

There have been numerous shootings in this lawless place. About a week ago, a 19-year-old was shot and killed. Last weekend, after yet another shooting, a 16-year-old is dead and a 14-year-old was injured. Some reports suggest these two boys were shot by a self-appointed security squad. These are miscellaneous citizens who roam the area with guns drawn after the occupiers drove the real police out.

We are talking about Seattle, WA, in the United States of America?

The rule of law cannot fade in and out with the fashions of the radical left. No leaders should have sacrificed small businesses to riots and mobs a few weeks back, and no leader should let threats or leftwing jargon persuade them to tolerate occupations for weeks on end.

I understand that, just this morning, Seattle's mayor finally—finally—released a new order that at last empowered police to bring an end to this. So let's hope the rule of law finally—finally—prevails.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on an entirely different matter, the Senate has indeed turned to what will be the 60th annual National Defense Authorization Act. If you look at the world news, it would appear we have done so not a moment too soon.

After months of threats, President Xi and the Chinese Communist Party finally delivered the punch in the mouth to the city of Hong Kong that they are calling a "national security law." As I and others have warned for months, it tramples all over the freedoms and autonomy that have set Hong Kong apart.

Today marks the 23rd anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from the United Kingdom. Normally this anniversary would have occasioned peaceful demonstration. Instead, the new law has brought scores of arrests and boasts from local authorities about how many peaceful demonstrators they have jailed, new harsh penalties for Hongkongers for new and vague offenses, and new authority from Beijing to intervene at will.

It appears to directly—directly—violate China's international promises and effectively end the "one country, two systems" policy.

I have discussed at some length the specific consequences China will face for this. I will continue to discuss them in the future.

This same week, we received new confirmation that China's ethnic cleansing campaign against the Uighur people in Xinjiang includes forced abortions, forced birth control, and State-enforced sterilizations on a systematic scale.

All of this is in addition to the international provocation that China has only stepped up during this pandemic—which they helped worsen—against Taiwan, against India, against the Philippines, and so on.

China is not our only adversary occupying the spotlight. Recent days have intensified questions about Russia's negative role in the Middle East.

I have long warned that Russia and other adversaries will exploit any American passivity or retreat from this important region. Whether in Syria or Afghanistan, the question is whether we will stand our ground and exert our influence or allow Iran, Russia, and terrorists to literally push us out of the region.

Sadly, as the Senate turns to the NDAA, the need to continue making swift progress on our national defense strategy is staring us plain in the face. Fortunately, Chairman INHOFE, Ranking Member REED, and our colleagues on the Armed Services Committee have put forward a bill that rises to the challenge.

The bill establishes the Pacific Deterrence Initiative. It lays out a clear vision for making our Pacific joint force more adaptable and our commitments to regional partners more feasible, smarter basing for forward-deployed Americans, more supplies and equipment repositioned.

It will encourage more streamlined technology so that, from weapons platforms to information security, America and its allies in China's backyard stand ready to counter aggression together.

This NDAA authorizes full funding for the European Deterrence Initiative, doubling down on our NATO alliances as we check the worst impulses of Putin's Russia. The bill will further limit the information Putin gets pertaining to missile defense, bring more focus on tracking Russian support for terrorist proxies and despotic regimes, and renew our commitment to have U.S. forces support, train, and keep watch alongside our partners.

But it isn't enough to check our adversaries today. We also need to outrun them toward the future. So this legislation will also support critical reserves to help us secure a decisive edge in everything from hypersonic weapons to 5G communications.

Threats to our Nation are pulling American servicemembers in all directions. Fortunately, this NDAA has all of their backs.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on one final matter, while the Senate maintains the serious approach that builds bipartisan successes like the CARES Act and the Great American Outdoors Act, the House Democrats appear addicted to pointless political theater.

Well, our absentee neighbors have finally arrived back in the Capitol, and they have wasted no time resuming old tricks. The Speaker has chosen to spend the House's time this week on a multithousand-page cousin of the Green New Deal masquerading as a highway bill.

