

and eager to work on those issues. Senate Democrats are waiting with bated breath for the Republican leader to put any of these bills on the floor or for any Republican to speak out and demand they go on the floor. The silence of our Republican colleagues indicates that they are going along with this strategy as well.

We meet this week in the Senate, and the majority leader has, once again, scheduled no legislative business on the floor—none. We are not debating impeachment. We are not discussing impeachment. For 3 weeks in a row, there has been not one legislative piece, not one legislative bill. That is all the evidence one needs to know which party is blocking progress in the Chamber.

The American people know it. When they are asked what they think of the Republicans in the Senate and the Republicans in Congress, the marks are very low. I imagine that is because they are getting nothing done.

Concerning the impeachment inquiry itself, the public hearings last week have brought up many troubling allegations, including the startling revelation that Ambassador Gordon Sondland told another State Department official that the President had made clear that he cares more about Ukraine investigating the Bidens than about helping Ukraine itself. The revelation added to an already substantial body of evidence that the President may—may—have abused the powers of his public office for personal political gain. I say “may” because we haven’t had the trial yet here in the Senate, should the House vote on articles of impeachment.

The President is now saying all this stuff is false; that all these witnesses are not telling the truth.

If the President believes that these witnesses are false and that the facts that are coming out of the Senate impeachment hearings are false, he should testify under oath in the House. If he wishes to present evidence to the contrary, he should do it not by tweet but by testimony under oath.

I wholeheartedly agree with Speaker PELOSI’s invitation to President Trump yesterday to testify in the House impeachment inquiry—not by tweeting and not by sending a note but by coming forward in person under oath, and let’s see what the President rejects. If the President doesn’t agree with what he has heard in public hearings and he has evidence he would like to present, he can come to the committee and testify and answer questions under oath.

He should allow his advisers, who are in fact witnesses in these matters, to testify under oath as well. The President shouldn’t spread falsehoods about the witnesses on Twitter. He should come to Congress and make his case. He should free up Pompeo and Mulvaney and all the others who might have real knowledge and let them testify.

The President and his allies in Congress criticized the testimony for being

secondhand in nature, while at the same time blocking those individuals with firsthand knowledge from testifying. Let’s end that particular hypocrisy.

President Trump, come testify. Allow your advisers to testify. If you refuse to come before the committee after Speaker PELOSI’s invitation and if you don’t let the people around you come before the committee, one question will loom before the American people: What is President Trump hiding, and why is he personally afraid to confront the facts?

Before I yield the floor, I will address a tragic pattern that has emerged in this Trump Presidency that is different from the previous one but very troubling. Too often—it seems almost weekly—President Trump announces that he is considering or even supporting a policy on which there is some bipartisan agreement and then backs off that position a few days, a few weeks, or a few months later. If there is an immediate issue, President Trump seems almost afraid not to go along with what the public wants, but because his integrity is so minimal, he must not really mean it because he just reverses himself.

After the mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton this summer, President Trump said he was considering “very strong background checks” as a response to the violence. Leader MCCONNELL echoed him. He said that a debate on gun violence would be front and center in the Senate in September.

Now 3 months later, after another high school shooting in Santa Clarita, CA, another mass shooting at a neighborhood party in Fresno, and another shooting at a Walmart in Oklahoma as recently as this morning, it has become painfully clear that President Trump and Leader MCCONNELL caved to the corrupt leadership of the NRA once again and will not move legislation to address gun violence. President Trump would rather protect his political interests than protect American lives.

Gun violence isn’t the only issue where President Trump has promised bold action, only to back off. We heard a new one this morning. Recent reports suggest the President is now wavering on his promise to ban flavored e-cigarettes, which are marketed toward our children. Once again the reporting says that the President backed off after hearing from industry lobbyists that the ban might hurt the President politically.

It is the same pattern. The President promises to do something about a serious issue—in some cases, an issue that threatens the lives of our children—and then backs off and reverses himself once the special interests weigh in.

President Trump, it is not too late. Do what you said you were going to do. It is not that hard. Ban these flavored e-cigarettes. When e-cigarettes are marketed as Gummy Bear or Captain Crunch, they are not aimed at adults; they are aimed at getting kids in high

school and junior high school—maybe even younger—to start vaping, which will ultimately harm them.

Another example occurred yesterday and again today. The Trump administration announced that it would extend a temporary license granted to Huawei, a Chinese telecom giant that our intelligence and defense agencies have deemed a national security threat. Once again President Trump failed to match his tough talk with appropriate action. If President Trump and his Commerce Department agree that Huawei is a national security threat, they ought to start acting like it. Every time President Trump goes easy on Huawei, the Chinese Communist Party takes that as a signal that they can hurt American jobs and threaten our security without repercussion.

I would urge the President to read an editorial by, I believe it is the Secretary of the Air Force in today’s Wall Street Journal—I read it this afternoon—that says what the security threat of allowing Huawei into this country would be to our Armed Forces, to our military men and women, and to our country as a whole.

I publicly praise the President and his administration when they have done the right thing. I praised the Trump administration when it announced it was going to ban flavored e-cigarettes. I praised the administration when it announced it was going to be tough on Huawei. But announcements don’t make the grade. When you back off, when you waver, when you stammer, all these announcements mean nothing. And the American people do remember it. There is an accounting.

Like on the issue of background checks and gun safety, you just can’t believe the President and his administration when they say they are going to do something. So many times when the President says he is considering some strong, bipartisan action, he backs off, usually at the behest of lobbyists or some special interests. On these issues and several others, the President has shown a profound lack of political courage. It is one of the many reasons why the President and this Republican Senate, which shivers in obeisance to him, have accomplished so little for the American people.

