

healthcare fight to get ready for the fall and winter and speed the search for a vaccine.

One helpful policy would be strong legal protection for schools, colleges, nonprofits, and employers who are putting their necks on the line to reopen. So long as institutions follow the best available guidelines, they should not have to live in fear of a second epidemic of frivolous lawsuits. Believe me, the virus is worry enough.

These are the kinds of smart solutions Washington must continue discussing as we evaluate what further steps may be necessary. Partisan theater and politicized wish-lists are not what the country needs.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now on another matter, as I have said for weeks, our domestic challenges cannot take Congress's eye off the ball of world affairs. So, as the Senate passed other major bills and the Senate Republicans tried to advance police reform until Democrats blocked us, our colleagues on the Armed Services Committee have worked hard to assemble the next National Defense Authorization Act.

Every year, the NDAA allows us to speak clearly about the Senate's priorities on matters of national defense. As China continues to treat maritime arteries like its own backyard sandbox, the men and women of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and the entire Indo-Pacific Command remain on call to maintain order. As Russia doubles down on its support of brutal dictators and attacks democratic regimes from dark corners of the web, U.S. Cyber Command remains vigilant and our NATO relationships remain vital. As tyrants, from Tehran to Pyongyang, pave over their citizens in pursuit of power, we need our sharpest minds and best tools watching their every move.

Our Armed Forces stand watch over our homeland, and they stand watch over an entire international order that shares our peaceful values and benefits our Nation.

Now our military has also risen to the unique task of helping respond to the pandemic. Military medical facilities have added critical capacity during the first surge of COVID-19, from Navy hospital ships to soldiers from the 531st Hospital Center at Fort Campbell. National Guard personnel have established and manned temporary testing facilities across the country. DOD research facilities have joined the race to develop treatments.

As our servicemembers confront challenges new and familiar, our job is to advance an NDAA that supports them and their families. Chairman INHOFE and Senator REED led a productive, bipartisan process in committee. I hope we will see a bipartisan amendment process out here on the floor as well.

But already the bill will make major steps forward. It supports servicemembers not only while they are at their duty stations but also on the homefront.

This year's bill encourages expanded telemedicine capabilities in the military healthcare system, and it will help retain highly trained providers. It implements new quality standards for acquisitions of military family housing and increases impact aid to school districts that support large numbers of military children. It revises sexual assault-prevention policies to destroy barriers to victims seeking justice.

It includes further steps to ensure all these efforts are supported by a more efficient and transparent administrative structure over at the Pentagon. That means changes to compensation to attract top talent, expanded access to cutting-edge software, and new checks on the Department's planning process to increase accountability.

The U.S. military is the greatest fighting force the world has ever seen. Our work in the coming days is meant to ensure that this remains the case. Supporting servicemembers and their families is a critical piece of this year's NDAA. Our men and women in uniform are simply the best, and they deserve the best.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 7259

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

An act (H.R. 7259) to allow acceleration certificates awarded under the Patents for Humanity Program to be transferable.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will re-

sume consideration of S. 4049, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4049) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Inhofe amendment No. 2301, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for Portman) amendment No. 2080 (to amendment No. 2301), to require an element in annual reports on cyber science and technology activities on work with academic consortia on high priority cybersecurity research activities in Department of Defense capabilities.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

RUSSIA

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, today there are thousands—thousands—of American servicemembers in Afghanistan defending us from terrorist organizations and their sponsors. They are joined by servicemembers and support personnel from allied nations and security partners. Each one of these lives is precious to a nation and to a family somewhere. Each one of us in this Chamber recognizes the solemn duty we have to our servicemembers.

We are all concerned about media reports that the Russian Government or its proxies has been offering bounties on the lives of American soldiers to Taliban-linked fighters in Afghanistan. The Associated Press has reported that the United States is investigating whether Americans died as a result of Russian bounties and is particularly focused on a 2019 attack that killed three U.S. marines, including one young man from Locust Valley, Long Island, NY, and another who worked as a firefighter in the FDNY—the great FDNY—for 15 years. On behalf of my constituents and the American people, I demand answers.

If, in fact, Putin and his cronies have been sponsoring the murder of American and coalition forces in Afghanistan, there is no question there should be swift and severe consequences. But unlike every previous administration I have ever worked with, the Trump administration has been shockingly weak-kneed when it comes to authoritarian leaders like Putin. This administration appears unwilling to even acknowledge the gravity of the situation, unwilling to even express concern about these rumors and commit to investigating them.

The shifting explanations from the White House about when and how the President learned about these reports has only added to the confusion and concern here on Capitol Hill. First, the President tweeted “Nobody briefed me or told me” about the reports. That is what he said: Nobody briefed him or told him. Then the President hinted he was aware of these reports but that it didn’t rise to the level of an official briefing. The White House Press Secretary repeatedly denied that the President had been briefed. Then, last night, the Associated Press reported that President Trump had received intelligence about these potential bounties as early as spring of last year—the spring of last year.

Out of all of those different explanations, the best case—the best case—for the President is that he doesn’t read sensitive intelligence reports. You know, that is his job.

It has been 5 days since media reports informed the world of Putin’s alleged bounty program. What has the President done? He hasn’t condemned it. He hasn’t told servicemembers and their families he will make sure this alleged program is exposed and ended. He hasn’t directed any action against Putin and his cronies whatsoever. He has done absolutely nothing—nothing.

As the Commander in Chief, the President has no more serious and solemn duty than to do right by the Americans in uniform who protect our country. He is directly responsible, and must be held accountable, for the well-being of American servicemembers who have volunteered to put themselves in harm’s way to protect our country. The least President Trump could do is promise to get to the bottom of these allegations and hold Putin and his cronies accountable for their actions. Even that—even that—seems beyond the administration’s capabilities.

In the short term, we need an agreement from the administration to conduct an immediate all-Members briefing on the reports that Russia placed bounties on U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Senators need to hear directly from CIA Director Haspel on these reports as soon as possible.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, the number of new COVID-19 cases is accelerating at an alarming rate through several States, and the economic effects of the pandemic continue to hammer American families and businesses across the country.

Over one-fifth—one-fifth—of the workforce has requested unemployment assistance—one-fifth. In one month, the expanded unemployment benefits we passed in the CARES Act will expire. For millions of Americans, another rent payment is due tomorrow, and eviction protections will run out for these tenants in a few weeks. School districts are preparing for the fall without the resources or the guidance they need to reopen safely. Localities are preparing for the 2020 general

election and need Federal resources to hold safe elections. Even the popular and bipartisan Paycheck Protection Program runs out of lending authority today, with over \$130 billion in remaining funds, while so many small businesses continue to struggle. They have \$130 billion sitting there. The program runs out today, and our Republican colleagues are doing nothing.

There are so many urgent priorities that require our attention here, but the Senate Republican majority has been ignoring them. Instead of working in a bipartisan way to reform police departments across the country, Senate Republicans dropped an inadequate partisan bill on the floor. After it failed, the Republicans didn’t seem eager to start the bipartisan negotiations we need to get progress back on track.

Instead of spending the last 45 days working with Democrats on legislation to address the public health and economic crises Americans are facing due to the coronavirus pandemic, Republicans just sat on their hands. In fact, Leader MCCONNELL seems dead set on delaying any COVID-19 relief until after the Fourth of July holiday, and even then, he said he wants to assess the conditions in the country before taking action.

We just can’t wait for our Republican colleagues to wake up to the reality in this country. People are losing their homes. People are not being fed. People are losing their jobs. Small businesses are closing. COVID-19 is spreading.

The Republican majority does nothing. It sits on its hands. The best it says, in the voice of the leader: Let’s assess the situation.

What more do we need to assess? The American people don’t need an assessment. They want action—action. It is amazing. We cannot wait—the country cannot wait—for our Republican colleagues to wake up to the reality.

Senate Democrats are forcing action on the floor this week on a number of crucial issues. Last night, Democrats asked our colleagues to pass emergency funding for State, local, and Tribal governments that are finalizing their budgets today and may be forced to cut vital services and lay off teachers, firefighters, and other public employees. Senate Republicans, however, have blocked our bill.

Hopefully, our Republican colleagues will not be so hasty to reject our attempt to start work on several other urgent priorities this week. Today, Democrats will come to the floor to ask this body to take up legislation on safe elections, led by my colleague Senator KLOBUCHAR; education funding, led by my colleague Senator MURRAY; and funding for our nursing homes, championed by Senator CASEY. All three will ask unanimous consent requests. Will our Republican friends block action once again as the country suffers, as the economy continues to decline, as more people get sick, and more people die?

These are not abstract issues—not at all. This is about parents making sure

their kids safely continue their education. This is about making sure elderly relatives are healthy and safe and properly cared for. This is about making sure that, when it comes time to vote, every American can exercise the franchise without worrying about getting sick.

The need for these pieces of legislation is beyond dispute. When most Republicans back home are asked if we should do these things, they want us to do them.

We have only a few days to go before the Senate adjourns for the next State work period. If Republicans continue to block reasonable attempts at passing COVID-19 legislation, they will have to go home and explain why to their constituents. Americans are tired of waiting for the Republican Senate to “feel the urgency of acting immediately.” We have a chance tonight to accomplish what should have been done months ago and pass three important bills to ensure that our schools, our elections, and our nursing homes get the support they desperately need.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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 STANLEY R. BALZEKAS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, in the course of America’s immigration history, there have emerged leaders whose names are synonymous with the struggle and triumph of these immigrants. Stanley Balzekas was that leader for Lithuanian Americans, especially in the city of Chicago.

Stanley was my friend. His devotion to Lithuania, to America, and to the cause of human freedom and dignity was legendary. Whether you bumped into him on the streets of Vilnius or Pulaski Road, he always had a smile and story to share. He was as gracious and as comfortable with the Chicago hotdog salesmen as he was with heads of state.

He died last week, passing peacefully at his home at the age of 95. As his family said in his obituary: “His failing heart could no longer keep up with his zest for life.”

What a heroic heart he had. Stanley Balzekas was a decorated war hero in World War II, one of the thinning ranks of the Greatest Generation. He joined the U.S. Army in 1943 and served in the infantry. He fought in key battles, including the Battle of the Bulge and the Battle of Huertgen Forest, for which he was awarded a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for rescuing 12 wounded soldiers.