You don't have to take my word for it; the chair of the House Transpor-

ation and Infrastructure Committee said so. He said: "This is the application of the principles of the Green New Deal." And he is right, because here are the four pillars of the Green New Deal: No. 1, spend an insane amount of money; No. 2, check every far-left ideological box; No. 3, propose bad policies; and No. 4, forget about making law from the very beginning so you can legislate in a world of pure fantasy—pure fantasy. Check, check, check, and check.

This so-called infrastructure bill would siphon billions in funding from actual infrastructure to funnel into climate change policy. By putting a huge thumb on the scale for mass transit and electric vehicles, it revises the old Obama-Biden focus on disproportionately helping major metro areas, leaving less for the rest of our country. No wonder it came out of committee in the House on a purely bipartisan vote. No wonder the White House declared it not a serious proposal and made it clear this will never become law.

Naturally, this nonsense is not going anywhere in the Senate. It will just join the list of absurd House proposals that were only drawn up to show fealty to the radical left. Here in the Senate, we will keep at the serious work of our Nation.

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

The legislative clerk read the following:

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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

AMERICAN WORKFORCE RESCUE ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, this morning, I have come to the floor with Senators WYDEN and BENNET to talk about a really bold new idea to extend enhanced unemployment assistance for as long as economic conditions in the country warrant it. I will speak about that legislation more in a moment, but first, two other issues.

S. 4049

Madam President, first, last night President Trump threatened to veto the National Defense Authorization Act—the bill on the floor this week—because it contains a provision to rename military bases named after Confederate generals.

Let me make a prediction. First, that provision will not change in this bill as it moves through the House and Senate. Second, let me predict that President Trump will not veto a bill that contains pay raises for our troops and crucial support for our military. This is nothing but typical bluster from President Trump. The NDAA will pass, and we will scrub from our military bases the names of men who fought for the Confederacy and took up arms against our country.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, on a second matter, before I get to the main topic of this morning, all week, Democrats have been trying to force action on the Senate floor to make progress on crucial issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As Senate Republicans continue to mindlessly delay the next round of COVID-19 relief, we have tried day after day to jolt the Senate into action. Last night, we made notable progress.

In the late hours of last evening, we were able to pass a monthlong extension of the Payment Protection Program, whose loan authority expired at midnight with over \$130 billion left in the program. We had to force our Republican colleagues to act on this very simple and noncontroversial extension—a date change—to help small businesses across America, particularly underserved businesses, minority-owned businesses that had trouble accessing the PPP program in its early days.

Throughout the day, we heard, to our surprise, that our Republican friends might block the legislation, but when the time came, Senator CARDIN's consent request was agreed to. It certainly is something to celebrate, but I would have hoped that our two parties could have worked this out before last night as a small part of much broader legislation to address the many challenges posed by COVID-19 rather than a consent request forcing the Republicans to act.

But Senate Republicans, unfortunately, seem dead-set on delaying almost any action on COVID-19 until after July, after they have had time, in the words of Leader MCCONNELL, "to assess the conditions in the country." The obstruction is deeply regrettable

and impossible—impossible—to explain.

We have other deadlines before us, not just the PPP. Today is July 1. With the first of the month comes a new rent payment for millions of American families who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Senate Democrats, led by Ranking Member SHERROD BROWN, are going to ask the Senate to pass rental assistance and an extension on the moratorium on evictions. Will Senate Republicans agree to our request or leave millions of renters out in the cold?

I would say to my Republican friends, let the extension of the PPP program be a metaphor. Democrats are going to keep pressing for Senate action on COVID-19-related issues. Let the Republican response be quick and generous, not stingy and halting. Senate Republicans are going to have to respond one way or the other and either support urgent and necessary pieces of legislation or explain to their constituents why they are blocking them. It would be far better to pass these measures earlier rather than later and be more generous rather than stingy.