I yield the floor, and 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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert J. Luck, of Florida, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

TED STEVENS ARCTIC CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, it was several weeks ago—actually, October 23—that here in the Senate we had the opportunity to recognize a friend of so many of us; a mentor, certainly, to me; and a leader in Alaska. We recognized the life and contributions of Senator Ted Stevens.

The Alaska congressional delegation was able to join with members of the Stevens family, many of his friends, his congressional colleagues, and a lot of former staff. We were able to unveil a portrait of Senator Stevens that had been commissioned for him as the President pro tempore of the Senate. It was a lovely ceremony and a great occasion, and now his portrait hangs back in the hall, behind where the Presiding Officer is sitting.

It was a great occasion to be remembering the contributions of Ted Stevens. He represented my State from 1968 to 2009. He was the longest serving Republican Senator in Senate history at the time that he left office.

He left office with considerable policy legacies. Those in the fishing industry remember the work he did with Senator Magnuson in creating the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which really has become the framework for our sustainable fisheries. It is something we continue to look to. He also worked in sports with the creation of the U.S. Paralympics. We remember his encouragement and all that he did with women and girls in sports regarding title IX.

We all know his background and his history. He was a pilot in World War II. Certainly, here in the Senate, he was a staunch advocate for our veterans and for all of our military. He worked hand in glove with his Senate brother and friend, Senator Daniel Inouye, chairing not only the Appropriations Committee itself but also the Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations. In that role, he helped to advance so many of our national priorities.

Today is Ted Stevens' birthday. If he were alive today, he would be 96 years old. Later this evening, there is going

to be a gathering. It is an annual gathering on November 18, when friends of Ted gather to raise a glass to a wonderful man, a strong leader, a great Alaskan, and truly a friend of mine.

I think today Ted Stevens would be smiling at what Senator SULLIVAN, Congressman YOUNG, and I were able to observe this morning.

The three of us—the full Alaska delegation—were in Fort Worth, TX, at the Lockheed Martin plant, and we were able to participate in the signing as we seek to roll off the line the first F-35 that will be based there at Eielson Air Force Base. It will be the first of two squadrons with there being a total complement of 54 F-35s. It was a reminder to all of us of all we have done in the State of Alaska in our focusing on Alaska's geostrategic position, not in the country but in the world.

Ted Stevens clearly recognized that. He was a visionary in so many areas, and he was certainly a visionary when it came to understanding the promise but also the challenge of the Arctic itself and how we were to ensure that in this region. It is a region that is pretty remote and pretty isolated, but it is a region that is prepared and then, with that preparation, is able to protect.

As we think about that role today that Senator Stevens envisioned for Alaska in terms of our role in protecting and defending the country but also our broader, more global role and responsibility, I come to talk about legislation that I have introduced, along with Senator SULLIVAN, to authorize the Department of Defense to create a sixth regional center for security studies that is focused on the Arctic.

I think it is very, very clear to us that the Department of Defense, in particular, is keying in on the challenges that we face in the Arctic. With the growing prominence of the Arctic and global geopolitical and strategic affairs, now is the time to give the Department of Defense the tools as well as the abilities that it needs to foster the research and the dialogue that we think will be critical to our Nation's security.

Let me give a little bit of background in terms of these regional centers. Currently, the Department of Defense has five academic regional centers for security studies. They cover the regions of Europe, the Asia-Pacific, Africa, Near East South Asia, and the Northern Hemisphere. What these centers aim to do is to support defense strategy objectives and policy priorities through a pretty unique academic forum, as well as to foster strong international networks of security leaders.

Just to give a kind of basic comparison of what we are talking about here, in specifics, the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies is actually fully entitled the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. It was established in Hawaii back in 1995, but it is a DOD institution that provides a

forum at which current and future military and civilian leaders from the Indo-Pacific gather to address regional and global security issues and enhance security cooperation through programs of executive education, professional exchange, and building relationships of trust and confidence. Currently, over 30 countries send participants to engage, to learn, and to really build those relationships.

The Ted Stevens Arctic Security Studies Center, which is what we seek to name this Arctic center, will be modeled after the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. There being the fact that the two of them worked hand in glove for so many years—really, for decades—on these issues of national security and national defense from both the perspective of the far north as well as the Asia-Pacific, it is only fitting that we model the Ted Stevens Arctic Security Studies Center after the Arctic center named after Daniel Inouye.

Senator SCHATZ clearly understands the value of the Asia-Pacific center, and he has joined Senator SULLIVAN and me as a cosponsor of this legislation.

What we are really seeking to do here—the overarching goal of this Arctic security studies center—is to find solutions for the greatest security challenges of the circumpolar Arctic region in order to help promote a greater understanding of the Arctic—we know we have to do more there—as well as to facilitate greater engagement and potential solutions for the many challenges that we know lie ahead.

It is an evolving world up there. Let me tell you that it is an evolving world. As we are seeing the impact from climate changes, as we are seeing ice recede, as we are seeing waterways open up, as we are seeing greater access, as we are seeing greater threats, what are we doing to prepare?

I think it is important to recognize that the proposed center would be additive in nature. It is not looking to take away from any of the other very excellent efforts that support the DOD's mission in the Arctic. What we are seeking to do is to provide additional value while creating new partnerships and supporting critical research. We hope—certainly, it is the intent here—to complement current structures, like the multinational Security Forces Roundtable, led by USEUCOM and the Norwegian Defence Staff. The center will build on the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, wherein, effectively, you have senior leaders from the Coast Guards from all over the Arctic nations gather to discuss defense and security concerns.

Just this last Thursday, I had an opportunity to be part and spoke via videoconference of the importance of this strategic dialogue at the Arctic Symposia and Arctic Senior Leader Summits, which was held by NORTHCOM and ALCOM.