He landed at Normandy and marched with other U.S. soldiers under the Arc de Triomphe and along the Champs-Élysées to celebrate the liberation of

Paris from Nazi occupation. He was captured by a Waffen SS unit in France in February 1945 and spent four months as a POW at a camp in Germany. There, he was brutally mistreated, starved, and lost half of his body weight.

After the war, he returned to Chicago and earned a bachelor's degree and master's degree from DePaul University and joined his father running the family business, Balzekas Motor Sales, which was run continuously by the family from 1919 until 2009.

Stanley's father emigrated from Lithuania to the United States in 1912. He grew up in Marquette Park, in Beverly, the heart of Chicago's Lithuanian community. His father made the leap from a butcher shop to start an auto dealership in 1919. Over the years they sold many models of cars, from Hupmobiles to Chryslers. The Balzekas name became synonymous with Lithuanian entrepreneurship. Young Stanley was at his father's side during the formative years and after he returned from World War II.

Next to his success in business, Stanley Balzekas' most lasting gift to Chicago is the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, which he and his wife Irene founded in 1956 in a building next to the family car dealership. The mid-1960s, when Stanley opened the Balzekas Museum, were some of the darkest days in the Cold War. Lithuania, once a massive medieval empire that stretched from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea, was then an occupied state within the old Soviet Union, and the USSR did all it could to erase the Lithuanians' sense of their own history and culture. Stanley and Irene Balzekas founded the museum to help preserve that history and culture and, equally important, to advance the cause of Lithuanian independence.

Chicago was the perfect city for their cultural jewel. It is the most Lithuanian city outside of Lithuania, and a sister city to the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius. Nearly one in eight Lithuanian Americans, including this Senator, calls Illinois home. In fact, Valdas Adamkus, the third person to serve as President of a free and democratic Lithuania after it won its independence from the USSR, lived for many years in the city of Chicago.

The Balzekas Museum's collection started with Baltic amber jewelry and Stanley's own considerable collection of East European military antiques. Over the years, it became a trove of Lithuanian and Eastern European books, maps, and artifacts, and one of the most respected ethnic museums in Chicago, if not the Nation. One of its prized possessions was a map from 1430 which showed the Lithuanian Empire stretching across Eastern Europe.

Stanley spent hours and hours reading letters and examining every artifact anyone would send to him at the museum. When someone else might view something as just an old handkerchief, Stanley would recognize the

family's last treasured link to an ancestral homeland—a treasure worth saving.

But Stanley Balzekas and the museum did not just catalog and preserve history. They helped to make history. On March 11, 1990, Lithuania declared its independence—the first Soviet republic to do so. Nine months later, in January 1991, Soviet troops and tanks rolled into Vilnius to crush the uprising. People from all over Lithuania rushed to Vilnius to defend the Seimas, their Parliament. Hoping to keep the defenders of a Lithuanian democracy and the world in the dark, the Soviet Government blocked all TV transmissions from and within Lithuania. But nearly 4,700 miles away, there was a fax machine in the Balzekas Museum humming a lifeline for the Lithuanian's resistance, allowing freedom's defenders in Vilnius to tell their story to the world and, in return, to learn that the world stood by their side in defense of their cause. That vital connection to the outside world may have influenced the Soviet Union's surprise decision to withdraw its tanks from the small democracy in the Baltics.

In January 2011, I had the great honor of addressing the Lithuanian Seimas, or Parliament, on the 20th anniversary as a free and democratic republic. I turned to Stanley Balzekas and his daughter-in-law to help translate parts of my speech into Lithuanian. He wasn't just a friend; Stanley was my teacher.

In the mid-1980s, the Balzekas Museum moved from its original home to the West Lawn neighborhood, on the Southwest Side of Chicago. It expanded its vision to become a place where Chicago's many ethnic communities are celebrated.

Stanley Balzekas never stopped thinking about how to create goodwill and understanding. One of his last projects was to turn a small vacant lot near the museum into a park, which he christened "Love and Respect Park." The centerpiece of that park is a young tree, grown from a cutting taken from the nearly 1,500-year-old oak tree, the oldest in Lithuania. He hoped its shade would provide comfort to all who call Chicago home for generations to come.

Stanley Balzekas was honored in life by many civic organizations. He received the highest honors offered by the State of Illinois and the Republic of Lithuania. His passing was mourned by the President of Lithuania and by friends too numerous to count.

Irene, the love of his life, died many years ago, but Loretta and I wish to extend our deep condolences to Stan's children: Stanley III, Robert, Carole, and their spouses, to Stanley's six grandchildren, and to his friends in Chicago and around the globe.

I will close with one last story about my friend. Over the years, Stanley Balzekas must have been photographed thousands of times with famous leaders or with family friends. He used to tell people jokingly that the key to taking

a good photo was to "always stand in the center, that way an editor can't crop you out."

Stanley, my friend, from your days as a young GI to your final days on Earth, you were never afraid to stand in the center of life itself. Your place in history will not be erased. And thanks in part to your efforts, Lithuania's proud history and culture were made an inspiring part of the world's story.

Aciu, my friend. May you rest in peace.

REMEMBERING ART BERMAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I would like to take a moment to say farewell to a good man who taught me a great deal about what it means to be a public servant.

Art Berman was a respected attorney, a community leader and the longest serving Democratic State legislator in my State. He represented the North Side of Chicago in the Illinois General Assembly for 31 years, until his retirement in 2000.

He was known as "the education senator" for his decades-long commitment to see that every child in Illinois could attend a good school and make the most of his or her God-given abilities.

He died earlier this month, June 6, at his home in Chicago. He was 85.

I first came to know Art Berman in Springfield, our State capitol, when he was serving in the Illinois House of Representatives and I was a young committee staffer, just starting out.

He was thoughtful, fair, and kind. I never heard him say a bad word about anyone. He regarded public service as a high honor and a joy. He seemed to radiate happiness.

He was a patient man, but you would be wrong to mistake his patience for passivity. He was tenacious in the pursuit of justice and the common good.

He entered politics as a Chicago precinct captain when he was just 20 years old. He was elected to the Illinois House in 1969, and in 1977, he moved to the State Senate, where he served until he stepped down in 2000.

All told, he won 22 elections for public office and never lost once.

He was a skilled legislator and a persuasive speaker who chose to use those gifts to help, more than anyone, the public school children of Chicago and Illinois. In both the Illinois House and Senate, he rose to chair the education committees.

He didn't champion trivial matters. Over three decades in Springfield, he sought to correct one of the toughest, most intractable problems in all of public education: unequal funding of public schools.

The problem was this: Illinois, like all States, relies heavily on local property taxes to fund public schools. Districts with higher property values bring in more tax revenues, which enables them to provide higher funding for public schools.

As a result, the wealthiest districts in many States spend twice as or much

or more to educate each pupil than do the poorest districts.

Art Berman worked to end this inequity. Our State's landmark 2017 school funding reform bill, the Invest in Kids Act, owes much to his long years of advocacy.

When State funding for special education was imperiled, Art Berman rallied support to save it.

He helped make Chicago public schools more effective and more democratic through the creation of local school councils.

In 1990, he sponsored a bill that made Illinois the first State in the Nation to mandate teaching about the Holocaust as part of World War II history.

Every member of the Illinois General Assembly is allowed to nominate two worthy students each year to receive college tuition scholarships.

After Art's passing, his children were touched to hear from so many now accomplished men and women who told them, "I could never have gone to college without your father's support."

At the core of his commitment to public school students was a deep appreciation for the difference that Chicago public schools had made in his own life.

He was the eldest of three boys born to a mother who was raised on the West Side of Chicago and a father who immigrated to Chicago, alone, at the age of 17 from a land that was then known as Palestine. Today, it is Israel.

His father found work with a Chicago bookbinding company. Some years later, when the owner retired, Art's father and a partner bought the company.

Art and his two brothers all attended Chicago public schools. He graduated from Senn High School and went on to earn degrees from the University of Illinois and Northwestern University School of Law.

Like a true Chicagoan, Art Berman loved the "Da Bears." He also loved playing tennis. Up until about 2 years ago, if you asked how his tennis game was, he would smile and say proudly, "Still playing singles," and it was the truth.

More than anything, Art Berman loved his family. Loretta and I send our condolences to Barbara, Art's beloved wife; to his two children, Adman Berman and Marcy Berman Padorr and their spouses; and to Art's five grandchildren.

May they find comfort in this sad time, and may his memory always be a blessing.

THE HEROES ACT

Madam President, I listened to the statements made this morning by the Republican and Democratic Senate leaders about the job ahead.

I think it goes without saying that we are still in the midst of a health crisis and an economic crisis in this country. We did respond. We responded on March 26 in the Senate with the CARES Act. It was a bipartisan measure, a measure that engaged the lead-

ers of the House and the Senate, Democrats, Republicans, Mr. Mnuchin, and the White House.

In 8 days, we crafted a measure that may be one of the costliest individual measures ever passed by the Senate—some \$3 trillion. It was an enormous investment in America, but it was desperately needed. It was, of course, crafted in a way to provide help for research and medical care, but also to invest in the people of America.

We understood then, and I hope we still do, that small businesses struggling to reopen and struggling to survive need a helping hand, and we provided it with the Paycheck Protection Program. Hundreds of billions of dollars were loaned to these businesses, which can be forgiven if, in fact, they invest in their employees and in coming back to life after the end of this crisis.

An equally important, if not more important, investment was unemployment benefits. There are now some 30 million unemployed Americans, one of the highest numbers in modern history. We know that unemployment brings with it hardship, sacrifice, and challenge.

That is why we included in the original bill, the CARES Act, a Federal supplement to unemployment benefits of \$600 a week. Some came to the floor and argued that it was too much money, that we would be giving people so much money that they would never want to return to work. I disagreed with that conclusion. I believe most people in America are proud and determined to get back on their feet and don't want to find themselves dependent on others. They want to be independent. I believe that, ultimately, they will be.

For the time being, we need to stand with these families to make sure they can pay their mortgages and keep their homes and not lose their lifetime investment, to make certain that they can pay the basics in life, food and utility bills, the needs for clothing and education for their children.