(The remarks of Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. WYDEN and Mr. BENNET pertaining to the introduction of S. 4143 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 6

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I come to the floor this morning on an issue that is topical. It is an issue that, over the last several days, has become a national centerpiece of conversation.

It reflects a decision of just a few days ago by the Supreme Court that rejected President Trump's efforts to repeal deportation protections for Dreamers—young immigrants who came to the United States as children. In an opinion by Chief Justice John Roberts, the Court held that the President's decision to rescind DACA, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, was "arbitrary and capricious."

It was 10 years ago that I joined with Republican Senator Dick Lugar, of Indiana, on a bipartisan basis, to call on President Obama and beg him to use his legal authority to protect Dreamers from deportation. President Obama responded by creating the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, known as DACA. It provided for Dreamers temporary protection from deportation—2 years at a time—if they registered with the government, paid substantial fees, and passed criminal and national security background checks. More than 800,000 Dreamers came forward and received DACA protection.

DACA unleashed the full potential of these Dreamers, who are contributing to our Nation in a variety of ways—as soldiers, as teachers, as nurses, as

small business owners. More than 200,000 DACA recipients are currently "essential critical infrastructure workers." That is not my term. It is the way President Trump's Department of Homeland Security describes the work of these DACA recipients now—200,000 of them "essential critical infrastructure workers." Among those DACA recipients, 41,700 of them are in the healthcare industry. This includes doctors, intensive care nurses, paramedics, and respiratory therapists. They are the healthcare heroes we salute, and at the same time, they are the DACA recipients this President loathes.

On September 5, 2017, President Trump repealed DACA. Hundreds of thousands of Dreamers faced losing their work permits and faced being deported to countries many of them barely remembered, if they remembered at all. Thankfully, the Supreme Court stepped in and rejected that strategy by President Trump.

What was the President's reaction?

To no surprise, the President responded by attacking the Court and threatening to try to repeal DACA, even again, in the closing months of his first term.

Congress must step in immediately.

After that Supreme Court decision, President Trump tweeted, "I have wanted to take care of DACA recipients better than the Do Nothing Democrats, but for two years they refused to negotiate."

Here is the reality. The President has rejected numerous bipartisan proposals to deal with DACA and the Dreamers.

May I be specific?

On February 15, 2018, the Senate considered bipartisan legislation that was offered by Republican Senator MIKE ROUNDS and Independent Senator ANGUS KING—a bipartisan measure. The bill, which included a path to citizenship for Dreamers, was supported by a bipartisan majority of the Senate. Why did it fail to reach 60 votes? Because President Trump openly opposed it. That is why. He said: I have a better idea.

On the same day that the Senate voted on the President's immigration proposal, we found his so-called "better idea" failed by a bipartisan supermajority of 39 to 60.

On June 4, 2019, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6—on June 4, 2019, which was more than a year ago. H.R. 6, the Dream and Promise Act, is legislation that would give Dreamers a path to citizenship, and it passed the House with a strong bipartisan vote.

The Dream and Promise Act has been pending in the Senate for more than a year. I have come to the floor, day after day, and heard the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, bemoaning the fact that we are so busy here in the Senate and that the House just isn't doing its work. Yet the House has sent some 400 pieces of legislation to Senator MCCONNELL's desk—90 percent of it bipartisan. He refuses to consider it. He refuses to bring it to this empty

Senate floor so that we can do our work. One of those measures, sadly, is the Dream and Promise Act—the bill that would solve at least part of the immigration challenge we now face in America. Last week, I sent a letter, signed by all 47 Democratic Senators, calling on Senator MCCONNELL to immediately schedule a vote after the Supreme Court decision. As of today, the Senator has not replied.

Over the years, I have decided that the only way to tell the story of the Dreamers and the story of DACA is to introduce them here in the Senate. I have asked them to come forward, if they wish, provide me with photographs, and let me tell their stories. This is the 124th story I am going to tell. It is the story of a remarkable young woman named Cinthya Ramirez.

