

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 329.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The legislative clerk read the nomination of Matthew H. Solomson, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

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 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 Matthew H. Solomson, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Lamar Alexander, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, Todd Young, John Cornyn.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 462.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The legislative clerk read the nomination of Eleni Maria Roumel, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

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 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 Eleni Maria Roumel, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Lamar Alexander, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, Todd Young, John Cornyn.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 525.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The legislative clerk read the nomination of Michael George DeSombre, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand.

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 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 Michael George DeSombre, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, James M. Inhofe, John Barrasso, Roy Blunt, Todd Young, Shelley Moore Capito, Michael B. Enzi, Lisa Murkowski, John Cornyn, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, Chuck Grassley, Josh Hawley, Roger F. Wicker, Marsha Blackburn.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls be waived.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it has been 4 days since the United States carried out a military operation that killed Major General Qasem Soleimani, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force. In the days since, I have become increasingly alarmed about the strike, a strike that

was carried out with insufficient transparency, without consultation of Congress, and without a clear plan for what comes next.

President Trump had promised to keep the United States out of endless wars in the Middle East. The President's actions, however, have seemingly increased the risk that we could be dragged into exactly such a war. It is indicative of President Trump's foreign policy record, which is riddled by chaotic, uninformed, erratic, and impulsive decision-making without adequate consideration for the consequences.

In just about every foreign policy area President Trump touches, we are worse off than we were before he started with it. Whether it is with China, North Korea, Syria, Russia, the President has careened from one impulsive action to the next, with no coherent strategy. North Korea today—despite what President Trump said, we don't have to worry about them—is a greater nuclear threat than they have ever been. Trump's actions have been disastrous. North Korea has more nuclear weapons, and, by all reports, has either developed or is very close to developing an ICBM that can hit the U.S. mainland. That is a result of President Trump's bumbling.

The situation in Syria is much worse than before. Doing what he did in Syria, pulling out those troops, made no sense to anybody, even the most hawkish foreign policy people we have, and every time the President seems to deal with Putin, Putin seems to come out ahead. Looking at the President's chaotic and rudderless foreign policy in hotspots around the globe, it is hard to conclude that any of the situations are better off than when the President took office 3 years ago. His policies seem to be characterized by erratic, impulsive, and often egotistical behavior, with little regard to a long-term strategy that would advance the interests of the United States.

At times like this, it is essential for Congress to provide a check on the President and assert our constitutional role in matters of war and peace. In my view, President Trump does not—does not—have authority to go to war with Iran. There are several important pieces of legislation that seek to, again, assert Congress's authority and prerogative on these matters.

Senator Kaine has a War Powers Resolution that would force a debate and vote in Congress to seek to prevent further escalation of hostilities with Iran. That resolution will be privileged, so it will have to come to the floor. My colleagues, we are going to vote on it.

Senator Sanders has introduced a bill that would block funding for the war with Iran. I am supportive of both Senator Kaine's and Senator Sanders' efforts, and I urge the Senate to consider both in the coming days.

Additionally, the Trump administration must start acting with greater transparency. By law, the Trump administration must make a notification

to Congress when it conducts a military operation like the one last Friday. That is known as a War Powers Act notification. Unusually, the Trump administration made the notification on Saturday, after the action occurred, and then they did it in a completely classified format.

Let me be clear. An entirely classified notification—in the case of this particular military operation—is simply not appropriate, and there appears to be no legitimate justification for classifying this notification.

Ranking Member MENENDEZ and I sent a letter to the President urging declassification. It is critical that national security matters of such importance—war and peace and the possibility of another “endless war” in the Middle East—that knowledge of the actions and justification should be shared with the American people in a timely manner. It is Americans who will be asked to pay for such a war if it occurs. It is American soldiers who will bravely risk their lives once again.

The reason the Founding Fathers gave Congress war-making authority is very simple: They were afraid of an overreaching Executive. They wanted to make sure that any act as important as war—war and peace—be discussed in an open manner by the Congress so it could be vetted, so questions could be asked, so a small, insular group—and the President’s group seems even more and more insular because anyone of strength and courage, people like Mattis and McMaster, who disagrees with the President because he is so erratic leaves, leaving a bunch of “yes” people who seem to want to do whatever the President wants. That means having a debate in Congress where questions are asked and coming to the American people so that people can hear a justification and see if it is actually a valid one is vital.

The administration still has to answer several very crucial questions about their actions last week. Iran has many dangerous surrogates in the region and a whole range of possible responses. Which responses do we expect? Which are the most likely? What do we know about what Iran would plan to do in retaliation, and what are our plans to counter all of these responses? How effective does our military, does our CIA, does our State Department think these responses will be?

The next question is, What does this action mean for the long-term stability for Iraq? What does it mean for our presence in Iraq? What does it mean to the trillions of dollars—trillions—and thousands of American lives sacrificed there? How does what we are doing now fit into that? How does the administration plan to manage any escalation of the hostilities? How does the administration plan to avoid a larger and potentially endless conflagration in the Middle East?

These are crucial questions. Not one has been answered by the President or anyone in the administration. All of

the tweeting and all of the bravado is no substitute for strategic thinking and long-term foreign policy goals and ways to achieve those goals. This administration seems to be devoid of that. It certainly was when it came to North Korea. It certainly was when it came to Syria. It certainly is when it comes to Russia, and it seems likely the same case is now occurring with Iran.

At a minimum, the questions I mentioned must be answered. This is an important moment for our Nation. The American people need clarity that the Trump administration has a plan—not just a tweet but a plan—to keep our troops, our Nation, and our people safe.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. President, as my colleagues return from the holiday recess, one question looms before us: Will the Senate conduct a fair impeachment trial of the President of the United States? Will we search for all of the facts, or will we look for a coverup—a sham trial—on one of the most important powers the Founding Fathers gave the American people?