On July 31, in just a few days, that unemployment program will expire. Speaker NANCY PELOSI passed a bill 4 weeks ago called the Heroes Act—a \$3 trillion bill—and it has languished here in the Senate. When Senator MCCONNELL was asked if he would call up this bill, he said that he didn't feel there was any urgent need to do so. I hope that Senator MCCONNELL now feels a sense of urgency.

He came to the floor this morning and characterized the House effort of a month ago, the Heroes Act, as unserious, a political wish list, and that people were laughing at how unrealistic it was. Many people may have laughed at our original effort at \$3 trillion, but it was desperately needed, as is a second effort as soon as possible.

Senator MCCONNELL said this morning that when we return in 2 weeks, his priorities will be to focus on kids, jobs, and healthcare. I couldn't agree with

him more. Many of the aspects of the Heroes Act that passed the House addressed those very subjects. If you want to take care of the kids of America, take care of their parents who are unemployed and make certain that they have unemployment assistance. Make certain their COBRA benefits are paid for by the government so they can maintain their health insurance at this time of health crisis. If you want to make sure that the kids of America have a fighting chance and that we create jobs, provide money to State and local governments.

I am reminded this morning of how many people we call healthcare heroes are actually employees of State and local governments who are risking their lives to fight this pandemic every single day. When the bill that passed the House of Representatives dedicated money for that purpose, it was money to invest in kids, in jobs, and in healthcare—the three priorities announced by Senator MCCONNELL. His notion that we owe nothing to these State and local units of government is to ignore the obvious. Their alternative will be to lay off teachers, nurses, healthcare professionals—people who are desperately needed for us to resume the normal activities of this American economy.

I also hope that Senator MCCONNELL will be open to the suggestion of providing additional funds to our hospitals across America. I know what is going on in Illinois, and I have read what is going on in his State of Kentucky. Hospitals, which are the major employers in many small communities, are laying off dozens—if not hundreds—of employees because of the state of the economy and because of the healthcare challenge. Hospitals in downstate Illinois constantly have ads on the radio and TV, saying it is safe to go back to your hospital for elective surgery and outpatient care, and because people are still reluctant to do so in my part of the world, they are withholding the funds that could be paid to those hospitals for the care that people need. We have to see that change. We have to restore confidence not only in our economy but, first, in the state of healthcare in America. We need to move on this.

Senator MCCONNELL has said the House of Representatives doesn't meet as frequently as the U.S. Senate, and that may have been true over the last several months. Let me remind him that we are in a period of time when we are all discouraged from travel that is unnecessary and when we are all told to be careful where we are going, when we are going, and not to gather in groups that might be a danger with the pandemic that we face.

The House of Representatives has produced dramatically more legislation than the U.S. Senate over the last year and few months in so many different areas, which we will highlight during the remainder of this week. The House of Representatives has sent legislation

to the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, which he has ignored.

For you to come to the floor and then criticize the House for not being in session enough, what is the point, Senator MCCONNELL? They have passed legislation that you have put in the legislative graveyard in the U.S. Senate. You will not even take it up to debate it.

We are on this inexorable path to fill every judicial vacancy with people who are thinly qualified, if qualified at all, for lifetime appointments so long as they meet the Republicans' political ideology test. That is what we spend our days and weeks doing here in the U.S. Senate instead of addressing issues of substance like this pandemic and the economic crisis our Nation faces.

I want to address the issue of liability, too, because Senator MCCONNELL brought it up again this morning. He basically said that he wants to protect those who are engaged in dealing with the public from liability for their actions. He said that, if they live up to what he called the best available guidelines, they should be spared any liability for their actions.

Let me just tell you that I don't know what the best available guidelines might be, but the best available guidelines should be a pronouncement by our healthcare experts as to what makes for a safe workplace and what makes for a safe retail establishment. If the owner is living up to those standards, yes, I agree with him that it should be a valid defense for anyone who suggests wrongdoing. Yet, at this moment, the Republicans cannot have it both ways. They cannot argue that we should give immunity to businesses if they live up to some guidelines and not tell us where those guidelines originate and whether they are based on science and public health standards. If they are, they can be taken seriously. If they are not, then this is an empty promise—a promise at the expense of customers and employees who still show up for work.

We have a lot of work to do. We will finish up this week and be gone for 2 weeks. Then, in the 3 weeks or 4 weeks when we return before the August recess, we will have a responsibility to not only deal with the economic crisis facing America but to take this healthcare crisis seriously. The other day, Dr. Fauci said we were not in a second peak in terms of infection. He believed we were still reaching the first peak, which means there are many challenges ahead.

It is time for us all to get serious. It is time for the President to slap on a mask and to stop with this colossal ego of his that will not let him be seen with a mask. If he would do this today—put on a mask—it would be a message to his loyalists that defying this basic protection of the people around you is simply not smart but arrogant in its approach. We need to have some humility here. This virus is on

the attack and doesn't care what political party you belong to. So I encourage the President to put on a mask once and for all.

Don't be the last American to ignore the obvious.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

S. 4049

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, in America, we are blessed with the protection of the strongest military in the world, one that provides not only for the safety of our country but believes in supporting our allies around the globe. Yet we cannot take our position as the leader of the free world for granted, for there are nations like Communist China that are actively building their militaries with a single goal in mind—to dominate the world stage.

So I thank Chairman INHOFE and my colleagues for working to keep our military strong so it can defend the freedoms we cherish and stand for freedom and democracy worldwide.

This year, the National Defense Authorization Act includes my Secure U.S. Bases Act, which Senator ERNST and I worked on, to reform and improve foreign military student training programs following the terrorist attack at NAS Pensacola last year.

New reports show there was a lack of vetting at multiple levels that led to this tragic attack. This terrorist should never have been allowed in our country, let alone on an American military base, with easy access to American military men and women. The Secure U.S. Bases Act eliminates this unnecessary risk by requiring a thorough vetting process before a foreign student enters the U.S.; by requiring foreign students to follow rules established by U.S. base commanders; and by vastly improving the security of our military installations, service-members, their families, and the surrounding communities.

I served in the U.S. Navy, and I could never have imagined not feeling safe on base. We must do everything in our power to prevent a tragedy like that of NAS Pensacola from ever happening again, and the Secure U.S. Bases Act is an important step.

I am also working on a number of amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act to protect our Nation.

The first includes my American Security Drone Act, which prohibits the U.S. Government from purchasing drones manufactured in countries identified as national security threats, like Iran and China. We know Communist China steals our technology and intel-

lectual property; yet the U.S. Government continues to buy with American tax dollars critical technology, like drones, from Chinese companies that are backed by their government. No one in America should buy products made in Communist China, especially not the U.S. Government. We cannot continue this practice, and my American Security Drone Act is a commonsense solution to end this threat to our national security.

Second, I am working to protect Florida's gulf coast from offshore drilling. I have an amendment in the National Defense Authorization Act that requires the Department of Defense to report on the importance of the Gulf Test Range, which is used for vital military testing and training and is critical to our national security. Offshore drilling in the area would pose a significant risk to the environment and our military preparedness.

I am also proposing an amendment to extend the moratorium on offshore drilling for another 10 years and will keep working to protect our natural resources for generations to come.

A strong defense is key to protecting the freedoms that make America great. I will never lose sight of one of the most important roles I have as a U.S. Senator to protect and serve the families of our Nation.

I look forward to working closely with my colleagues to make sure we are protecting our national security and investing in America's greatest assets—the men and women of our Armed Forces.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I want to begin by saying thank you to my colleague from Florida who is doing so much good work on the Armed Services Committee, and I also thank Chairman INHOFE and other members of the committee who have made it a priority to be certain that our men and women in uniform are well cared for and their families are protected and that we are thinking toward the future as we look at this year's NDAA.

As we have gone through this year's NDAA drafting process with a unique frame of reference, the effects of the COVID pandemic have made our national security, our supply chain, our reach and development vulnerabilities national news.

I think they have shifted somewhat the focus that the American people have had, and I can't remember a time when I have had so many Tennesseans contacting my office asking questions about our critical infrastructure supply chain: How are we protecting ourselves and how do we look at what is transpiring in our Nation and globally to consider how we best protect ourselves and defend this Nation? The fallout from the pandemic has highlighted the need for our Armed Forces to reassert themselves globally.

The proposed 2021 NDAA that we are gathered on the floor this morning to discuss and to show our support for this legislation and for its funding will do some critical things.

The newly created Pacific Deterrence Initiative will enhance U.S. global leadership and devote needed attention and resources to multinational fusion centers in the Indo-Pacific, where we can work with our allies and partners to reduce the threat of Chinese aggression. And that is something that through COVID, through the way China has stolen our intellectual property—this has come to the forefront.

Just having the presence will not be enough. If we don't focus on innovation as an essential element of our national security, we will fall behind. It is imperative that we continue to lead in technology, in research and development, in making certain that the 21st century is going to be a century of freedom.

In this year's NDAA, we prioritized education. The proposed package includes funding for JROTC educational opportunities in STEM fields. I will tell you, in Tennessee, we have the Dobyns-Bennett High School in Kingsport, TN. They are continuing great work in these JROTC programs.

We are also going to invest in collaborative research between academia and military. Programs like Pathfinder Air Assault will strengthen our Armed Forces against dangerous adversaries like China, Iran, and Russia—all part of the new "axis of evil."

I am thrilled to see what researchers at the University of Tennessee, University of Memphis, and Vanderbilt University will do with this opportunity.

We are also going to take all of the progress we have made in cybersecurity and bring it on home to our State and local governments. National Guard cybersecurity assistance programs will improve homeland security at every level of government by leveraging Department of Defense resources against foreign adversaries.

Last but not least, I want to highlight the inclusion of language that will secure American supply chains by requiring a percentage of critical technologies to be manufactured and assembled in the United States or an ally country.

All these items appear right alongside more funding for a better quality of life for our military families.

We will also be seeing more Chinooks flying home to Fort Campbell, TN, and investing in practical improvements on our military bases.

Ours is the kind of freedom that is always in danger of extinction but always worth protecting, and with this bill, I believe we have ensured that our best first line of defense has the ability to do so.

We thank our military men and women.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LOEFFLER). The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I would like to thank my colleagues from Florida and from Tennessee for their great service to our Armed Forces and our Armed Services and great support. I enjoyed hearing Senator BLACKBURN from Tennessee talk about her Tennesseans.