Cinthya Ramirez came to the United States from Mexico at the age of 4. She grew up in Nashville, TN. She wrote me a letter. Here is what she wrote about growing up:

Moving to the United States gave me the gift of education. I learned English by the first grade, and that is when I learned that I loved school and I loved learning.

While in high school, Cinthya was on the track team and was a student council representative and a great student. She graduated at the top of her high school class with the highest honors. Cinthya went to Lipscomb University, which is a private Christian college in Nashville, and she graduated with a nursing degree. Today, thanks to DACA, Cinthya works as a cardiac registered nurse at Vanderbilt University Medical Center—the largest hospital in Nashville, TN. Cinthya is on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here is what she writes about this experience:

I am a very spiritual person, and I pray a lot. I remind myself that this is the job that I was meant to have. If the time comes for patients to die and they cannot have their families with them, we have to be there for them.

Cinthya's greatest fear is that of bringing the coronavirus home to her family when she comes home after her nursing shifts at the hospital.

Here is what she writes:

I take every precaution before entering the house. I take off my clothes, clean my phone, go straight to the shower. The rest is in the hands of God.

I thank Cinthya Ramirez—a DACA recipient—for her service. She is an immigrant healthcare hero. She is a DACA healthcare hero. She is putting herself and her family at risk to save the lives of others. She should also not have to wake up every morning in fear that actions taken by the Trump administration will lead to her being deported back to a country she can barely, if at all, remember.

This is a classic example of this debate and what it is about—and to think that, in a year, we have not even taken up this issue that was sent to us by the House while it winds its way through

our judicial process all the way to the highest Court in the land, where the ruling was in favor of Cinthya and the DACA recipients who have this protection.

In that year, did we step forward in the U.S. Senate—the so-called greatest deliberative body on Earth—to even debate the bill that passed the House of Representatives? No. No, there was no time for that. As you can see, we are so busy here on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

There is so much more that we could do here. Shouldn't we start with the highest priority—protecting Americans in the midst of this pandemic?

This woman, Cinthya Ramirez—undocumented, protected by DACA—risks her life every single day because of this pandemic. Can we risk ourselves politically for a minute in the Senate and actually take up a measure that could have a direct impact on the lives of the 800,000 DACA recipients and the thousands of others who could have applied for that protection during the months that we have debated this in court?

Sadly, we have been unable to do that, and it is all because of a decision being made by the President of the United States and by the Republican majority leader, and it is a decision which needs to be addressed directly.

In a few moments, I am going to offer a unanimous consent request, when it comes to moving this bill, that was sent over by the House of Representatives more than a year ago. I am really going to call the bluff of this President, who asks: Why doesn't Congress act? Why don't you come up with a bipartisan proposal?

Mr. President, here is our chance. Here is an opportunity.

We have a bill that has been sitting here for a year that would address Cinthya Ramirez's future and the future of thousands of others. The question is whether or not the Members on the other side of the aisle, on the Republican side of the aisle, will at least let us address this issue now.

Give us an opportunity to bring before the U.S. Senate a measure which is no surprise, nothing revolutionary or new. It is a measure we have considered in various forms over the last 20 years, but it is a measure that would address this issue and do it in a thoughtful way.

This is an opportunity which we should seize. Wouldn't it be remarkable, maybe a headliner, if the Senate actually did something—if we actually took an issue of the day that affected real people, real lives, in the middle of this coronavirus epidemic and actually decided that this young woman and thousands like her were worth the effort?

I think America would be shocked that this U.S. Senate responded that way, and don't tell me we have better things to do. I am all for doing the military authorization bill. We can get that done and be back in 2 weeks and take this up immediately. We know the

bill is here. We know that the bill is prepared and covers the areas that would protect this young lady and so many others and give them a future in the United States of America. At this point, it is really up to us.

Now, there may be an objection when I make this unanimous consent request. Listen carefully to the objection. It has nothing to do with resolving the issue before us—the issue of the future of this young woman and thousands of others just like her.