The Framers gave the Senate the sole power to try Presidential impeachments because they could not imagine another body with “confidence enough” in its own status to “preserve the necessary impartiality.” It is up to every Senator now to live up to that awesome and profound responsibility.

At the moment, there is a very clear difference of opinion between the Republican leader and myself about what it means to have a fair trial. I believe a fair trial is one that considers all the relevant facts and allows relevant witnesses and documents—a feature of every single impeachment trial of a President in the history of our Nation. We have never had one with no witnesses—not once.

Leader MCCONNELL likes to cite precedent. That precedent stares him in the face, and he can’t answer it. My Republican counterpart believes that a trial should feature no relevant witnesses and none of the relevant documents. He has made clear in his public appearance on FOX News that it should proceed according to the desires of the White House—the defendant in this case. Glaringly, the Republican leader has yet to make one single argument why witnesses should not testify.

I am waiting to hear it, Leader MCCONNELL. Give us specific answers why these witnesses should not come forward. Don’t call names. Don’t finger-point. Don’t get angry at NANCY PELOSI. Tell us why, here in the Senate, witnesses and documents should not come forward that are directly relevant to the charges against the President of the United States of America.

Leader MCCONNELL has sort of exempted himself from fair debate. He doesn’t want a fair trial; he wants a quick and sham trial. Now it is up to every Senator. Every Senator will have a say in deciding which of the two views wins out. Will we have a fair

trial or a coverup? Will we hear the evidence, or will we try to hide it? It will not be me and not the Republican leader alone but a majority of Senators who will decide whether we have a fair trial with facts and evidence or a Senate-sponsored coverup of the President’s alleged misconduct.

Make no mistake—there will be votes on whether to call each of the four witnesses we proposed and subpoena the documents we have identified. Under the rules of the Senate trial, the minority will be able to offer motions subject to a majority vote.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle, your constituents and the voice of history are watching. You will be required to vote on whether we have a fair trial with witnesses and with documents, or you will say: I am running away from the facts. I am scared of the facts. I will go for a coverup.

A few hours ago, the momentum for uncovering the truth in a Senate trial gathered even more momentum. One of the key witnesses I have asked for, Mr. John Bolton, former National Security Advisor to President Trump, correctly acknowledged that he needs to comply with a Senate subpoena for his testimony, if issued. Previously, Mr. Bolton said he was leaving the question of his testimony up to the courts. Today, he made it perfectly clear that he will come if the Senate asks, as he should. The other potential witnesses we have identified—Mr. Mulvaney, Mr. Duffey, and Mr. Blair—should do the same.

We know that Mr. Bolton, like Mr. Mulvaney, Mr. Duffey, and Mr. Blair—the three other witnesses—has crucial, eyewitness knowledge of the President’s dealings with Ukraine, about how decisions were made to withhold security assistance and how opposition within the administration to that delay President Trump seemed to want was overcome.

A simple majority is all it takes to ensure that the Senate issues a subpoena for these witnesses. If only four Republicans decide that Mr. Bolton and the three other witnesses ought to be heard, they will be heard, because every Democrat will vote to hear them. It is now up to four Senate Republicans to support bringing in Mr. Bolton and the three other witnesses, as well as the key documents we have requested, to ensure that all the evidence is presented at the outset of the Senate trial.

Given that Mr. Bolton’s lawyers have stated he has new and relevant information to share, if any Senate Republican opposes issuing subpoenas to the four witnesses and documents we have requested, they would make it absolutely clear they are participating in a coverup on one of the most sacred duties we have in this Congress—in this Senate—and that is to keep a President in check.

Leader MCCONNELL has suggested we follow the 1999 example of beginning the impeachment trial first and then deciding on witnesses and documents

after the arguments are complete. He keeps making this argument. It doesn't gather any steam because it is such a foolish one. Let me again respond for the benefit of my colleagues.

Witnesses and documents are the most important issue, and we should deal with them first. To hear Leader MCCONNELL say "no witnesses now but maybe some later" is just another indication that he has no argument against witnesses and documents on the merits. He is afraid to address the argument because he knows it is a loser for him, so he says: Let's decide it later.

Why? There is no reason. In fact, it is sort of backward. We are going to have all the arguments—pro and con—then say maybe we will have witnesses and documents? We will have the arguments first and the evidence later? As I have said, Leader MCCONNELL's view of the trial is an "Alice in Wonderland" view—first the trial, then the evidence.

More important than precedent is the fact that his analogy plainly doesn't make sense because you don't have both sides present their arguments first and then afterward ask for the evidence that we know is out there. The evidence should inform the trial, not the other way around.

When Leader MCCONNELL proposes that we follow the 1999 precedent, he is essentially arguing that we should conduct the entire impeachment trial first and then once it is over, decide on whether we need witnesses and documents. Again, MCCONNELL's view is "Alice in Wonderland," where we first have the trial and then the evidence. If the Senate were to agree to Leader MCCONNELL's proposal, the Senate would act as little more than a nationally televised meeting of a mock trial club.

Leader MCCONNELL's proposal on witnesses and documents later is a poorly disguised trap. He has already actually made clear what his goals are. He said it on FOX News radio: "After we've heard the arguments, we ought to vote and move on" with no witnesses and no documents.

Well, at least 47 Democrats and I hope some Republicans won't fall for that kind of specious logic. What MCCONNELL said doesn't sound like someone who will reasonably consider witnesses and documents at a later date; he sounds more like someone who has already made up his mind.

You cannot have a fair trial without the facts and without the testimony from witnesses with knowledge of the events and related documents. A trial without all the facts is a farce.

If the President is acquitted at the end of a partisan sham trial with no witnesses and no documents, then his acquittal will not carry much weight in the minds of the American people or in the judgment of history.