I stand before you with my colleagues today to talk about the NDAA and how important it is to pass the National Defense Authorization Act.

My State of West Virginia has some of the highest rates of veteran population. About 10 percent of our population are veterans, and nationally that average is only 7, so I think that service in the military and taking care of our military has always been a source of very much importance to me as their representative here in the Congress.

I think we can all agree that our Armed Forces would not be what they are without the great service of our patriotic men and women in our All-Volunteer Force. That is why it is important that we continue to support them and the work that they do to protect our freedoms every single day.

This important legislation does just that by authorizing vital resources for our Nation's troops, our wounded warriors, and their families.

The Defense bill also includes programs which will directly impact the West Virginia National Guard. I have had the chance to regularly meet with servicemembers in my State and abroad, and I have enjoyed personally being able to thank them.

Most recently, I traveled to Afghanistan, where I met a unit from West Virginia. During my visit with our West Virginia servicemembers and others, they shared with me their great pride, not just for our State and our country, and why they are proud to defend our freedoms.

I have also had the chance to hear many of the challenges that they face on a day-to-day basis. The feedback has been so helpful to Congress as we better support our military.

These brave men and women deserve our unified support, and I think they will get it, and should not be subject to the gridlock that has become so common in this body and certainly in Washington, DC. That is why Congress has come together for the 60th year to pass a bipartisan bill.

The NDAA authorizes \$740.5 billion in funding for the Department of Defense and national security programs to ensure that our military families are modernized and well equipped to handle the constant, evolving national security threats.

The NDAA also designates the necessary funds to provide our Active-Duty servicemembers, veterans, and their families with the resources they have earned with their dedication and support.

Another way that the NDAA looks out for our troops and their families is that it authorizes a 3-percent raise for

our soldiers. This comes less than a year after a 3.1-percent raise for our servicemembers, which was the largest in a decade. Given the fact that our military is an All-Volunteer Force, it is important that we make it known that sacrifices do not go unnoticed. That is just one small way we can do that.

The NDAA makes sure our military is trained and equipped to protect this country. We accomplish this in the bill by continuing to carry out the plans highlighted in the national defense strategic plan, which stresses that the United States strives for superiority on land, on the seas, in the air, and in cyberspace.

The NDAA advances the DOD's cybersecurity strategies and cyber combat capabilities and enhances U.S. security efforts by countering competition from near-peer adversaries like Russia and China and defeating threats from rogue regimes like Iran and North Korea.

I have had multiple conversations with the West Virginia National Guard on their desire to play a larger role in cyber defense. The NDAA establishes a National Guard cyber pilot which will allow National Guard men and women to do just that.

I know many members of our West Virginia National Guard who would jump at the opportunity to defend against cyber attacks will be excited to learn about the pilot program.

With technological advances, we are becoming increasingly reliant on critical minerals, particularly rare earth elements, which are predominantly produced in China. If you look at a chart of where they are produced, it is eye-popping.

I am pleased that the base text of the NDAA included a priority of mine, which is to require DOD to submit a report to Congress concerning the security of the domestic supply chain of rare earth elements.

West Virginia University has figured out how to extract these elements from acid mine drainage, which would hopefully reduce our need to purchase these from China.

WVU is also a leader in looking into ways to advance our country's rare element capabilities, which is why it is critical for the DOD to begin to assess the security and best storage practices for these elements so that they can begin to ramp up the domestic supply chain.

Additionally, I am hoping that the two additional amendments that I put forward can be added to this bill because they will directly impact my State.

The first is the one that would require the DOD to submit a report to Congress on the stockpiling of PFOS—the chemical PFOS—to build upon the progress we made last year in regard to this chemical.

The second amendment I worked on with my colleague Senator MORAN was to ensure that mothers-to-be who are

members of the National Guard are compensated and receive retirement credits for the missing drill weekends that they have missed because of maternity leave.

With West Virginia's strong history of military service, caring for America's service men and women could not be more important.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the members of the West Virginia National Guard and every other National Guard across this country have stepped up and gone above and beyond the duty.

The NDAA will make sure that those who have responded to this pandemic receive the health benefits they deserve.

While I believe we must put our Nation on a sound fiscal path to end our dependence on deficit spending, it is equally important to maintain our military readiness and provide necessary resources to those who serve our Nation.

I want to thank my colleagues and Chairman INHOFE for their excellent work on the NDAA. This is an important bill—a must-pass bill—and I look forward to working with my colleagues on doing just that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. The Senator from West Virginia is absolutely correct. This is a must-pass bill, and I am delighted to join her and the Senator from Tennessee, who spoke before her, in pointing out some of the very positive aspects of this bipartisan bill.

Isn't it refreshing that this last piece of legislation that this body will consider before the Independence Day break this weekend is a truly bipartisan tradition that we have had in the Senate and something we can be proud of and should try to replicate on other legislation.

I want to take my hat off to Chairman Jim Inhofe, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and the ranking Democrat, JACK REED, for their patriotism, for their cooperation in putting together a product that garnered almost unanimous support in the Armed Services Committee and will undoubtedly pass overwhelmingly, I would say, with 90-plus votes on floor of the U.S. Senate.

The NDAA is a critical part of keeping this Nation safe. It is a critical part of giving our service men and women the training, the equipment, and the resources they need. And it is a critical part of building on what has become a 3-year process of restoring some of the confidence and restoring the building from some of the cuts that we have had over time in our military spending.

We need to continue expanding our military and making sure that we can meet the threats, and particularly, as a former chairman of the Seapower Subcommittee, we need to keep expanding and building on the progress we have made in our Navy to meet the threat

from China and to meet the threat from other adversaries we have.

Also, I would point out that the NDAA, which is before us for a vote and which we will undoubtedly pass before July 4, will go a long way to steady the funding we need to respond to the COVID-19 virus. It has affected our economy, but it has also affected our ability to maintain our supply chain and to defend the Nation.

I want to thank the Senator from Tennessee for pointing out the plus-ups that we have been able to do in this year's bill and previous bills for Junior ROTC. Junior ROTC is a fantastic way to build character and build ability and education in our high school students. If you take a school that is fortunate enough to have one of these programs, the statistics are absolutely astounding. Students in a school that participates in Junior ROTC consistently statistically have better grades, fewer dropouts, and there is a better graduation rate and there is higher postsecondary participation among the small set of people within a school who participate in Junior ROTC. So I want to thank the bipartisan leadership of our committee for continuing to build and expand this program.

I would echo what the Senator from Tennessee said about high schools within her State that have the Junior ROTC Program. I have visited these programs in the State of Mississippi. They work, and they are good. They are not only good for national defense, they are just good for America and for citizenship.

I want to particularly mention what this bill before us does with regard to shipbuilding and military aircraft manufacturing and why that is so important.

This year's NDAA would restore funding for American ships after a dip we have had to experience because of budget constraints. I would point out that this bill authorizes the money; this bill does not appropriate a single penny. That will be left up to us to take the product from the Appropriations Committee. If we are able to spend the money that is authorized, here is what we are going to end up with by the end of the year: It would fund seven new battle force ships. It would authorize four new amphibious assault ships, which, of course, will be built in our American shipyards, some of them in my home State of Mississippi.

It is worth mentioning to my colleagues that we had wonderful news yesterday that the Navy will build an additional destroyer in Pascagoula, MS, and that destroyer will be named after our former colleague, the late Senator Thad Cochran, a Navy veteran himself and a longtime chairman of the Appropriations Committee. These projects would bring our Navy closer to the total of 355 ships, which is part of the requirement we get from our admirals and generals around the world who tell us on an objective basis what we

need to keep this Nation safe. They have given us a requirement of 355. If we actually went back to them today and had them reassess that number—and they may be doing that right now—they would probably tell us that number is over 355.

What we did when I was chairman of the Seapower Subcommittee was put that requirement of 355 in the statute. It is not a sense-of-the-Senate or a sense-of-the-Congress. We built it into the statute, made it the law of the land, and 355 ships is where we need to be if we want to protect the United States of America.

We have had this dip in military manufacturing that affects both ships and aircraft manufacturing, and I would just point out that we are going to need to restore that dip outside of the regular appropriations process. I would commend to my colleagues the possibility of putting the job-creation part of this equation in phase 4 of our COVID-19 response bill, which I think will come before the Senate in the second part of July once we return from the 2-week Fourth of July break. I hope we can come up with a little extra money for ship manufacturing and for aircraft manufacturing. This will get us where we need to be in terms of protecting our Nation, but also it is an unbelievable job creator.

Listen to what shipbuilding does for our economy alone. In shipbuilding alone, there are 14,000 supplier companies in all 50 States. Shipbuilding impacts many companies in every single State. The LHA 7 Program, for example, requires 541 suppliers across 39 different States to fully produce that class of ship. So it protects America, and it puts Americans back to work. I think we can spare a few extra billion dollars to restore that dip and put those people back to work as part of our recovery program.

With regard to our F-35 Program—aircraft manufacturing—in 2020, this year, there are over 1,800 suppliers working on that aircraft manufacturing program in 48 States and in Puerto Rico. Of those 1,800 companies that are suppliers, over 1,000 of those suppliers are small businesses. The small businesses alone contribute over 40,000 direct and indirect jobs in the United States of America. Overall, the program itself in all 50 States contributes 254,000 direct and indirect American jobs attributed to this program.

I would commend this bill to our colleagues and ask for a "yes" vote, and we will get a "yes" vote, but I would ask us to bear in mind that we are going to have to figure out a way to pay for this, and I think that is going to require a little innovation and a little addition in phase 4 of the COVID response bill.

I am happy to say that this additional job creation and manufacturing is supported by the leadership, up to the top level in the Pentagon, up to and including the Secretary of Defense. It is supported by the National Security Advisor and by the entire team

around the President. So I think we will be able to have bipartisan support for this.

Good work on behalf of the committee in authorizing these programs. There is additional work that needs to be done by us and our friends on the Appropriations Committee in actually getting the money there to restore the dip. It is a good day for America, and it is a good occasion for this Senate that we are able to end this work period with bipartisanship and support for our troops.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO TULSA POLICE OFFICERS

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, 2 days ago, at 3:30 in the morning in Tulsa, Officer Zarkeshan did a routine traffic stop. He got backup coming to him, who was Sergeant Craig Johnson, and dealt with a person who would not get out of their vehicle. Twelve times they said to this person: Get out of your vehicle.