But we are in a position at this moment where we have to act. I am awaiting the arrival of a Republican Member, who I hope is on the way, and so at this point I am going to suspend and yield the floor with the hopes that we can return to another colleague coming to the floor momentarily.

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. 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.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I am here to urge my colleagues on the Republican side not to object—follow last night's example and allow this simple, humane, and good-for-our-economy amendment to go forward.

First, I want to salute Senator DURBIN. There has been no voice—no voice of any elected official whom I know who has had a stronger, longer, and more passionate defense of the DACA kids, many of whom are now adults.

And he has pricked the conscience of the Nation so that now the DACA kids and their families are, really, by most Americans respected and by many Americans just loved. I am one of those in the latter category. I love these kids and their families.

I have watched them, on the frontlines during the coronavirus crisis in New York, risk their lives, even though they are not allowed to be full Americans, to help.

Now we have an opportunity here to simply say: Stop harassing them. Let them do their jobs. Let them live their lives. Let them be with their families here in America so they can help us in our economy recover from COVID, as they have been doing, without looking over their shoulder and worrying about being deported or having one of their family members being deported every 5 minutes.

It is such an important amendment. It is so good for the country. The idea that immigrants are bad for America, that DACA kids are bad for America, is a regressive, nativist, and often bigoted idea that some use for political purposes, but nothing, nothing, nothing could be further from the truth.

So I urge my colleagues not to object to Senator DURBIN's fine amendment to help America live up to its ideals and

its dreams. That lady in the harbor in the city in which I live—"Give me your poor, your tired, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"—that has been part of the American fabric for centuries.

This is a chance to bring us back to that fabric, that wonderful fabric that has been so good for our country for those centuries.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I want to thank my colleague and friend Senator SCHUMER. We have been fighting this battle for a long time, Senator.

Eight of us who came, four Democrats and four Republicans, put together a comprehensive immigration reform bill which should have passed 7 years ago—68 votes on the floor of the U.S. Senate. It was a bipartisan measure, which we joined with Senator McCain to put together to bring to the floor.

I thank you for your heartfelt comments.

I am going to speak a little longer and make a unanimous consent request.

This measure I am asking for unanimous consent on, the American Dream and Promise Act, was introduced by Representative LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, Democrat of California, on March 12, 2019, with 202 original cosponsors.

It would provide Dreamers, temporary protected status recipients, and individuals with deferred enforcement departure with protection from deportation and an opportunity to obtain permanent legal status in the United States if they meet certain requirements.

It passed the House of Representatives 237 to 187—7 Republicans joined the 230 Democrats who were present to support the legislation.

Protections in the American Dream and Promise Act would allow nearly 700,000 DACA recipients, as well as another 1.6 million eligible Dreamers brought to the United States as children to stay in our country legally.

The bill's protections would also allow over 300,000 temporary protected status holders and 3,600 individuals that I described earlier with the same opportunity.

It would create a conditional permanent resident status valid for up to 10 years that would protect Dreamers, including DACA, from deportation and allow them to work legally in the United States. Cinthya Ramirez could continue working as a nurse long after this pandemic is gone.

To qualify for this, the Dreamers would need to meet requirements. They must have come to the United States before the age of 18—she came at the age of 4—and continuously lived here for at least 4 years.

They must demonstrate they have been admitted to an institution of higher education, earned a high school

diploma or equivalent, or are currently in the process of doing that. She is a graduate of Lipscomb University with a degree in nursing.

They must pass government and background security checks, submit biometric and biographic data, demonstrate good character with no felonies, misdemeanor offenses of domestic violence, or multiple misdemeanor convictions, and they must register for the Selective Service, if applicable—she has already met all these standards by the examination she has been put through for DACA—and, of course, pay their application fee.

DACA recipients and other DACA-eligible Dreamers who still meet the requirements needed to obtain DACA would automatically qualify for conditional permanent resident status.

When the President ended DACA in September of 2017, we stopped accepting applications from those who were eligible. Now these young people would have the chance, if they meet the requirements and the test that is required of them.

