

Menashi went to work figuring out how to let the schools that scammed them off the hook. Be clear—it was not Menashi just doing his job advocating for someone else's bad policy; he wrote the memo. It is clear that he actually supported and supports Betsy DeVos's radical agenda.

Now they want to put him on the Federal bench so he can put his thumb on the scales of justice for shady for-profit schools over students and corporations over workers and, as I said, for Wall Street and insurance companies over patients. We have seen that from judge after judge after judge with President Trump, but even by those Trump standards, Menashi is particularly bad.

It always comes down to whose side you are on. Are you a judge who will stand on the side of workers or stand on the side of corporations? Will you stand on the side of students—struggling students, moderate-income and sometimes low-income students trying to build better lives for themselves—or on the side of failed sham schools? His record is clear.

The stakes for Ohio are too high to give Steve Menashi a lifetime appointment on the Federal bench.

PENSIONS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, yesterday we got another reminder of the urgency in the pension crisis facing more than 1 million workers and retirees with the news that Dean Foods is filing for bankruptcy. The company is part of the Central States Pension Fund. The bankruptcy puts the pension fund that much closer to insolvency, that much closer to having to turn to the PBGC for help, and that much closer to knocking down the dominoes that could bring down our whole multiemployer pension system and potentially and even likely trigger a recession. We have to act now for the sake of our economy, for the sake of thousands of small businesses, and for the sake of a million Americans who are on the verge of facing massive cuts to the pensions they earned.

This crisis affects thousands of Ohioans. It affects the massive Central States Pension Plan, the United Workers Pension Plan, the Ironworkers Local 17 Pension Plan, the Southwest Ohio carpenters, the bakers and confectioners, and many others. It touches every State in this Nation. If the system collapses, it won't be just retirees who will feel the pain. Current workers will be stuck paying into pensions they will never receive. Small businesses will be left drowning in pension liability they can't afford to pay. That will have ripple effects throughout the economy. If we do nothing, this can trigger a recession on par with the housing crisis. We know who gets hurt the worst. It is the small businesses, workers, and the retirees who are counting on these pensions to survive.

People in this town so often don't understand the collective bargaining

process. People give up dollars today at the bargaining table for the promise of a secure retirement with good healthcare and a pension. These workers' lives and livelihoods will be devastated if Congress doesn't do its job.

I think about the words of Larry Ward at a hearing in Ohio last year. He said:

I don't understand how it is that Congress would even consider asking us to take a cut to my pension or to see it going away, when it had no problem sending billions to the Wall Street crooks who caused this problem in the first place. They used that to pay themselves bonuses. We use our pensions to pay for medicine and food and heat.

Think about that. Wall Street uses this pension money for bonuses. Mr. Ward and his other workers and retirees use their pensions to pay for medicine and food and heat. There is something wrong with this picture. It is bad enough that Wall Street squandered workers' money; it is worse that the government, which is supposed to look out for these folks, is ignoring the promise to these workers.

I know there are Senators in both parties working in good faith to fix this, but this bankruptcy is a reminder that we are running short on time to come up with the bipartisan solution we need.

It comes back to the dignity of work. When work has dignity, we honor the retirement security that people earned. When work has dignity, we fight for those workers, we honor workers, and we respect workers.

I urge my colleagues in this body, let's pass a solution that honors their work, that honors the dignity of work, and that keeps our promise to the people who make this country work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

PRESIDENT ERDOGAN

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, the United States is always grateful to receive heads of State from around the world. Heads of State from around the world come to the United States because they know we are 25 percent of the world's economy. We are the most powerful military in the world. We are the most moral Nation in the world in how we manage freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of opportunity for all people within our country. When we see a problem in our country, we work to address that.

So with that, we are welcoming another head of State to the United States today, President Erdogan of Turkey. Turkey has been a long-standing NATO ally. NATO was formed in the late 1940s. Turkey and Greece were the first two countries that came into NATO after its formation in the 1940s. Turkey has been a member of NATO since 1952. We have a very important military base based in Turkey, Incirlik Air Force Base. It is key in the war against terror in that entire region.

Turkey hosts the largest Syrian refugee population. Turkey has been very engaged in NATO, filling all of its billets and all of its requirements. They have worked to be a good partner. They have partnered with us in not only the War on Terror in multiple different countries in the regions, but they have been very faithful to engage with NATO as a whole.

But something is happening in Turkey that I hope President Trump and President Erdogan had a very frank discussion on because since 2016, President Erdogan of Turkey is shifting Turkey away from NATO toward Russia, toward a more authoritative regime, changing their Constitution to give more power to Erdogan and to whoever his successor is—if there is a successor to Erdogan, if he doesn't maintain power and keep it forever from here on out.

There was a mayoral election in Istanbul that Erdogan didn't agree with, and so he declared it null and void and forced another election in Istanbul, hoping to get the outlook he wanted, but the Turkish people actually voted even more so against Erdogan in the next election in Istanbul, putting in someone who directly opposed Erdogan and his party.

President Erdogan recently imprisoned an American pastor who had served more than 20 years in Turkey, serving people of all faiths and all backgrounds in the beautiful city of Izmir. He rounded up Andrew Brunson with tens of thousands of other people whom President Erdogan and his government considered a threat, and most of them they have been held without charges for years now. There are thousands of people right now who are still awaiting their day in court from the 2016 coup. Not knowing if any of these folks were actually connected to the coup, they rounded up teachers, journalists, law enforcement individuals—just everyone they could round up that they had any suspicion of and imprisoned them and said: We will bring charges to you later. Thousands are still waiting for “later.”

I happened to be in Turkey in December of 2016 to personally meet with the Ministry of Justice in Ankara to talk about Andrew Brunson, an American swept up in that time period who had nothing to do with the coup that happened in 2016. President Erdogan solely had the ability to get him released but held him for years with all kinds of wild accusations against an American missionary who had been there for decades.

Turkey continues to be able to focus on the Kurdish Syrians just south of their border. I have to tell you, there are a group of the Kurds whom I understand President Erdogan should be attentive to. There is a certain group called the PKK. The United States also considers that Kurdish group terrorists and have for decades. That particular group of Kurds who are in Syria have traveled into Turkey and carried out