Trying to figure out what to do, they worked to deescalate, and they realized he was not going to move. After the back-and-forth conversation there in the street, the individual got out of his car with a pistol and shot both officers multiple times in the head, jumped in a second car, and drove away. Seven hours later, both those individuals were apprehended.

While the flippant national conversation in this room and across the country continues about defunding the police, two officers in Tulsa are clinging to their lives in a hospital right now.

I think our Nation loses track of exactly the sacrifices that law enforcement makes every single day. Their families hugged them before they took off for the graveyard shift and said: See you in the morning.

Officer Zarkeshan had been on patrol 6 weeks. He graduated from the academy in May.

I am grateful there are men and women across our country who continue to put on the blue uniform to serve and protect us because there are people on the streets who mean to do our community harm, and when given the opportunity, they will take that opportunity.

If the Presiding Officer doesn't mind, I would like to pause and pray for just a moment for the families and for them.

Father, we do ask Your help for Sergeant Johnson and Officer Zarkeshan, to intervene in a way that only You can. Help the doctors and nurses. Give them wisdom. Give a sense of peace to those families as they struggle for answers. Pray for Chief Franklin and for all the Tulsa PD. God, they need Your help in these moments. I pray that You would bring peace as only You can.

In Your Name I pray. Amen.

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Madam President, Senator INHOFE and JACK REED have done a pretty remarkable job working through the

NDAA and all that has to be done and the literally thousands of decisions that have to be made. It is pretty remarkable what they have done, and I am grateful for all of their work.

We lose track of the fact that there are folks in Afghanistan right now fighting over peace and stability and pushing down terrorists who are still in the area. We lose track of the fact that U.S. Army soldiers right now are having dinner in a tent in Poland. There are folks in the U.S. Navy who are sound asleep in Guam, except for those folks who are standing watch. There are marines in Okinawa who are asleep, but they won't be asleep very long. There are folks in the Air Force who are prepping for tomorrow's mission in South Korea.

All around the world, awake and asleep, there is never a moment and there is never a place where folks in the U.S. military are not representing their Nation and doing exactly what their Nation has asked them to do. We are proud of those folks.

This bill, the NDAA, gives a 3-percent pay increase to those folks. It ensures that we won't have another BRAC round of base closings in the United States during this next fiscal year. It deals with some of the ally relationships that we have in Taiwan and Ukraine. It helps bring some of the folks who have worked as interpreters in Afghanistan for years to the United States.

It deals with not just those in the military, but it deals with their families as well. It allows additional funding to help licenses move from State to State for those who are military spouses. It adds additional supervision for military housing to make sure we do better supervision there.

Bases and posts around Oklahoma have very specific things that fully fund the KC-46 and the B-21 Programs. It is very significant to Tinker and the community around it. It deals with the 180-day rule modification. It is an amendment I specifically put into this. It is something that folks at Tinker have asked for over and over again. Those folks who are retiring in their uniform are interested in civilian spots, but under current practice, they have to wait 180 days before they can move from military to civilian. Well, in that time period, guess what happens? They get snatched up by a defense contractor, and we lose their skills and their wisdom that they have. Why do we do that? Why do we literally punish one of our members in the military when they retire from the military, after great service there, and then say, "If you are interested in continuing to be able to serve in the community that you are in, you have to wait 6 months before you can do it"? We put an addition in there to expand this pilot program to allow those folks to move from uniform to civilian and to compete for those jobs and not have to wait 180 days.

At Altus Air Force Base, it fully funds the KC-46. It prohibits us stop-

ping the KC-135 tankers until all the details are all worked out with the KC-46 and advance if they need it. It funds the T-7 Red Hawk in the development of that, the replacement for the T-38.

In McAlester, it funds the Army McAlester munitions plant work there and the construction to increase the capability of the Sea Lion. That is an area where we have old munitions that have to come back and actually be disassembled to be safely disassembled. It is a job a lot of folks don't want because they are handling old munitions, but it is the folks in McAlester who do it every day, and we are very grateful for the work they continue to do there.

In Lawton, Fort Sill, it funds the Talon, an integrated management system. It is a very significant advantage that we have. It is one of the things that everything that happens in Lawton in the fires, they want all over the world. Whether you are in South Korea or whether you are in Saudi Arabia, they are interested in what is happening in Lawton. Even for some of our guardsmen for the Oklahoma National Guard—it protects the 137, stopping any kind of divestiture of their system for the MC-12. It continues that process. It is a very significant bill to the Nation in our national defense. It pays attention to people all over the world, but it also takes care of the issues that we need to resolve to be able to have them trained, equipped, and ready—much of that happening in Oklahoma.

There are some specific things that are in this that I requested as well. Everyone in the military is familiar with the term "DD-214." Everyone, after you get out of the military, whether you go to the VA or whatever it may be, they are interested in your DD-214. Those are your records for your Active-Duty service.

Well, it is great if you are in Active Duty. The problem, though, is if you are a reservist or a guardsman—and there are 840,000 of those across the country—they don't get a DD-214 like the Active Duty do. So, in later years, when they want to prove their service record, they can't do that. We fixed that in this bill. It is an amendment I brought to the 13,400 Oklahomans who are in the Guard, for them to finally have records for their service just like the Active Duty have records for theirs.

One of the things I focused in on as well is allowing religious accommodation and training for that in our military. Our members of the military have the same religious freedoms as everyone else does. They are to be accommodated in their faith, no matter what their faith is, in the U.S. military. Sometimes the training lacks on that, and officers and JAG members who sometimes struggle, they say: Well, for good order and discipline, everybody just needs to put your faith aside. Well, when you join the U.S. military, you are not required to also give up the Constitution. You are protected. You are allowed to keep your faith and to

maintain that. This bill will allow some greater training and instruction to make sure we protect the rights of each individual to live their faith. We think that is important as well.

There are a lot of good things in this. I am glad to be a part of it and to see this continue on, even through some things that you may not think are really military in it. Last year, in the bill, when it came out of conference, paid parental leave was added to it for Federal employees. A lot of folks said: Where did that come from? It came from a House-Senate compromise. In the House-Senate was documentation to add paid parental leave, but the problem was, what the House had actually pulled together for paid parental leave didn't work for a lot of folks. It left out people like the FAA and all the folks who work for FAA. It left out the TSA. It left out article I judges, so they don't get access. If you work for the FAA and TSA, you don't get access to paid parental leave like other Federal employees do. You know, we need to fix that, and I have an amendment in this bill that says: Let's treat all Federal workers the same in this. If we are going to pay parental leave, don't ignore the good folks who work for the FAA and TSA and other folks. So this actually fixes an error from last year's bill that came over from the House to make sure that all Federal employees are treated equally. We can do this.

This is something we already have wide bipartisan support for. It is why we opened the bill with so many votes yesterday on a wide bipartisan majority. Let's keep working on it, and let's finish it out. Let's get it done before the Fourth of July so we can continue to honor members of the U.S. military and to thank them because they are literally standing watch across the Earth right now on our behalf.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I am always pleased to be on the floor with my good friend from Oklahoma, Mr. LANKFORD, but I am particularly glad I was able to be here today. Early, in his remarks, he was talking about a family, remembering that family in prayer, and then very thoughtfully going around the world of where people are, at this minute, who defend us. It is a good thing for us to think about; it is a good thing for us to keep in mind; and it is good that when we say we are remembering people in our prayers, to be sure they really understand that we are. I am glad to be with my neighbor here today and also with Senator HOEVEN on the floor.

This will be the 60th time in a row, if we do our job, that we pass the National Defense Authorization Act. I don't think there is any other bill—in fact, I am sure there is no other bill—we pass every year. When we pass this bill every year, we reestablish, every year, that defense is our No. 1 priority. Defending the country is the one thing

that almost everybody admits they can't do for themselves. The States don't think they could do this without us.

This is a national responsibility, and the threats we see today are complex. They are more pronounced than any our Nation has ever faced. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dunford, recently said that our military has to be ready to fight across regions, to fight across domains, and across functions. This bill moves forward in all of those areas, being sure that we are interoperable where we need to be; that we are quickly mobile where we need to be; and that our armed services work as well together as we could possibly hope they could work together.

The President has launched policies and programs to ensure the safety and the well-being of Americans. Certainly, the people who defend us who serve in the military are doing their part to protect our Nation. Now it is time for the Congress to do its part, led by the Senate and led by Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED bringing this bill to the floor. It is not a small bill, and it is not a bill that gets done just without a lot of work and a lot of compromise and a lot of determination as to what is really doable at this time, but this is the bill we are voting on.

Since we do it every year, a lot of it is not absolutely new, but all of it is, in my view, as updated as the committee could bring it to the floor, and we are going to have a discussion of what needs to change, even being that this year the Senate's version of the bill provides \$740 billion to support the Department of Defense.

We see this at a critical time when our adversaries, including China and Russia, seek to undermine our influence around the world. Russia was just accused of putting a bounty on the head of not only American service people but our allies in some parts of the world. If that is true, a price should be paid for that. We are going to be working hard in the next days to determine how deep that intelligence goes and how true that allegation is, but whether it is true or not, it should be no surprise that the Russians are constantly focused on things that diminish the impact of the United States of America, and the Chinese are more and more focused on that at the same time.

This bill authorizes \$1.4 billion to establish a Pacific Deterrence Initiative that will help secure our interests in the Pacific and our friends in the Pacific. The bill supports military readiness and modernization priorities. It has more than \$21 billion for shipbuilding and investing in technology like hypersonic weapons, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and things we have to have to keep the current advantages we have.

It recognizes the family. There is \$4 million in this bill to help military spouses transfer their professional license between assignments and be-

tween States when servicemembers are reassigned. I am pleased to say that the Missouri General Assembly has been a leader in that effort. When you move to our State as a spouse of someone in the military, your credentials should be, and I think now are, able to be moved with you.

This bill increases funding for Impact Aid by \$70 million, and \$20 million of that is for children with severe disabilities. The other \$50 million is just for trying to make up for what would have been a taxpaying unit, if that unit hadn't been there. I think Impact Aid matters. This bill, once again, says it matters, and we are increasing it.