They must complete one of three tracks: graduate from college or university or complete at least 2 years of a bachelor's or higher degree program in the United States; complete at least 2 years of honorable military service or have worked for a period totaling at least 3 years while having valid employment authorization; maintain continuous residence in the country; demonstrate an ability to read, write, speak English; understand American history, principles, and form of government.

It is a high standard, but it is one they are prepared to meet and they should meet to become part of America's future.

How important are they? Well, they are extremely important in every single State. We know that there are some 780,000 DACA recipients across the United States. There are 109,000 of them in the State of Texas—109,000. The average age of arrival for them is 7. They came here as kids. Their annual tax contributions are in the millions. I could read the numbers.

In the State of Texas, there are 30,000 of these DACA recipients who have been characterized by the Trump administration as essential workers—30,000—4,300 DACA healthcare workers in the State of Texas.

The States of Texas, Arizona, California, Florida, and others are going through a resurgence of infection and death from this pandemic. These DACA young people—many of them are on the frontline fighting this disease, as Cinthya Rameriz is in Tennessee.

The notion that we want them to leave now—4,300 leave Texas now—healthcare workers? Unimaginable. It makes no sense.

It is time for us to do something. At a minimum, for goodness' sake, in this empty Chamber, can we come together and debate this issue?

The President has challenged us to do it. Let's do it—not be afraid of it.

Put it through an amendment process on the floor. I have lived through that before. It actually would resemble the U.S. Senate, which many people remember from the history books, where people actually came to deliberate and vote on amendments. That is all we are asking for. Bring this under unanimous consent to the floor. Let's do it. The President has challenged us.

I am going to make a unanimous consent request. I see the Senator from Texas is on the floor here, and I want to make sure I get the right copy. Here it is.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 112, H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

You know, someone watching this at home might think that Senate Democrats want to actually enact amnesty for the so-called DACA recipients. Of course, they could have done so earlier.

President Trump offered Senate Democrats a deal that would have granted permanent amnesty for all the DACA recipients, and the Democrats turned it down. They didn't want the deal. They hoped, instead, to have an issue in November.

You know, we are right now in a time of crisis in our country. We have a global pandemic, and we have 44 million Americans out of work. This is, on the economic side, the greatest crisis our country has seen since the Great Depression.

Yet what we are seeing in the Senate is a continuation of something we have seen for several years, which is that today's Democratic Party doesn't value working men and women—American working men and women.

Last week, we saw a decision from the Supreme Court of the United States on amnesty. It was a particularly disgraceful opinion. Unfortunately, it was authored by Chief Justice Roberts; it was joined by the four liberals; and it concerned President Obama's illegal amnesty.

DACA, when it was issued, was illegal. Actually, for years, President Obama admitted that. When activists asked him: Will you decree amnesty unilaterally, as an executive, he told them over and over again: I can't do that. I am bound by Federal immigration laws. I am not a King. I am not an Emperor. That is what President Obama said repeatedly.

But then as the election approached, I guess they reassessed and decided that being a King or Emperor sounded pretty good, and so DACA, the day it was issued, was directly contrary to law.

Federal immigration law says in the statute books that if you are here illegally, it is illegal for you to stay, to get work permits, and the Obama administration ignored Federal immigration law and simply printed what were called work authorizations.

My friend from Illinois has a picture of a lovely young lady whom he has spoken about.

What he doesn't have a picture of is what happened after Executive amnesty was granted for those who came illegally as kids, which is that the number of unaccompanied children skyrocketed.

In the State of Texas I have been down to the border many, many times. I have visited with the Border Patrol many, many times. You know, when you go online, you see cages with children in them. What many of the people online don't tell you is that it was the Barack Obama administration that built those cages, and it was Executive amnesty that resulted in tens of thousands of little boys and little girls being sent alone with violent drug traffickers, with coyotes. Far too many of those kids were physically assaulted and sexually assaulted. You are not helping children by incentivizing little boys and little girls being in the hands of violent traffickers. That is not humane. I have seen child after child after child abused by this system, and every time the Democrats offer more amnesty, the predictable result is that more children are going to be physically and sexually assaulted. Amnesty is wrong.

