

We want to pass a conference report for the NDAA, critical legislation for our national defense. Congress has passed a bipartisan NDAA every single year since 1961. Now it is another casualty of the impeachment obsession.

House Democrats steamrolled Republicans in order to pass a wholly partisan bill. I believe this may be the first time ever that either Chamber has passed a purely partisan NDAA. Now they are stalling the conference committee and jeopardizing the whole process.

We want to pass the defense funding bill that our Democratic colleagues have now filibustered twice so that our servicemembers and commanders get what they need. Back in the summer, the Republican and Democratic leaders in the House and Senate all agreed and all signed onto an agreement with President Trump—a bicameral, bipartisan agreement. Everybody signed it. We brokered this deal to make sure the appropriations process did not—did not—get bogged down with bickering over policy issues. We all agreed to keep poison pills out so that government funding could move forward.

But just a few months later, our Democratic colleagues are now insisting on exactly the kinds of poison pills they foreswore when they signed onto the agreement this summer. They are holding up funding for our men and women in uniform because they disagree with the President's views on border security. They want to chip away at the exact Presidential authorities that they specifically agreed not to be touched. Let me say that again. They want to chip away at the exact Presidential authorities that they specifically agreed not to be touched. In short, my friends in Democratic leadership smelled an opportunity to pick a political fight.

Our servicemembers need their funding. American workers and small businesses need their new trade deal. Our Armed Forces need the authorizing legislation that has been a bipartisan slam dunk every year for almost 60 years—60 years.

We cannot cease all legislation just because Democrats would rather fight with the President. We will not neglect the business of the American people just because a House committee is holding some public hearing. If they are going to keep plowing ahead with their impeachment obsession, they cannot abdicate their basic government responsibilities at the very same time.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now, on another matter, last Tuesday was election day in dozens of States and localities, including in my home State of Kentucky. There was one important aspect of election day that didn't get much attention. Unlike in 2016, last week's elections were not marred to the same extent by foreign

interference from our Nation's adversaries, and neither were the 2018 midterm elections last year.

As of now, there are no reports of foreign intrusion into voter records and no reports of significant and successful disinformation efforts on social media or anywhere else. By any reasonable standard and by all available evidence, the past two elections have gone a whole lot more smoothly than back in 2016.

Now, this wasn't for lack of trying. Russia and our other adversaries have tried for decades to interfere in our politics and to undermine the competence of the American people in our democracy, and they will not likely let up anytime soon. This fight is nowhere near over. But make no mistake, our defenses are a whole lot stronger.

A massive coordinated effort to confront this threat has brought together the Congress, the Trump administration, all 50 States, the private sector, and more than 2,000 local jurisdictions. We have worked to address the weaknesses Russia sought to exploit during the Obama administration and have proactively strengthened our defenses.

Last week, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Defense, the Acting Homeland Security Secretary, the acting DNI, and the heads of the FBI, the NSA, the U.S. Cyber Command, and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency issued a statement. Here is what it said:

Election security is a top priority. . . . In an unprecedented level of coordination, the U.S. government is working with all 50 states and U.S. territories, local officials, and private sector partners to identify threats, broadly share information, and protect the democratic process.

Now, I know my colleagues already know about these significant efforts thanks to the groundwork laid by the Intelligence Committee's painstaking investigation. We know about it because we have provided \$380 million to help modernize State election systems. Back in September, I cosponsored an amendment in committee that will bring the total to more than \$600 million.

We know about the progress because we have had a bipartisan, all-Members briefing from administration experts. Senators literally broke into applause in appreciation for what the administration was doing to protect our election. The story is not finished. The crucial work continues, but the progress is undeniable.

No longer is threat intelligence siloed within the Federal Government. This administration has moved to share vital information systematically with everyone, from States and localities to social media companies. No longer is interference cost-free for adversaries. The administration has sanctioned and prosecuted Russians engaged in election interference and issued an Executive order that paves the way for additional sanctions on those who seek to interfere.

The Department of Homeland Security now runs a National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center—a physical war room of sorts—on election day for sharing information and coordinating action. That is along with an online platform that 200 jurisdictions reportedly tapped into last week.

Long before election day, this administration was connecting with all 50 States and more than 2,000 localities to deploy new cyber security tools, new training for election workers, and to provide threat alerts, and the list goes on and on.

Our adversaries are still at the door, but for two election days in a row now, we have benefitted from stronger defenses. Progress like this should earn bipartisan applause. Like I said, behind closed doors, it did, but in public our Democratic colleagues have not loudly cheered the successes. Instead, they are trying to use the very serious issue of election security to repackage their long-held liberal view that Washington, DC, needs far more power over elections.

Look, nobody really believes that all the partisan proposals from Speaker PELOSI and company are some kind of tailored response to Russian meddling, not when they transparently serve the same goals the Democrats have wanted since way before 2016.

For goodness' sake, the New York Times was editorializing for federalizing elections right after election day 2012, even when they liked the outcome. That was the same election cycle, by the way, in which President Obama mocked—mocked—his Republican opponent for being too tough on Russia.

So let's not mistake these long-held liberal policy goals as some new, targeted response to Russian meddling. Election security is too important to become a Trojan horse for ideological goals that Democrats have wanted for many years.

We need to continue the serious work that Federal, State, and local officials are engaging in every day—work that is already yielding results—and we need to stay vigilant because our adversaries will not stop.

So I want to salute the Federal, State, and local professionals who helped make last week an apparent election security success. I urge Senate Democrats to stop blocking a bipartisan appropriations process so that we can secure hundreds of millions of dollars more for the folks out there on the frontlines.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Steven J. Menashi, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

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

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

REMEMBERING KAY HAGAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, last month, we lost Kay Hagan after a long illness.