These programs are critical. They are important. We need to ensure that the military construction projects that will be funded later by the appropriations process are authorized here. There is \$40 million for the new hospital that ground was broken on at Fort Leonard Wood just last week. There is \$60 million for the new National Geospatial-Intelligence facility in St. Louis, a \$1.3 billion or so project that is well on its way now. This authorizes the next moving forward of that project.

Investments in military weapons that are made in Missouri and things that help our military that are made in Missouri, such as the development of the B-21 Raider that will be based at Whiteman, or the modernization of the C-130H aircraft where Rosecrans, in Saint Joseph, is the world training center for our NATO allies to come and understand lift and moving things around and how those C-130s work.

This bill authorizes \$1.8 billion to buy 24 F-18 aircraft that are built in Missouri and \$1.3 billion to buy F-15s. They are built in Missouri, made with a great Missouri-Illinois workforce, and I know Senator DURBIN and I will work together again on Defense approps to be sure that this authorization is fully filled. These aircraft are essential and need to be part of our continuing defense base.

Senator HAWLEY and I proposed an amendment in the bill that would make Silver Star Service Banner Day an annual recognition on May 1. This is to be sure we honor the sacrifices of wounded and ill members of the Air Force. I urge my colleagues to recognize the addition of Silver Star Banner Day in this bill.

There are a lot of bipartisan priorities in this bill. This will have a bipartisan vote when it leaves the Senate. It is a bill worthy of support, and I look forward to our efforts to get this done for the 60th Senate in a row.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to join with my colleague from the State of Missouri and agree very much with the comments he has just made, and I am here today to express my support for the National Defense Authorization Act this week.

Defense Department leaders always tell me that, if we don't get NDAA done and our Defense appropriations bill—and I am on the Appropriations Committee and on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee—that those delays really are a challenge and a problem for the military and cost some money. So, obviously, if we can get this bill done this week and get on to our Defense appropriations bill and get those passed, it makes a big, positive difference for our men and women in uniform.

We should be able to move this NDAA legislation quickly because the chairman and the ranking member have put together a good bill for our national security and for our Armed Forces.

This NDAA supports our national defense strategy that is designed to keep us ahead of the Russians, the Chinese, and other adversaries, and it includes things like standing up the Space Force, investing in new technologies like hypersonics and artificial intelligence, and creating a Pacific Deterrence Initiative to help ensure that we have the capabilities we need throughout the Pacific region to deter conflict and coordinate with our allies.

Also, I am very pleased that this bill includes strong support for modernizing our nuclear deterrent, which is vital to our national security, and that certainly includes the dual nuclear mission at the Minot Air Force Base in my State.

This bill moves forward a number of modernization programs, including the modernization program for new intercontinental ballistic missiles, the ICBMs; a new nuclear cruise missile, which is now called the LRSO, the long-range standoff weapon; and upgrades for the B-52, including a new engine—reengining what has been an incredible aircraft for many, many years and has had a longevity that is unbelievable. And the Air Force projects an ongoing longevity for it for quite some time. Part of that is all the upgrades that we have put into this platform, including now new engines, as well as things that include the weapons systems, the ability to carry those weapons systems, communications—just a whole range of upgrades that have been incredibly important for that aircraft.

Of course, there are other aspects that go with the nuclear mission, whether it is the nuclear command and control systems as well as upgrading the nuclear warheads on the weapons that the aircraft delivers.

Also, I support provisions in this bill to place restrictions on the retirement of the RQ-4 Global Hawk, which is headquartered at Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota. Now, our combatant commanders rely on the Global Hawk every single day. These aircraft are highly capable and are not easily replaced, so we are going to need a lot more information from the Air Force about what capabilities could replace the Global Hawk. In other words,

what is the follow-on mission? That is particularly true given the Navy's commitment to the Triton, which uses the same airframe as the Global Hawk.

So we would certainly need that for an ISR mission, and we are going to need to know what the follow-on is and when that is going to be available before there is any retirement of the RQ-4, and we have legislation included in this bill to make sure that that is properly and fully addressed.

Also, I support the bill's authorization of additional procurement of MQ-9 aircraft. This fleet is used every day in a variety of missions, and we need to sustain it as well until there are proven replacements for it.

Because we are going to be flying the MQ-9 for many years to come, we have to make sure that we have all the facilities we need to operate that aircraft. Of course, I am talking about the Reaper, which we use all over the globe.

One of the Air National Guard units that flies that mission—one of the first to fly it—is our North Dakota Air National Guard, and I am pleased that this bill includes authorization of \$17.5 million for a new operations facility for the North Dakota Air National Guard in Fargo, and I look forward to working in my role on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee to make sure that that authorization is funded for that facility. It is very important in terms of that MQ-9 mission.

The bill also provides authorization for a 3-percent increase for our forces and authorizes the fiscal year 2021 military construction program. I am looking forward to working on those, as I am also a member of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee as well, and we want to make sure that we are providing funding for those priorities—those military construction projects.

Finally, I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for helping us to clear some of my amendments, which I have included to further this legislation as well.

The committee included an amendment I authored that will require the Air Force to define how its next budget will support activities in the Arctic, which is increasingly important for our national security. The Air Force is starting to refine its strategies to operate in the Arctic region, and my amendment helps ensure that the Air Force translates strategic concepts into real capabilities. It will ensure we do not cede this critical region to our adversaries.

I also appreciate the chairman and ranking member including an amendment I filed in relation to the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent Program, which is to develop a new ICBM. It is critical that we keep this GBSD—which is Ground Based Strategic Deterrent—program on schedule so it can replace the existing Minuteman III at the end of the decade.

Of course, all of our nuclear weapon components have to be capable of withstanding electromagnetic pulses, or EMPs, so my amendment requires that the Air Force report on how it will ensure that these systems and components will be protected from electromagnetic pulses. By planning ahead, we can make sure that we are prepared for something like that.

I also hope that we will be able to include an amendment that Senator UDALL and I have offered, a bipartisan amendment that would reauthorize and reform Native American housing assistance programs as well as authorize a joint Tribal housing initiative between Housing and Urban Development and the Veterans Administration to provide Native Americans who are homeless veterans—now, we are talking about our veterans, and the percentage of Native Americans who serve in the military, I think, is the highest of any ethnic group. So we have a lot of Native American veterans, and for those who are homeless, we have to help them with their housing and their healthcare services. That is what this amendment does.

I chair the committee on Native Americans, and along with our vice chairman, Vice Chairman UDALL, we have put together this legislation, which includes housing and also addressing our Native American veterans in a way that I think is important and helpful. I hope that it can be included in this legislation.

In closing, the NDAA provides vital support for our men and women in uniform. It authorizes important defense priorities for our Nation, including unmanned aerial systems, which is, of course, a huge and growing area—our unmanned aerial systems—and the support for the nuclear mission, which I have mentioned.

Again, I think this is good legislation. It is bipartisan legislation. We need to all work together now to get it done and get it done this week for our men and women in uniform. They do so much for us, and we need to be there for them. We need to support them by passing this legislation.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Madam President, this week we debate, as the Senate should, the annual Defense bill, the National Defense Authorization Act.

I served 23 years in military uniform, as both a company commander in Iraq and Kuwait during Operation Iraqi Freedom and as a logistics battalion commander with the Iowa National Guard. It is because of that experience that I understand that the work we do here on this bipartisan Defense bill matters immensely to our troops.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit us, 50,000 National Guard and Active-Duty troops answered the call without hesitation and are out there today running test sites, delivering medical supplies by ground and by air, and even running

food banks to ensure no one goes without during this trying time.

During a recent confirmation hearing for Lieutenant General Hokanson to be the head of the National Guard Bureau, I asked what the Governors would do without the National Guard. He said he shuddered to think what they would do because they are America's first response in communities across the Nation.

Just a few weeks ago, on June 7, we had over 120,000 National Guard deployed, and that includes not only those within the United States but those that are deployed overseas.

As a former National Guardsman, I can tell you these are some of our best and brightest. They are ready to go at a moment's notice, to respond to anything, whether it is civil unrest, pandemics, or natural disasters.

That is why I am extremely pleased that this Defense bill includes my provision to provide hazardous duty pay for our National Guard and other troops who are deployed to fight COVID-19.

Now, being a woman in the military has many challenges, and some of these obstacles are preventable and ones we here in the Senate can take action on—for example, ensuring our female servicemembers are properly equipped for the battlefield. Through my efforts and that of my fellow Army veteran, Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH of Illinois, this Defense bill ensures female troops will have body armor that fits them properly, and DOD will be forced to report to us on their progress in finally getting this done.

It is not just the body armor. We are protecting troops in other areas as well. One issue I have worked on for quite some time is treating and preventing traumatic brain injury—or TBI. This year's NDAA funds effective treatments for TBI, such as noninvasive neurostimulation therapy that has been proven to work in clinical trials.

Through my provisions in the bill, we are also improving safety for military vehicles and ensuring our troops have the best weapons and ammunition. Our soldiers have been carrying the same weapons and ammo for decades, and they are about to jump to the next generation of weapons with a new and better ammunition package.

By bolstering funding for our Army's small arms rifles and automatic weapons, our infantry will finally be carrying the most effective assault weapons on the planet in a few short months.

Now, when we look at waste in our Federal Government, folks know that I call it as I see it. As a former member of our military, I am not proud to say it, but the Department of Defense oftentimes is responsible for some of our most egregious spending.

So to protect Iowa's taxpayers, I made sure in this NDAA that we require all DOD grant recipients who get Federal dollars to include a pricetag

disclosing the cost to taxpayers for their projects if they put out a press release for their work.

The Comptroller General will also investigate the most expensive cost overruns in weapons systems, and the Pentagon will tell Congress their top 10 most expensive weapons to fix and maintain.

On duplication and waste, I was proud that my subcommittee—the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Emerging Threats and Capabilities—cut \$300 million in research and development programs that were wasteful, duplicative, or simply not a priority; and we redirected this funding toward urgent research needs, such as getting a deployable coronavirus vaccine for our troops and for funding TBI programs.

The NDAA also requires the most senior science and technology leaders to meet and discuss their research to ensure that it is coordinated and that the Pentagon doesn't continue to pay for the same research twice.

Finally, and very importantly, this Defense bill starts the long and hard work to fix our overdependence on China, a near-peer adversary that we should always keep our guard up against. In the defense realm, the United States has grown too reliant on the Chinese Communist Party for components and materials and for our most advanced weapons systems.