President Trump, if you are hurting about this impeachment and you are wishing for a fair trial and a real acquittal, join us in asking for the wit-

nesses to come forward. Join us in asking for the documents. What are you hiding, President Trump? What are you afraid of, President Trump? If you think that you have done nothing wrong, you wouldn't mind having your own witnesses come here. These are people you appointed.

Most Americans know that President Trump seems to be afraid of the truth. And 64 percent of all Republicans who almost always side with President Trump in the polling data say there should be witnesses and documents—64 percent. A trial without all the facts is a farce. The verdicts of a kangaroo court are empty.

It is time for a bipartisan majority in this Chamber, Democrat and Republican, to support the rules and procedures of a fair trial. A vote to allow witnesses and documents does not presume a vote for conviction in any way. It merely ensures that when the ultimate judgment is rendered, whatever that judgment will be, it will be based on the facts. We don't know what the witnesses will say; it could be exculpatory for President Trump or it could be more condemning. Whatever it will be, we should have the facts come out and let the chips fall where they may. The Senate Democrats believe we must conduct a fair trial. As for the Senate Republicans, we will see.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ERNST). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I have some prepared remarks regarding the Soleimani strike and some other related matters, but I want to take a moment and just respond briefly to my friend, the Democratic leader.

There seems to be a lot of irony involved in this question of the Articles of Impeachment. First of all, of course, Speaker PELOSI, who said this is an urgent fulfilling of a constitutional duty and who wanted the Articles of Impeachment voted on in the House, has been radio silent and appears to be getting cold feet on whether or not she will even send the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate.

I would suggest that the first thing we need to know is if Speaker PELOSI is actually serious about this. If she is not, there is no occasion for us to even begin this conversation about how the Senate trial will proceed. Speaker PELOSI is mistaken if she thinks she can direct or influence the Senate's decision on how the trial will proceed. In fact, one of the things I am pretty sure of is that the Senate will not replicate the circuslike atmosphere of the impeachment inquiry in the House, which was one of the most partisan undertakings I have seen in my time in the Senate.

I think they are really grasping at straws now and are recognizing they did a poor job in developing the case that led to the two Articles of Impeachment. One was because of a disagreement over the manner in which the President exercised his authority

under the Constitution to engage in foreign relations, and the other was based on this bogus idea that by saying: I need to go to court to get some direction on a claim of executive privilege, that somehow, even though Mr. SCHIFF dropped the subpoena or no longer sought that witness's testimony, one has obstructed Congress's investigation. All of this was without even alleging any crime.

I suggest that the Senate is an institution that follows the rules and that we follow our precedents. The most obvious precedent for this impeachment trial is the Clinton impeachment trial. There, we saw 100 Senators agree to a procedure which allowed both sides to present their cases, after which there was a vote to see whether additional testimony would be required. Indeed, there was an agreement to provide three additional witnesses, not live, in a circuslike atmosphere here on the floor of the Senate, but through depositions taken out of court that could then be out of the Chamber, whereby excerpts of those depositions could be offered as additional evidence. That was the procedure that was supported by the Democratic leader, the Senator from New York. I suggest that what was fair for President Clinton is fair for President Trump. It is not much more complicated than that, and that, indeed, is the most relevant precedent.

With regard to this claim that some Senators aren't demonstrating impartiality, I recall reading that the Senator from New York, when he was running against incumbent Senator D'Amato, said a vote for him for the Senate would be a guaranteed vote of acquittal of President Clinton. That was hardly impartial. Now he protests too much and, I think, demonstrates his hypocrisy when it comes to the standard by which he holds himself and others.

I am sorry. I just can't believe that Senator WARREN and Senator SANDERS would qualify under anybody's definition of an impartial juror. Yet that is our constitutional system. I think what has happened is that they realize their case is falling short of any standard by which a President would be convicted and impeached, and they are simply grasping at straws.

IRAN

Madam President, on another matter, last Friday, Americans woke up to the news that one of the most brutal terrorist leaders in the world had been killed. Qasem Soleimani was killed in an airstrike by America's military, finally bringing an end to his decades-long reign of terror.

You could legitimately call General Soleimani a master of disaster because that defined his entire professional life as the leader of Iran's military. Actually, he was the head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force, which is a U.S.-designated terrorist organization. General Soleimani was the most consequential military leader in Iran, which has been designated by the U.S. State Department

as a state sponsor of international terrorism since 1984. General Soleimani orchestrated Iran's efforts to squash democracy movements both at home and abroad by any means necessary. He and his army of terrorists exported violence around the region and engaged in gross human rights violations against the Iranian people.

If you are curious how the Iranian Government treats its own citizens, just look at the recent protests that started as complaints over increased gas prices. When the Iranian citizens took to the streets in peaceful protest, the Ayatollah, the Supreme Leader, called them enemy agents and thugs, and the government attacked. As many as 450 Iranians were killed in those peaceful protests, with some 2,000 injured and 7,000 detained. This is not a government that is protecting its people; it is a network of criminals that masquerades as a government. One of the Ayatollah's most loyal henchmen was Soleimani.

In addition to leading attacks on the Iranian people and fueling terrorist operations throughout the Middle East, he also played a crucial role in fomenting Syria's civil war. Soleimani helped to finance and aid the butcher, known as Bashar al-Assad, in the slaughter of the Syrian people. The death toll of the Syrian civil war is estimated to be as high as a half a million Syrians, and the number of refugees and internally displaced persons goes into the millions.

While the greatest death and destruction orchestrated by Soleimani was concentrated in the Middle East, the United States was one of his and Iran's biggest targets. From the Iranian hostage crisis back in 1979, to the Khobar Towers bombing, to the recent shooting down of a U.S. drone, to the death of an American contractor in Iraq, Iran's actions at every turn have demonstrated a desire to make the chant "Death to America" a reality.

Soleimani was known to be responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American soldiers. He and the Iranian regime supplied explosively formed penetrators that cut through American armor like a hot knife through butter and left hundreds of American soldiers—indeed, maybe 1,000 or more—disabled as a result of this deadly instrument of war. Since 2003, at least 600 U.S. soldiers have been killed by Iranian proxies in Iraq, and as I have said, many more have been injured.

