake, it is not a socialist agenda. That is about the dumbest thing that I have heard people say over the last two days. Good Lord, we are talking about a process that is rooted in the Constitution of the United States. It is rooted in the Constitution of the United States for a purpose—part of the checks and balances that seem to be going out the window these days in our society and in our government and here in Washington, DC. This is an American agenda to make sure that we know the facts and that we understand those facts so people who are around here watching this today know and can be secure in the fact that their Congress is doing their job, that the President is doing his job, that the courts are doing their job.

This is not the time to circle the wagons around the President, but, likewise, it is not the time to make a judgment already that this President should be removed from office or even for articles of impeachment voted on by the House. This is not the time to do that. We are beginning a process

that we have to take our time on. I say that knowing that when we say “take our time,” we just need to be deliberate, but we need to move. This is not something that needs to drag on. This is not something through which the American public needs to be dragged over the course of too long a period of time. This can be determined.

If you look at that whistleblower complaint that was filed, this is something that should easily be able to be done in a relatively short period of time if the administration will cooperate and if we get that instead of the stonewalling that we have seen in the past.

Cooperate with us. Do your job. Do your duty and let us do ours. That is all that we ask. That is all that anybody should ever ask of anyone in this body or anyone in the House of Representatives. Let us do our job.

We are about to leave this place for a couple of weeks. The House is leaving, though they may still do a little work. We are going to be leaving for 2 weeks. We are going back home to our States. We are going to be talking to the media. We are going to be talking to constituents. I guarantee you that when I go back to Alabama, a lot of people will have already made up their minds. When I go to a townhall or whatever, they will have made up their minds without any facts. They make up their mind based on the media.

My friends in the media need to pay attention too. Don't ask me whether or not this is going to affect my election in 2020. Don't ask me if it is going to affect Joe Biden or Donald Trump, or ask me if it is going to affect the Presidential race. Ask me about what is going to happen to the Constitution and what is going to happen to the rule of law. Let's talk about the seriousness of what we have and not the politics of it, for goodness' sake.

But every time I turn around, when I walk out of these doors, the first thing they are going to ask me is this: How do you think this is going to affect your race?

That is not my job. That is not my oath. That is not my duty. If we put our fingers to the political winds with everything we do in this body, we may as well not be here. We should not be able to live with ourselves. Unfortunately, I think so many people do that. I am hoping that in this day, in this time, in these troubled waters we are about to embark on, people will see that higher calling and that they will once again return to that time and that place when this Senate was a deliberative body and not a knee-jerk reaction to a particular program or nomination or whatever that comes before it. We will return to the days of yesterday where we actually deliberate and we talk amongst ourselves and we have a civil discussion about the important issues that we are faced with. I remember those days. I was here. I was sitting back there as a Senate staffer, watching those great debates and watching

people change their minds on the floor of the Senate because of the debate that someone gave and someone persuaded him. We don't have those any more. Look around right now. We are all gone, except those people around here listening to me, and I have staff here. But we don't have those debates any more. We don't have those deliberations any more. We are going to have to now. We are going to have to because the Republic depends on it. The fate of this country will depend on it. We are so divided in this country right now. We are living in what Arthur Brooks has called that “culture of contempt,” where we don't necessarily just disagree with each other. We hold each other in contempt if we disagree with each other.

We have to change that, folks. We have to get back. We have to change that. We have to make sure people understand their roles and their duties. We have to make sure that for this country to progress and for this country to survive, we have to work together.

We have to be one America. We can't be so divided. That is exactly what our enemies have been trying to do to us for centuries. For two centuries or more, they have wanted to divide us, and they came close during the Civil War. They are going to come close now if we are not careful. If we don't stop folks on both sides of the aisle from continuing to pull us into our corners but rather start pulling people back to where we can have these discussions, we will be in trouble.

As we go forward and as we go into this recess, I hope all of my colleagues will remember their oaths. I hope people will remember what they said when they stood right over there and the Vice President of the United States asked them to raise their right hands and say: “I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”

We took an oath to support the Constitution. We didn't take an oath to support the President of the United States. We didn't take an oath to support the Republican Party. We didn't take an oath to support the Democratic Party. We took an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. That is an important part that our Framers put in the Constitution, “foreign and domestic.”

We said we would take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion. We cannot evade. We took an oath not to evade while we were here—that is not what we do—and to well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which we entered.

Our duties to this office are to be fair, to be impartial, and to be deliberative, not political. Our duties to this office are to our constituents and to do the very best we can to make sure we analyze whatever is in front of

us because history will judge us. It will determine whether or not we acted with courage and conviction or whether we just simply tested the political winds as some people are already doing.

Often in my talks around the country and in some even here, I like to quote one of my favorite characters from literature, Atticus Finch. Atticus Finch gave an impassioned closing argument to a jury he knew was not likely to give him the verdict he sought. He laid out a case in defense of Tom Robinson, a Black man who was accused of raping a White woman. In that defense, he went through the facts. Everybody who has ever read the book and everybody who has ever watched the movie knows Tom Robinson was innocent, but Atticus Finch knew that the likelihood of the jury's finding that man innocent was slim and none.

At the end of that closing argument, he talked about the solemn duty, the solemn obligation, that the jurors had to the system. He talked about the justice system and the courts and the jurors being the great levelers of society, where the pauper and the rich man were the same in the eyes of the law. He talked about the duty they had to fairly and impartially judge the facts.

Just before he sat down—and you could see it and feel it, and if you were to read the book, you could feel that Atticus knew what was going to happen—he looked that jury in the eye and said: “[Gentlemen], in the name of God, do your duty.”

Ladies and gentlemen and colleagues, in the name of God, we have to do our duty. We have to do our duty. We have to make sure we fulfill our oaths and not be concerned about how many votes it might get us or how many votes we might lose. Whether we know the outcome or not, whether we get pressure from Assad or not, whether or not there are millions of dollars spent on TV and in radio so as to tell us to vote a certain way, we have to fulfill that solemn obligation. In the name of God, we should do our duty and nothing less.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 446, 447, 448, and 449.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.