Through my efforts in the bill, we are helping secure the U.S. supply chain for rare earth metals and battery components so that we don't rely on China for our weapons.

We are also working to deploy counterdrone weapons to stop unmanned aerial attacks on troops and invest in the latest technology for heads-up displays and wearable tech for our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

Before I close, I want to remind everyone of something. The National Defense Authorization Act is largely bipartisan. It is through the work we did in our Armed Services Committee, led by Senator JIM INHOFE and Ranking Member JACK REED, that we were able to move quickly and debate it on the floor this week.

In what seems like a never-ending polarization of politics, important work like the NDAA often goes unnoticed or is only highlighted because of the newsworthy provisions in the bill. I wish that were not the case.

As I have said many times over, America does not have a perfect history, and many of our heroes were flawed, but, folks, we still live in the greatest country on the face of this planet. That is because of men and women who have fought and died to protect our freedoms, liberties, and rights, and our troops continuing to serve on the frontlines to protect our homeland. Ensuring our troops are ready for the threats we face now and well into the future is something we should all celebrate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Madam President, we are talking about the National Defense Authorization Act. We are talking about preventing and dealing with threats to our country. I want to describe a hypothetical threat—a threat that throws millions of people out of work almost overnight. It causes the stock market to collapse. It cripples the airline industry. It has people afraid to leave their homes and States scrambling for materials to prepare and cope with the attack. The attack comes in waves. Just as it seems to be receding, it comes back. It is difficult to know the sources of the attack. The country is divided. There are conspiracy theories and polarization and politicization of this awful situation.

I am not describing the pandemic. That is what we have experienced. I am describing a potential, catastrophic cyber attack on this country. Everything that I listed would be part of what would happen in the case of such an attack, plus our networks would likely be down—no more working from home, no Zoom, no meetings. The effect on the economy would be twice, at least, the effect of the coronavirus.

The electric grid could likely be compromised. The electric grid—people think about the lights, but in the South, electricity is necessary for air-conditioning. In the North, electricity is necessary for firing oil and gas-fired furnaces. We are talking about no air-conditioning and no heat. It could be in the dead of winter.

We are talking about airports closed.

We are talking about the financial system potentially in tatters. Peoples' lives and livelihoods—their life savings could dissipate at the stroke of a key.

We are talking about thousands of water systems across the country that could be compromised by a cyber attack, making people afraid to drink the tap water in their homes.

We would have uncertainty, economic catastrophe, and an enormous challenge to this country.

By the way, what I just talked about is not entirely hypothetical; it is happening now. Our financial system is under attack. I talked to a utility executive recently whose system is being cyber attacked 3 million times a day—today. I have talked to small banks in Maine that are being attacked thousands of times a day. We have had ransomware attacks on our towns and cities across the country. They have hacked our OPM—the Office of Personnel Management—and gotten the personal data of millions of American citizens. And, of course, we know about the attacks on our election infrastructure and the dangers of those attacks continuing and escalating.

The financial system is at risk. The energy grid is at risk. The transportation sector is at risk. This is a very serious and immediate challenge.

One of the important lessons from the pandemic—I think one of the overall lessons from the pandemic is that

the unthinkable can happen. If you had told any of us a year ago that we wouldn't be leaving our homes, that we would be wearing masks when we went out, and that our restaurants and social gatherings would be closed, nobody would believe that. Well, it has happened. And a catastrophic cyber attack can happen.

That is why, in the National Defense Act last year, the Congress passed and the President signed the creation of something called the Cyberspace Solarium Commission—a 16-member Commission; 4 Members of Congress; totally bipartisan; 4 members from the executive and 6 members from the private sector—to take an in-depth look at this threat and to try to come up with a national strategy and set of plans to cope with it now before it happens. That was the mission of our Commission.

We met over 30 times. We had hundreds of hours of consideration. We had hundreds of witnesses and submissions of information from around the country, thousands of pages of documents, and came up with a report. Ironically, our report was released on March 11. It was probably the last significant large meeting in these buildings before the shutdown occasioned by the pandemic. We had dozens of recommendations. I am proud to say that 11 of our most important recommendations are in the Defense bill that is going to be considered this week. They have been included in the bill that has been reported out by the committee on a totally bipartisan basis. That is an important first step in implementing this project.

The main point I want to make, though, is how urgent this is. Just as the pandemic was unthinkable, nobody can conceive of an attack that would bring down the electric system or the financial system or the transportation system or the internet, but it can happen. The technology is there.

We all think in terms of World War II and conventional forces. I believe the next Pearl Harbor will be cyber. That is going to be the attack that attempts to bring this country to its knees. As we have learned in the pandemic, we have vulnerability, and we have to prepare for it.

We have amendments in the Defense bill that relate to the Department of Defense. That is good, but one of the issues with this subject matter is that it is spread across the government, both in the executive sector and here. We have 18 or 20 amendments that are pending that we hope we are going to be able to improve and get into this bill with the clearance of other committees, but getting 20 amendments cleared—because of the multiplicity of jurisdictions that cover cyber, we had to get 180 clearances from committees across the Congress, in both Houses. That indicates how fractured this policy process is.

The same thing is true in the executive branch. The authority for cyber is

in Homeland Security; it is in the CIA; it is in the FBI; it is in the NSA. It is scattered throughout the government. It is something that we proposed that we try to make sense of this process and provide both in the executive branch and in the Congress central points that can have authority and responsibility over this area.

There is a great deal of work left to be done. We had some 80 recommendations. We hope that as many as 15 or more will be in the Defense bill. But there are others that will require other committees, and we look forward to working with them.

Two of our recommendations in terms of making sense of the organization relates to this body, and one relates to the executive. This body—we are recommending that we create a Select Committee on Cyber in the Senate and one in the House—exactly what was done in the 1970s when it was realized that intelligence was too important to be scattered throughout the jurisdiction of all committees. That is when the Select Committee on Intelligence was created. We are recommending the same change here.

In the executive, we are recommending a Senate-approved national cyber director in the Executive Office of the President—analogue to the Trade Representative—who is Senate-approved, appointed by the President, and serves at the pleasure of the President. The idea is to give the President a central point of contact to deal with the multiplicity of authorities that are involved in this issue throughout the executive branch of the Federal Government.

One of my principles of business when I was doing contracts and working in business was that I want one throat to choke. I want one place where I can go to hold someone accountable and to hold them accountable not only for reacting but for planning. That is what we are proposing to be brought forth, and we hope we are going to be able to earn the support of the administration.

The Commission, as I mentioned, had four Members of Congress, four members from the executive branch, who made significant contributions, and six members from the private sector. We had unanimous recommendations after an enormous amount of work and serious thought by very serious people from across this country.

There is plenty of work left to be done. I want to thank the committee chairs and the leads and the staff and all of those who have worked with us to get these recommendations this far. But I also want to leave the Senate and the Congress and the American people with the knowledge that we are not there yet, that we are vulnerable, and that this is something we have to attend to. This is not something that may happen; this is something that is happening now, and it may happen—it will likely happen to a more serious degree in the future.

The pandemic has taught us some important lessons about planning and preparing and providing. That is what we are talking about here. We have to plan for the unthinkable. We have to prepare continuity of the economy, continuity of government. We have to prepare in terms of what our deterrent policy is because the best cyber attack is the one that doesn't occur. We also have to provide the structures and the resources to be sure we are ready to meet and defeat this next challenge.

I consider this one of the most serious threats facing this country. It is easy in the midst of a pandemic and all of the other issues that are swirling around an election year and everything else, but it is so clear that this is an overwhelming risk to the future of this country and that we have to take it seriously, we have to respond, we have to be ready, we have to deter, and we have to prepare.

I deeply hope we will continue the momentum that has begun in this bill and be able to take the next step and the other recommendations and other good ones that may come forward in this process so that we will be prepared and we will be able to respond and prevail.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for such time as I shall consume.

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

Mr. INHOFE. That is another way of saying I want to complete my remarks.

Let me say this about the Senator from Maine: Of all the Members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, he is the one who is always there and getting involved in these things with a sense of urgency that he feels in his heart, and I appreciate him as a very valuable member of that committee. I thank the Senator for all of his service.

RUSSIA

Mr. President, earlier this morning, I was at the White House with a few other Members to receive a briefing on the reports of Putin putting bounties on troops in Afghanistan. You have been hearing about this. After a very long briefing, I am confident that President Trump did not know about the reporting. There is some confusion in terms of our own intelligence, and it just didn't rise to the level of the President at that time.

Another takeaway from the briefing is that our intelligence agencies aren't in complete agreement on this even now. This is going to continue to be a Washington, DC, story—one where they try to make the President look bad.

Here is what we also know, and we don't need any special intelligence to tell us. Putin is a murderer, a thug. He hates America. He hates our interests. We know that, and we are doing something about it. President Trump has taken a whole list of steps to protect our troops and stand up against Russia's actions.

In the Senate, the NDAA is focused on our top priority of taking care of our troops and also aligning our military to better deter against China and Russia. As we continue consideration, let me just give a brief update as to where we are right now.

We talk a lot about our troops and our military strength in this bill.

At the end of the day, the bill affects all American families and our communities directly. It is about their security, their freedom, their prosperity.

We introduced an amendment last night that included 79 bipartisan amendments. As we speak, we are working on building a managers' package that includes dozens of bipartisan amendments. We are really doing the job the way it is supposed to be done, the way we did last year and the year before.

The safety of the American people is not negotiable. With the fiscal year 2021 NDAA, we move one step closer to ensuring the safety of and closing the gap between our military and those of China and Russia.

For some reason, this never gets out in the media. Nobody ever talks about this and, to me, it is so significant that during the Obama years—the last 5 years, which would have been between 2010 and 2015—he reduced spending on defense by 25 percent. That is 25 percent in a 5-year period. I don't think we have ever seen that before. At the same time that we were reducing by 25 percent, Russia was increasing by 34 percent. If you think that is bad, at the same time China was increasing by 83 percent. We reduce by 25 percent and China increases by 83 percent.

How do you catch up? It is going to be hard work.

As for some things in this bill, it increases funding for weapons procurement programs, including Tomahawk missiles, long-range anti-ship missiles, ground-based anti-ship missiles, and realigning our weapons capability to match the NDS.