I and others in this Chamber have seen their activities firsthand at Brooke Army Medical Center, the Center for the Intrepid in San Antonio, and at other places where they have received treatment, like at Walter Reed Army Medical Center here in Washington, DC. It is where the victims of these Iranian improvised explosive devices were treated for amputation, for burns, or functional limb loss if they survived those injuries in the first place. These soldiers are a reminder of the selfless commitment our men and

women in uniform make each day as well as the perilous threat posed by Iran under Soleimani's leadership.

For decades, since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Tehran has waged war against the United States and our allies, and recent reports indicate that Soleimani was in the process of plotting even more acts of aggression against the United States and U.S. interests, which is hardly surprising, though, since he had been doing that for many years. That is precisely why he was targeted.

Just as quickly as the news of this attack spread, so did anti-Trump rhetoric. Instead of celebrating the fact that Iran's chief terrorist was dead and could kill no more, a number of our Democratic colleagues chose to bash the President instead. They claimed his action was unauthorized, even illegal, or that he should have sought congressional approval beforehand. None of that is true. The President not only has the authority under the Constitution but the responsibility to defend the United States from terrorist organizations like the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and its leaders like General Soleimani.

This was neither an assassination—a particularly loathsome allegation that has been made on social media—nor an unprovoked attack. This was the President of the United States exercising his lawful authority to protect the United States, our allies, and our national interests just as Presidents before have done. Perhaps the most stark comparison is when Barack Obama directed the killing of Osama bin Laden. Where were the people who now claim that Soleimani's death is an abuse of power? I don't recall anyone calling the killing of Osama bin Laden an assassination. When he was killed, they were not on cable TV, criticizing the move; we were all celebrating.

Some of our Democratic friends will simply never pass on an opportunity to criticize the President—no matter how unfair. Thank goodness there are Democrats like former Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson and former U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman.

Senator Joe Lieberman said:

President Trump's order to take out Qasem Soleimani was morally, constitutionally and strategically correct. It deserves more bipartisan support than the begrudging or negative reactions it has received thus far from my fellow Democrats.

I am also grateful for the informed comments by luminaries like former CENTCOM Commander and former CIA Director General Petraeus as well as Ambassador Ryan Crocker, who have both rightly said that this action was authorized and necessary.

It is unquestionable that the death of Soleimani was a major blow to the Iranian regime and a strong message of deterrence to all state sponsors of terrorism. The blood of hundreds of American soldiers and countless civilians is on Soleimani's hands, and because of

the decisive action taken by President Trump, he is gone.

I fully support this move by the President, and I commend the President's willingness to send a strong message of deterrence to the terrorist threat in the Middle East, particularly against the United States, our citizens, and our interests.

Finally, I join my fellow Senators in thanking the brave men and women in uniform who fought and continue to fight terrorist acts brought about by people like General Soleimani and the Quds Force as part of the IRGC. I especially thank those who are fighting and who are prepared to defend our interests in the Middle East today.

America must never back down in the face of this evil. Our world is safer today because Qasem Soleimani is dead. It would not have been possible without the actions that President Trump has undertaken or without the resolve of our military leaders and our courageous servicemembers who put their lives on the line each day.

116TH CONGRESS

Madam President, on another matter, briefly, we have now crossed the halfway point of the 116th Congress, and it is safe to say that 2019 was an unconventional and a somewhat bumpy year.

After 2 years with Republicans controlling both Chambers of Congress and the White House, we were all prepared for the challenges that would come with a Democratically controlled House. Despite the unnecessary foot-dragging and political gaming and obsession with foiling the President, we were still able to accomplish a lot of good for the country and the people of my State of Texas.

Last month alone, we made major moves to strengthen our military and support our troops. We passed a funding bill that increased the funding by nearly \$20 billion—necessary to restore our readiness—and gave our troops the largest pay raise they had received in a decade.

This complemented the National Defense Authorization Act, which authorized \$400 million for military construction projects in Texas and 90 new F-35 Joint Strike Fighters that will be built in Fort Worth.

It also included a number of provisions that I introduced to support our servicemembers and veterans. In 2016, only 46 percent of Active-Duty military voted by absentee ballot, and one-third of those who didn't vote said that the absentee voting process was simply too complicated.

To make that better, I introduced the Military Voter Protection Act, which became law last month. It makes the absentee voter registration process easier for servicemembers stationed overseas so that a complicated trail of paperwork doesn't prevent them from casting their well-deserved ballots.

I have also heard from my Texas constituents who are veterans, who have

fallen on hard times and had to fight for their VA and Department of Defense disability benefits in bankruptcy proceedings. That should never be the case. Another bill I introduced called the HAVEN Act, which is now law, shields those benefits in the same way that Social Security disability is exempted. No veteran should be penalized for receiving the disability compensation that they are rightly due.

Of course, perhaps the biggest headline news is our continued work on judicial nominations. Under this administration, we have confirmed more than 180 Federal judges, including 20 in Texas, plus 2 Supreme Court Justices. Although we are still 1 year shy of the end of President Trump's first term, we have already confirmed more circuit court judges than in any other President's first term in the past four decades. Having these impressive judges on the Federal bench will be a tremendous benefit to the entire country for generations to come, and we will keep working to confirm even more.

Over the last year, we have also built on our work to support victims of Hurricane Harvey, including the release of \$4.6 billion in additional funding from a bill to support communities across the country, including those in Texas, recovering from natural disasters.

More than 2 years after the storm, many Texans are still rebuilding and, sadly, have had the added struggle of fighting to get their hands on Federal funds already approved by Congress. In February 2018, Congress passed a funding package that included more than \$4 billion in disaster mitigation for Texas, but more than a year later, folks at home still hadn't seen a dime of that money.