Kay was always a fighter, starting with her days in the North Carolina State Legislature and continuing to when she answered the call of serving the Senate during the perilous days of the great recession. Kay was the right person to fight for North Carolina when she was needed the most.

She came from a family who knows service and sacrifice. Her uncle was Lawton Chiles, a Korean war veteran and former Representative, Senator, and Governor of Florida. Her father and brother served in the Navy. Her father-in-law was a major general in the Marine Corps. Her husband is a Vietnam veteran who used his GI bill to pay for law school. When Kay talked about veterans' issues, she spoke from the heart.

Kay was born into politics. As a young girl, she was putting bumper stickers on cars for her uncle. Her father won an election to become mayor of Lakeland, FL. While interning for her uncle, Kay learned about the ups and downs of Congress, literally. She operated the Senators-only elevator in this building.

North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt first encouraged Kay to run for office when she served as his Guilford County campaign chairman. In 1998, she unseated a Republican incumbent and won a seat in the North Carolina State Senate. For 10 years, Kay Hagan earned a reputation as a commonsense hard worker, interested in results, not partisan fighting. As cochair of the State budget committee, she increased the State's rainy day fund and balanced five straight budgets. She helped make record investments in education, raised the pay for teachers, and increased the minimum wage.

She was one of the most versatile women in her State. She juggled Girl Scout events, winning reelection four times, raising her growing family, and

serving as a Sunday school teacher and a Presbyterian Church elder.

In 2008, Kay ran for and won a U.S. Senate seat, becoming the Senate's first female Democratic Senator. With her family's military background, it surprised no one that Kay fought hard in the Senate for military families and veterans. When she heard about 9-year-old Janey Ensminger—daughter of a retired marine—passing away from leukemia because of contaminated water on the base of Camp Lejeune, she worked to pass the Janey Ensminger Act to help those affected receive healthcare.

Kay also introduced a bill that was close to my heart. It would ban for-profit colleges from using the phrase "GI bill" in their aggressive marketing efforts aimed at separating veterans and servicemembers from their hard-earned education benefits.

Kay was fearless with her voting. She made the toughest votes count, knowing the consequences to her own career. As long as it helped people of North Carolina and the United States, she was always a crucial partner. The Affordable Care Act and the 2009 economic stimulus package were politically difficult for many, but Kay stepped up and supported them. She was brave to the highest degree. Historians will remember that bravery. She stepped up when America needed her. Today, because of it, America is stronger and better.

We will all remember Kay Hagan for her friendship and that we had the privilege to call her a friend and colleague.

She is survived by her husband Chip, her three children—Jeanette Hagan, Tilden Hagan, Carrie Hagan Stewart—her father Joe P. Ruthven, two brothers, and five grandchildren.

It was my honor to serve with Kay Hagan and to memorialize her service to North Carolina and the United States in this statement today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, November is National Adoption Month. Later this morning, I will be spending time with a family I nominated to receive an Angels in Adoption Award this year. The Angels in Adoption Program is designed to bring recognition to individuals and organizations who are, in the words of the program, "making extraordinary contributions to adoption, permanency, and child welfare."

Angels in Adoption is a program in the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, and each year Members of Congress are invited to nominate an individual or family to receive an Angels in Adoption Award. I have been making these nominations for more than a decade now. It has been a privilege and an inspiration to meet South Dakota families who have opened their hearts and homes to children in need.

This year, I nominated Mike and Kim Adams, fellow residents of Sioux Falls,

SD. Mike and Kim have a tremendous heart for children. They have five biological children, but as they learned more about the plight of children in poverty, they were drawn to adoption.

God put the country of Ethiopia on their hearts in a particular way. In 2008, they adopted a daughter from Ethiopia—Eva. Within a few years, they had adopted three more children—Selena and Amanuel from Ethiopia and Shakira from Uganda—making them a family of 11. The story doesn't end there. Seeing the poorest of the poor in Ethiopia deeply moved them, and in addition to adoption, they sought ways to help communities stuck in poverty.

The needs of children were particularly close to their hearts. In 2013, Mike and Kim agreed to take over two schools in Ethiopia when the agency running them was forced to pull out of the country. The Adams family formed the Adams Thermal Foundation to support the schools. Today the foundation supports more than 1,000 students in two schools in Ethiopia. The schools' mission is to serve children most in need—those who might otherwise miss out on the opportunity for an education. In addition to academic instructions, schools provide other resources in an effort to alleviate some of the effects of poverty and to make it easier for the children to stay in school.

To name one example, at the end of last year, the foundation completed a project to provide a permanent source of clean water to its school in Ottoro, Ethiopia, as well as to seven local villages. In addition to providing essential health and sanitation benefits, the new pipeline also frees children from the hours-long task of fetching water for their families, meaning more children can attend school.

In learning Mike and Kim's story, I was struck by how love multiplies and expands. Mike and Kim's willingness to open their hearts has led not only to four children finding a forever home but to hope and opportunity for hundreds more. I feel privileged to have learned their story and to be able to nominate them for an Angels in Adoption Award this year.

National Adoption Month is a chance to honor all those who, like the Adams, chose to welcome a child in need of a home. Sadly, not every child is born into a safe and loving home. Some are born to parents who are unable to take care of them. Some lose their parents to war, accident, or illness, and, tragically, some are born to parents who refuse to take care of them or actively seek to damage the great gift in their care.

Thankfully, there are parents out there eager to receive these children. Across our country, there are countless parents whose homes and hearts are already prepared to welcome a child in need. They may not yet know the names of their future sons or daughters, but they are ready and waiting to meet them.