This is the NDS. I like to take this with me so people understand that this is really a well-thought-out short document. This is put together by 12 Democrats and 12 Republicans. All were considered to be experts and all were coming to agreement. Can you believe that 12 Democrats and 12 Republicans were all in agreement?

That is what this is all about. It reestablishes our superiority in the air by focusing on procurement for the Air Force, while also preventing divestment of legacy aircraft like the KC-135. It was envisioned about a year ago that we would be phasing it out, but things have slowed down a little bit. Its replacement is the KC-46. It will take a while for that to get online. In the meantime, we do have an adequate number of working KC-135s. We are talking about a vehicle that is 60 years old, but they are still working and working well. It shows what we are going to come up with when the KC-46 finally comes online.

It reestablishes our superiority on the seas by increasing authorization for shipbuilding and authorization for procurement to achieve the 355-ship Navy. We are still talking about that. It supports the Army's focus on multi-domain capabilities, especially the modernization priorities, and it keeps our eye on Space.

The bill also goes beyond our bases too. A few examples are the Defense Community Infrastructure Program, Impact Aid, STARBASE for science and technology, and research partnerships with universities. This is very significant because I know three universities that have been active in this field for the last 3 years.

It also includes research and experimentation in 5G, which is vital to maintaining both our military and our economic advantages.

One other thing this bill does that I want to highlight is that it protects our GPS signals. This is very important. Recently, the Federal Communications Commission OK'd a proposal by Ligado Networks to make a new cellular network that jeopardizes GPS signals that so many people rely on. That is not just me saying that; we had a hearing. We had the military, and some 12 agencies of government all joined in. Nobody else on the other side was talking about what Ligado is going to do and the jeopardy it puts on our GPS system. That is not just military. We are not just talking about use in the field for these signals, but the pilots in the sky, construction workers on job sites, and even our farmers use GPS to irrigate and harvest their crops.

Even though the Department of Defense and more than a dozen other Federal agencies objected, the FCC went ahead with this deal. To make it even worse, the FCC was aware of the threat that was being posed and the objections that were out there, and they actually had that vote over a weekend. I went back and checked with it and found out that they had never done that before. I don't know. I can't talk about that because I don't have the answers. I have been trying to get the answers.

The NDAA makes sure the DOD is not on the hook for the costly updates if Ligado moves ahead with the deal by prohibiting the use of DOD funds to comply with the order until these three things occur: The Secretary of Defense submits an estimate of the costs associated with the GPS interference; two, it directs the Secretary of Defense to contract with the National Academies of Science and Engineering for an independent technical review; and, three, then the bill further directs the Secretary of Defense to create a process to ensure that our Nation's military is reimbursed directly by Ligado for the interference that they caused. In short, it makes sure that we are not wasting taxpayer money to fix the problems that Ligado is causing.

These are just a few of the reasons this bill is more than just a military

bill. First and foremost, it is what it is—a security bill. Every provision in this bill matters to our national security, but it also goes beyond that.

I think it is really important that Americans know that, with the bill, we are leaving a legacy for our children and our grandchildren. It is one that values peace, protects economic prosperity, and safeguards our freedoms.

You have to keep in mind that this bill has passed every year for 60 years. It is very unusual that something like this would happen. In fact, this is the only area where that has happened. We do know that the results are there. We know that it is going to pass. It has passed for 59 years, and it will pass for another year.

We are going to make sure that we put our military back to where it should be—back where it was prior to the last administration.

I think everyone should realize that we are still waiting for the last shot of amendments, and we are ready to go ahead and finish it. Conceivably, we can get this thing done before the Fourth of July recess. That could happen. We are talking about this coming Thursday. We are in the process of getting this done now.

In my opinion, it is the most important bill of the year, and we are going to get it finished.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking my friend from Oklahoma for his leadership on the NDAA. I think that record of 59 years of getting the bill passed is one I am envious of.

I wanted, personally, to thank him for his willingness to put into the original managers' package the intel authorization bill, which I know sometimes has controversy to it, and I am grateful for the chance for it to ride along on the NDAA.

I thank him for his leadership on this issue.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. President, I am here today because I fear the Senate is about to fail once again to protect our elections from foreign interference.

For the last 3 years, I worked as vice chairman of the Intel Committee to investigate Russia's attack on our democracy in 2016. I am proud of the fact that, with all the controversy about this subject matter, we are the only bipartisan investigation of Russian election interference to make it to the finish line.

The fifth volume of our report is at the ODNI right now for declassification. Any member of the public can read the first four volumes of declassified conclusions, and any Member of this body can read additional classified materials.

Our report offers a stark warning of Russia's intent to interfere in future U.S. elections and a clear roadmap for how to defend our democracy from

Russia or any other adversaries copying their playbook.

Unfortunately, the White House and the leadership on the majority side of the Senate seem to be the only ones not taking this threat seriously.

Since 2016, this body has failed to vote on a single piece of stand-alone election security legislation. Four times in the last year, I have come to the floor in an attempt to pass my bipartisan election security legislation, known as the FIRE Act, by unanimous consent, and each time these efforts were blocked by my Republican colleagues.

Of course, when they blocked it, they got what they were looking for. They earned applause from the President on Twitter. In a different time with a different President, this bill wouldn't be controversial at all. It would simply say to all Presidential campaigns going forward that if a foreign power reaches out to their campaign offering assistance or offering dirt on a political opponent, the appropriate response is not to say, thank-you; the appropriate response is to call the FBI.

What a sad statement about partisan politics in our country when we can't even agree on that. We can't even agree that there ought to be a duty to report an offer of foreign assistance in a Presidential campaign.

I introduced this legislation months before the facts came to light about the President's pressuring Ukraine into announcing politically motivated investigations into the Bidens. I am not here to rehash the impeachment trial, but I do want to note one thing. A number of my Republican colleagues justified their vote by saying that, while not impeachable, it was wrong for the President to solicit foreign interference in our elections.

I take my colleagues across the aisle at their word that they believe foreign interference has no place in our elections, but at some point you have to put your money where your mouth is.

We know the President tried to trade election favors with Ukraine. According to the new book from John Bolton, the President tried to trade political favors with Xi Jinping during trade negotiations. Maybe that happened; maybe it didn't. But I would be much more inclined to give the President the benefit of the doubt if he hadn't asked China to investigate the Bidens on national television, if he hadn't asked Russia to hack Hillary Clinton's emails during the 2016 campaign, or if he had shown even a shred of interest in defending our democracy from foreign interference over the last 4 years.

We are under attack from adversaries who see this new area of cyber warfare and disinformation as a golden opportunity to undermine American democracy. We cannot afford to have a system that allows Presidential candidates to welcome this interference with open arms. If we can't trust the President of the United States and his campaign to do the right thing and re-

port foreign interference, then we need to require it by law.

I spent over a year inviting my colleagues across the aisle to work with us on this already—and I point out “already”—bipartisan legislation. I have tried to answer every objection and work through the right channels to get this legislation to the floor as part of the NDAA. What did we do? We went back to the Intelligence Committee—again, the only committee engaged in a serious effort to prevent foreign election interference. We made sure this year's intel authorization bill included several provisions to strengthen our defenses ahead of the November elections. The committee voted 14 to 1 to pass an intel authorization bill that included the FIRE Act, the act that I just described, so that if a foreign government interferes or offers you assistance or offers you dirt, you don't say thanks; you call the FBI. So you can imagine my surprise and frustration when I learned of a backroom deal to strip the FIRE Act out of the Intelligence Committee's legislation because of a supposed turf war with another committee.

I am back again today because the security of our elections cannot wait. Let's not hide behind process or jurisdictional boundaries. The stakes are far too high to continue the partisan blockade of election security legislation that we have seen over the last 3 years.

If, behind closed doors, my Republican colleagues want to strip this legislation out of the NDAA, then I am going to offer it up as an amendment to force an up-or-down vote and put every Member of this body on the record: Are you for election security or are you for allowing foreign entities to interfere and offer assistance with no requirement to report?

More than ever, it is time to put country over party and defend our democracy from those who would do it harm. I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment and send a clear message: Foreign interference has no place in our elections.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:31 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

MULTIEMPLOYER PENSION SYSTEM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, since I reclaimed chairmanship of the Finance Committee at the start of this

Congress, one of my top priorities has been to fix the failing multiemployer pension system and to help secure retirement benefits of more than 10 million workers and retirees in these multiemployer plans.

This is especially important since 150 multiemployer plans have failed or terminated, and many others are expected to run out of money in the coming 10 years. In the decade after that, many more plans are expected to fail. In all, more than 1.5 million Americans would be affected by the failure of these multiemployer pension plans.

Now, the coronavirus has had its effect on these plans as well. We don't yet have a firm read on how much the economic downturn has affected plans' funding or even the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's insurance fund backing up those plans that have failed. We expect more details on those issues later this summer.

Now, one thing that we do know for sure is that this problem is only going to get worse and more costly to resolve if we wait longer to solve it. That is why all this concentration at this point. Now we have a real opportunity to get it fixed—and hopefully this year.

Last November, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee chairman LAMAR ALEXANDER of Tennessee and I released a draft plan to reform the multiemployer pension system, protect retirees, and at the same time secure the PBGC's insurance fund. We received many thoughtful and constructive comments, and we worked over the past several months to address those comments to make our reform plan as effective and balanced as possible.

So what is standing in the way? The usual thing: You have got to have bipartisanship to get anything done in the U.S. Senate. The short answer is that the Democratic leadership doesn't seem to be very interested in working to find that bipartisan solution. They seem to think the no-strings bailout which they tried to force into the CARES Act in March and which now appears in the House's HEROES Act is somehow a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. That doesn't work very well, particularly in the Senate, where it takes bipartisanship to get anything done.

I would also hope that they are not playing election-year politics. If they are, then they are playing those election-year politics with the retirement security of millions of Americans. As every day goes on, the prospects of people retiring on what they thought they were going to retire on—these multiemployer plans—is getting less and less. Delaying a solution until next year is only going to make it more costly, and it will still require bipartisan support.

We can and we must do better if we want a healthy multiemployer system for the long haul. We have a chance to fix this problem long term. Otherwise, we will be right back here in 5 or 10 years dealing with the same problem.