This summer, I introduced a bill that would require the Office of Management and Budget to send those and any future funds approved by Congress within 90 days of their appropriation by Congress. Government bureaucrats should not be allowed to stand in the way between communities in need and funds already approved by Congress, and I am happy that those funds are finally going out the door to these Texas communities.

Another challenge we have faced over the last year is the ongoing crisis at the border, which hit its peak in May. Local communities in Texas helped carry the weight of this humanitarian crisis, which has placed serious strain on their ability to deliver basic services at the municipal and State levels. They diverted taxpayer dollars from things like public safety, power, and clean drinking water to do a job that should have been done by the Federal Government in the first place to secure our border.

To right this wrong, we passed a funding agreement, at my request, which provided \$30 million in reimbursements for local governments, States, and charitable organizations that have spent millions of dollars in response to this crisis, which seems to

be ignored too often here in Washington, DC. Nearly 40 percent of this initial funding went to Texas to meet immediate needs, and I expect another round to come soon to cover additional expenses.

Another big victory came in the form of international trade. Through my role as chairman of the Senate Finance Trade Subcommittee, I worked with the administration on three trade agreements with Japan, the USMCA—the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement—and China, all of which, I think, will inure to the benefit of all Americans, including Texans. I commend President Trump and Ambassador Lighthizer for their courage in confronting unfair trade practices, opening new markets, and providing economic certainty as we move into this election year.

On top of all of this, we passed the bipartisan Taxpayer First Act, which includes some of the most significant reforms to the Internal Revenue Service in two decades. We stood with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault by finally passing the Debbie Smith Reauthorization Act, which strengthens our fight to end the rape kit backlog. We helped provide additional resources to secure America's elections against foreign interference, and the list goes on and on and on.

It is safe to say, though, that there are a number of items that could have been added to this list of accomplishments, had they not been pulled into the political fray and this obsessive impeachment mania by the House of Representatives. Two things we could have done that were not accomplished as a result of this obsession were bills to reduce prescription drug pricing and to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, for which the Presiding Officer has played such an important leadership role.

In both cases, there is broad bipartisan support for action, and in both cases, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle decided that political point scoring was more important than actually getting the job done; thus, we found ourselves at an impasse. As we gear up for a new year, those will be two of the top items on my priority list, and I hope our Democratic colleagues will work with us this time around to get them done.

We are kicking off 2020 with a big, looming question mark hanging over this Chamber in the form of this impeachment trial, which was an urgent constitutional imperative until it wasn't. We are anxious to see what Speaker PELOSI will finally decide, and we are waiting for the House to transmit the Articles of Impeachment, but we are not going to let the grass grow under our feet in the interim. We are going to keep working to notch more wins for the American people, confirm more Federal judges, and pass the USMCA trade agreement, hopefully, before further delay.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

(The remarks of Mr. HAWLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. Res. 463 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HAWLEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

IRAN

Mr. KAINÉ. Madam President, I am glad to be joined today by my colleague from Illinois, who is a personal mentor of mine. We are here to talk about the threat of war with Iran and about the Constitution.

I have been worried about this threat for some time, ever since President Trump chose to ignore the advice of his key national security professionals and allies by abandoning America's commitment to a diplomatic deal to limit Iran's nuclear program. The President's action since that tragic decision and the easily predictable responses of Iran to his actions have resulted in an escalating set of hostilities between the United States and Iran and its proxies.

I will state at the outset my conclusion. I believe that the United States should not be at war in Iran and that, indeed, another war in the Middle East now would be catastrophic.

But I recognize that some of my colleagues may have a different point of view. So I speak in the hopes of forging a consensus on at least one issue, and that issue is this: If there is to be a war with Iran, it should not be initiated by this President or any President acting on his or her own. It should only be initiated by a vote of Congress following an open and public debate in full view of the American people.

Every Member of Congress should vote and then be accountable for the question of whether another war in the Middle East is a good idea. The demand for congressional accountability is constitutionally required in the unique constitutional framework that we have. We pledge to support and defend the principle that it is up to Congress to declare war, not the President.

If we engage in a war, the odds are high that young American men and women will be killed or injured. Some will see their friends killed and injured. Some will have the remainder of their lives affected by physical and emotional injuries, post-traumatic stress, the pain of losing friends, and their families and friends will bear those scars as well. If we are to order our troops and their families to run that risk, then, it should be based on a public consensus as reflected in an open congressional debate and vote that war is in the national interest.

If Congress debates the matter in full view of the public and reaches the conclusion that war is necessary, so be it. Even if I were to vote no, if the majority of my colleagues voted yes, I would agree that the decision to go to war was a legitimate basis to order our best and brightest into harm's way.

But by what right do we consign our troops to possible injury and death if

we are unwilling to have a debate and cast a vote ourselves? We cannot hide under our desks, outsource our constitutional duty to any President, and pretend that we can avoid accountability for war and its consequences.

Over the course of this week, I will address three topics about the issue of war with Iran. The first subject which I will address today is this: How did we get here? How did we come to the place where the United States and Iran are trading violent attacks against one another and what does that mean for our country, the region, and the world?

In the coming days, I will address two additional topics. I will discuss how Congress should reclaim its constitutional war-making powers by acting on a privileged resolution that Senator DURBIN and I have filed on January 3 to remove U.S. troops from hostilities with Iran unless Congress passes a new declaration or legal authorization initiating such a war. The resolution, which is also being offered on the House side by Representative SLOTKIN, will give all 535 Members of Congress the opportunity to declare where they are on the advisability of a war with Iran, and it also gives them an opportunity to affirm their commitment to their oath of office.

Finally, later in the week, I will address the larger question of how the United States should deescalate tensions in the Middle East so that we might better protect American lives and promote peace and stability in a very turbulent part of the world.

How did we get here?

The United States and Iran have a very troubled history. When Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossaddegh, supported efforts to nationalize private energy resources, the United States and Britain orchestrated a coup that led to his ouster in 1953.

The overthrow of Iran's democratic government, partially with U.S. support, led to the strengthened rule of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who ruled Iran as an Emperor until he was overthrown in the Iranian revolution of 1979. His dictatorial rule, with strong support from the United States, increasingly alienated the Iranian population. When he fled the country during the revolution, Iran abolished the monarchy and declared itself an Islamic republic.

Within a few months after the revolution, Iranian protestors took over the American Embassy in Iran. For those of us who saw the protests outside the American Embassy in Baghdad last week, the images of the Iranian Embassy hostage taking in Iran in 1979 were at the front of our minds. The protesters cited America's role in the 1953 coups, and they asked the United States to return the Shah, who had come to the United States seeking medical attention, to Iran for trial. The United States refused. Iran held 52 Americans hostage for more than 440 days until they were finally released in

the first days of the Reagan administration.

After this attack—this inexcusable attack on the American Embassy—U.S. and Iran diplomatic relations were severed. The United States has imposed significant economic sanctions against Iran for decades. The United States provided support for Iraq in its 8-year war against Iran—a war in which hundreds of thousands of Iranians were killed.

In 1988, the U.S. Navy cruiser USS *Vincennes* shot down an Iranian commercial airliner, killing 290 passengers and its crew.

Iran has engaged in hostilities against the United States and our allies in many settings—through targeted attacks and assassinations around the world, covert and overt support for terrorist organizations, and development of weapons systems in violation of U.N. security resolutions. Iran has been directly responsible for the deaths of thousands of Americans and indirectly responsible for many, many more. These activities over many decades have led America for years to view Iran as a key promoter of terrorism and one of the most concerning nation-state adversaries of the United States.

In recent years, a particular focus has been Iran's nuclear program. Despite Iran's claim that it sought nuclear power purely for peaceful purposes, legitimate suspicion of its intent led to a global campaign led by the United States to sanction Iran even more as a means of getting the country to abandon its quest for nuclear weapons.

After years of negotiations between six nations—France, Britain, the United States, Germany, Russia, China—and Iran, an agreement was reached in 2015 whereby Iran would pledge never to seek, acquire, or develop nuclear weapons in exchange for gradual relaxation of sanctions against Iran. The agreement, known as the JCPOA, contained strict limits on Iran's nuclear program that would gradually relax over 25 years. Iran's pledge to never acquire or develop nuclear weapons was permanent, as was its commitment to abide by the inspection protocols of the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure compliance with that fundamental pledge. The JCPOA was not perfect, but it carefully preserved the ability of the United States and other nations to continue sanctions against Iran for its other activities and offered an opportunity for the first time in four decades for the United States and Iran to communicate through an established diplomatic process.

As the Trump administration took office, the President pledged to undo this diplomatic deal, the JCPOA. The nations that agreed to the deal pointed out that Iran was complying with the deal, as did the IAEA, and the key officials of President Trump's national security team—Defense Secretary Mattis, Secretary of State Tillerson,

National Security Advisor McMaster, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dunford—all argued that the agreement was working and should be maintained.

But President Trump made the decision that the United States should abandon the diplomatic deal. The U.S. abandonment of a working diplomatic deal was historic. No U.S. President had ever walked away from a diplomatic commitment of this kind.

Many of us, at the time, warned the President that abandoning diplomacy, against the advice of allies and our national security professionals, would likely lead us to an unnecessary war. It was just a matter of time. Indeed, since the beginning of the Trump administration, there have been increasing back-and-forth provocations that have now led us to a state of active hostilities between the United States and Iran.

Unclassified examples of U.S. activity under the Trump administration that have escalated hostilities with Iran include the following:

On December 12, 2017, the United States and Israel reached a joint strategic work plan to counter Iranian activity in the Middle East that included preparation for military escalation scenarios against Iran.

On May 8, 2018, President Trump unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA after promising to do so for months.

On May 21, 2018, Secretary of State Pompeo, who had earlier expressed a preference for bombing Iran rather than entering into the JCPOA, vowed to “crush” Iranian operatives and proxies.

On July 23, 2018, President Trump tweeted a threat to President Rouhani, warning that Iran would “SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE.”

On August 6, 2018, the Trump administration unilaterally imposed economic sanctions lifted as part of the JCPOA, despite Iran's continued compliance with the deal.

In September of 2018, it was reported that new National Security Advisor John Bolton had asked the Department of Defense to prepare war plans against Iran. Later the same month, Bolton warned Iran that there would be “hell to pay” if the nation ever crossed the United States.

On October 3, 2018, the Trump administration terminated the 1955 Treaty of Amity affirming friendly relations between the United States and Iran. The United States terminated it. The treaty itself had long ago been made irrelevant by the actual hostilities between the nations, but the action of the United States in finding the treaty and publicly terminating it unilaterally was seen as a part of a pattern of hostile intent.

As early as the fall of 2018, Department of Defense officials began to express concern that the U.S. maximum security pressure campaign against

Iran was raising the risk of Iranian retaliation against American troops in Iraq and Syria. In an October 26 article in the Wall Street Journal, DOD officials were quoted as expressing concern that Iran's belief that the United States was helping Israel with airstrikes would jeopardize American lives in the region.

On November 5, 2018, President Trump imposed additional sanctions on Iranian oil, shipping, and banking sectors.

On February 3, 2019, President Trump stated on "Face the Nation" that troops being withdrawn from Syria would be moved to Iraq to serve as a check against Iran.

On February 11, 2019, Advisor Bolton released a video addressed to the 40th anniversary of the Iranian revolution, stating that Iran's leaders would not "have many more anniversaries to enjoy."

On February 13, 2019, the Trump administration convened a meeting in Poland that was publicly described by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on his official website as designed to "advance the common interest of war" against Iran.

In March 2019, press accounts revealed that the Department of Energy had approved seven transfers of nuclear technical information from U.S. companies to Saudi Arabia without informing Congress. The transfers were made despite U.S. awareness that the Government of Saudi Arabia had publicly threatened to develop nuclear weapons to counter Iran.

On April 8, 2019, the United States designated the Iranian Revolutionary Guard as a foreign terrorist organization, the first time that had ever been used to apply to a foreign governmental entity.

On May 5, 2019, Advisor Bolton announced deployment of the Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and a bomber task force to the U.S. Central Command for the expressed purpose of countering Iran.

On May 8, 2019, the Trump administration ordered new sanctions against Iran's metal industry.

On May 10, 2019, the New York Times reported on war plans developed by the administration that could deploy up to 120,000 additional U.S. troops to the Middle East to counter Iran. On the same day, the administration deployed Patriot missiles to U.S. Central Command to counter Iran.

On May 24, 2019, the Trump administration bypassed Congress, declaring an emergency citing "Iranian malign activity" in order to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

In June of 2019, President Trump ordered 3,500 more troops of the U.S. military to the Middle East to check Iran.

On June 20, 2019, the United States initiated a strike against Iranian positions that was aborted at the last minute by President Trump.

On June 24, 2019, President Trump imposed additional sanctions against Iran.

On September 15, 2019, after drone attacks on two key oil installations in Saudi Arabia, President Trump tweeted that the United States was "locked and loaded depending on verification from the Kingdom as to who they believe was the cause of the attack."

On November 19, 2019, President Trump notified Congress that "consistent with the War Powers Resolution," he was deploying additional U.S. weapons and troops to Saudi Arabia to counter Iran.

On December 29, 2019, following a rocket attack from an Iranian-backed militia in Iraq that killed an American contractor and wounded several others, the U.S. military struck Iranian-backed militia groups in Iraq and Syria, killing dozens.

On January 2, 2019, President Trump ordered a drone strike killing Qasem Soleimani, a key Iranian military commander as well as a key Iraqi military leader. The December and January strikes in Iraq were carried out despite the objections of the Iraqi Government and without any prior notification to Congress. Two days after the Soleimani strike, the President notified Congress of the action, which had been in the newspaper, obviously, "consistent with the War Powers Resolution."

Now, during the same time, Iran has conducted escalatory activities as well. Their bellicose behavior includes continued arming and financial backing of Hezbollah, a designated foreign terrorist organization which carried out the bombing of the marine barracks in Beirut as well as efforts to target Israeli citizens and troops; support for the Houthis, including the supplying of ballistic missiles, thus escalating the civil war in Yemen; direct participation of troops and commanders in support of Bashar al-Assad's murderous campaign against the Syrian people; support for the Popular Mobilization Committee-affiliated Shia militias in Iraq, which pose a direct threat to U.S. personnel; unjust detention of U.S. citizens; cyber attacks on U.S. officials, agencies, and companies; the downing of a U.S. unmanned aerial vehicle in June of 2019; UAV strikes against Saudi oil facilities in September 2019; persistent interference with commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz; militia attacks on the Iraqi base in December that killed an American contractor; and stoking popular unrest against the United States in Iraq that encouraged the assault on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad last week.

I have given you these examples for a reason. You can see the reason. There has been an escalation that began with the U.S. decision to destroy a diplomatic deal, and it has been one nation acting and the other responding, and the other acting and the other responding, and now we are on the brink of war. The escalation has been so significant between the United States and Iran that now each country has been responsible for actively inflicting inju-

ries and deaths on the other, and we are at the brink of war.

Thousands of American servicemembers enjoying the holidays with their families were surprised by notices in the last few days that they must now deploy to the Middle East yet again. The current state of hostilities is causing other serious consequences.

The U.S. abandonment of the diplomatic deal, together with other actions, has seriously jeopardized our relations with many allies, particularly our European allies. The U.S. abandonment of a diplomatic deal over a nuclear program has made it much harder to find a diplomatic deal with North Korea. The U.S. decision to carry out strikes on Iraqi soil over Iraqi objections has badly damaged U.S.-Iraq relations. Just yesterday, the Iraqi Parliament voted to ask all U.S. troops to leave Iraq. If that occurs, it will further destabilize a country that has been wracked with protests in recent months, and it will embolden both ISIS and Iran.

U.S. actions have had the unlikely effect of driving three of our principled nation-state adversaries into historically unprecedented levels of cooperation. Just recently, Iran, China, and Russia conducted joint naval operations in the Gulf of Oman.

Notably, the U.S. actions that I have described here have been carried out mostly by President Trump without congressional approval and often without any notice or any consultation with Congress. Members of Congress on the relevant committees have had to read about these actions in the newspapers rather than being informed by the Trump administration.

At this particular moment, with the specter of war so present, it is time for Congress to assert itself. We cannot let a President destroy American diplomacy on its own. We cannot let a President take our Nation, take our troops, and take our best and brightest into an unnecessary war on his own. Indeed, we cannot leave the lives of our troops up to the whim of this President or of any President.

That is why Senator DURBIN and I have introduced, pursuant to the same War Powers Act referenced by the President, a resolution that will force the removal of U.S. troops from hostilities with Iran unless Congress independently votes that we should be at war. Congress has the responsibility, and Congress must act to shoulder its responsibility.

I will offer more comments on the resolution later this week, but I appreciate the support of my colleague, who, as I said, in many ways, is my mentor in the Senate, the Senator from Illinois.

I yield the floor to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Virginia for his clarion call for the U.S. Senate to assert its constitutional responsibility

when it comes to the prospect of a war with Iran.

He has referenced, many times, the War Powers Act. The War Powers Act, students of history will remember, was passed by the U.S. Congress after the end of the Vietnam war so Congress would assert, with specificity, its authority when it came to the execution of a war. The President at the time, Richard Nixon, opposed the War Powers Act and vetoed it, and because of what the United States had endured during the course of the Vietnam war, Congress overrode the veto of President Nixon to make it clear, with the War Powers Act, that we would never ever, by design, find ourselves in the same moral predicament we did with the war in Vietnam.

Almost 50,000 American lives were lost in that war in Vietnam, a war which was not a declared war under the Constitution but one which still exacted a heavy, incalculable price on American families—families I know and everyone knows, whose lives were touched by that Vietnam war, whose sons and daughters may have served or may have given their lives in service. The decision was made in Congress never again. We are not going to let this happen again. We are not going to find ourselves backsliding into a war.

The American people, through their elected men and women representing them in Congress, will make the decision as to whether it is time for us to go to war and will make the decision as to whether our men and women in uniform are going to risk their lives at war. The decision will be made by the American people through their elected representatives in Congress. It was not a novel idea. We find it in this little Constitution, which we are all handed when we take the oath of office.

As Senator KAINE from Virginia has noted, article I, section 8, in just a few words, says: The Congress shall have the power to declare war. It is not equivocal. There are no footnotes, asterisks, or question marks. The Congress shall have the authority to declare war.

Now, at this moment in time, with the assassination of General Soleimani and the escalation of the conflict between the United States and Iran, Senator KAINE and I come to the floor and ask this Congress, Republicans and Democrats alike: Do these words count? Do we have a constitutional responsibility to stand up and speak up and to challenge this President or any President of either political party when they start moving us toward a moment of war which could easily claim the lives of many Americans?

That is the purpose of our resolution. It is simple and straightforward, but it really goes to a fundamental question. The men and women who serve this country in uniform—God bless them for their sacrifice and their courage. We know that when they take the oath to serve, they are prepared to risk their lives in service. Many of us have

attended the funerals of servicemembers who gave their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan and so many other places. It is a heartbreaking experience to see that emotional family leaving a church or a synagogue after a service honoring someone in uniform who has given their life for this country. That is so fundamental.

Senator KAINE and I have come to the floor today to say we are finding ourselves now moving, day by day, closer and closer to a confrontation with Iran that could result in a war. What Senator KAINE has catalogued and gone through is this long buildup under the Trump administration that brings us to this moment.

To think President Trump inherited from President Obama an international agreement that included the signatories of not only our traditional European allies but also China and Russia to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon; to think that that agreement was being monitored by international overseers who reported back to us that they had ready access throughout the nation of Iran when it came to making certain that the JCPOA agreement was lived up to; to think that that at least gave us the assurance that Iran would not develop a nuclear weapon—and then this President, with a series of tweets and actions, swept it away and said we are going to ignore this treaty, we are going to walk away from it, and we are going to confront the Iranians in a variety of ways, as Senator KAINE has spelled out.

So we come to the floor this afternoon to really appeal to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle. On behalf of the American people, let us learn the lessons of history—a lesson bitterly learned during the Vietnam war—that if Congress does nothing, a war can develop and continue at great human cost.

I know the moments of great decision that are made in the U.S. Congress, and I have been fortunate to be part of some of them. I remember October 16, 2002, as if it were yesterday. I remember that well, at that place that I point to, where in the early morning hours, three of us—three Senators stood and spoke to one another as we left to go home. There had just been a vote for an authorization for use of military force in Iraq. The three of us had gathered in the well, including Senator Paul Wellstone from Minnesota and Senator Kent Conrad from North Dakota, and we looked at one another, having all three voted against the invasion of Iraq, and realized we were headed home to face the electorate on that decision. It was an emotional moment.

I remember saying to Senator Wellstone, who had voted against the invasion of Iraq, as I had: Paul, I hope this doesn't cost you the election. He said: Dick, if it does, it is all right because that is what I was elected to do, to come here and to vote on issues. Is it possible there is any issue more important than the issue of asking Amer-

ican families to give their children in service of this country in a war?

Senator Wellstone passed away a few days later in an airplane crash. It was my last conversation with him, but I remember that moment, and I remember the responsibility we had. What Senator KAINE and I are doing now is to appeal to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Do not walk away from our responsibility when it comes to the future decision of whether we go to war with Iran. Stand up for those American families who sent us here to do our constitutional duty and engage in the debate as to whether it is the right thing at the right moment of history or whether it is an impulsive decision by a President who broke away from a political campaign meeting to authorize the assassination of General Soleimani and then returned to the campaign meeting. Make the decision as to whether this is the right moment in history. Don't point to the President that it is his responsibility; it is our responsibility. That is what this Constitution says.

(Mr. BOOZMAN assumed the Chair.)

Now, with that responsibility, we need to stand up and act. I am honored to join Senator KAINE. We have filed our resolution. We are seeking a ruling by the Parliamentarian, and we want to move forward on a schedule for a debate on the floor of the Senate. It may be the single most important debate we face this year for many years to come.

I yield the floor.

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair lays before the Senate the certificate of appointment to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of former Senator Johnny Isakson of Georgia. The certificate, the Chair is advised, is in the form suggested by the Senate. If there be no objection, the reading of the certificate will be waived, and it will be printed in full in the RECORD.

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

STATE OF GEORGIA

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

To the President of the Senate of the United States:

This is to certify that, pursuant to the power vested in me by the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the State of Georgia, I, Brian Kemp, the Governor of said State, do hereby appoint Kelly Loeffler a Senator from said State to represent said State in the Senate of the United States until the vacancy therein caused by the resignation of John H. Isakson, is filled by election as provided by law.

Witness: His excellency our Governor Brian Kemp, and our seal hereto affixed at the Capitol, in the city of Atlanta, this 1st day of January, in the year of our Lord 2020.

By the Governor:

BRIAN P. KEMP,
Governor.

BRAD RAFFENSPERGER,
Secretary of State.

[State Seal Affixed]