It is also the wrong priority of today's Democratic Party. Their priority is on people here illegally and not on American workers, not on keeping American workers safe.

What we should be doing—and in just a moment, I am going to ask unanimous consent for this body to take up and pass Kate's Law. I am the author of Kate's Law in the Senate. Kate's Law is named for Kate Steinle, a beautiful young woman in California who was murdered on a California pier by an illegal immigrant who had come into this country illegally over and over and over again. He had multiple violent criminal convictions over and over and over again, but our revolving-door system kept letting him out.

As Kate Steinle died on that California pier, her father held his daughter in his arms, and her last words were "Daddy, please help me."

I have had the opportunity to visit with Kate Steinle's family. What happened to her was wrong. It shouldn't happen, and the reason it happens is that our broken system keeps letting go violent criminal illegal aliens. What does Kate's Law provide? Common-sense legislation that says aggravated felons—people with serious felony convictions—who repeatedly enter the country illegally face a mandatory minimum prison sentence; in other words, we are not going to let them out and allow them out to commit mur-

ders, rapes, and assaults. We are not going to let them out to abuse and threaten children.

Kate's Law is overwhelmingly bipartisan common sense. If you go into the great State of Illinois and ask the voters of Illinois "Does Kate's Law make sense?" overwhelmingly, they say yes. That is true in every State in the country.

By the way, it is true of voters who aren't just Republicans. It is true of Democrats, and it is true of Independents. It is true of everyone except the 47 elected Democrats in this Chamber and their colleagues in the House of Representatives because the reason Kate's Law is not the law is that every time I have tried to bring it up, the Democrats have objected to it.

If Kate's Law had been on the books, Kate Steinle would still be alive because the violent criminal who kept coming in over and over and over again illegally would have been in jail instead of murdering that young woman.

Amnesty is wrong. Illegal Executive amnesty is wrong, and we need to have as our first priority protecting the American workers and keeping the American people safe.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it is my understanding that the Senator from Texas was going to offer a consent request.

Mr. CRUZ. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. I think this is the moment to do it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—KATE'S LAW

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Kate's Law, which is at the desk.

I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, listen carefully to what we just heard from the Senator from Texas. First he talked about amnesty. Amnesty as I understand it is a blanket forgiveness for the commission of a crime.

Cinthya Ramirez has DACA—the DACA protection that I described—2 years at a time. She was brought here to the United States from Mexico at the age of 4. She has paid her fee, has gone through her background check, and receives 2-year protections to continue in this country. According to the Senator from Texas, that is amnesty for a crime—amnesty for a criminal. It is certainly not that.

This young woman has been as open with our government as she could possibly be, and for it she has received 2 years at a time to build a life, and what a life she has built. Undocumented and uncertain of her future, a person who is doomed by the Trump administration's policy finishes her medical education in nursing school at Lipscomb University, a Christian college in Nashville, and works at one of the best hospitals in the whole region, saving the lives of people who are facing COVID-19, and in the eyes of the Senator from Texas, she is just another criminal looking for amnesty. Really? I am sorry, that doesn't add up. It doesn't add up at all.

To say today that because we are seeking help on DACA, Democrats do not value American workers—another statement made by the Senator from Texas—may I remind the Senator that all of the people we are talking about in the DACA Program are currently in the United States legally working because of DACA? It is not as if they are taking jobs away by coming into this country and displacing others. Many of them are unemployed because of the economy too. She is doing work people are afraid to do, exposing herself to the coronavirus every single day.

You heard the routine she goes through when she comes home from work: taking off her clothing, rushing into a shower, washing off her cell phone, cleaning it before she sees her family. This is a person who is a criminal? She is a criminal for what she does, Cinthya Ramirez—really? I don't understand the thinking.

To call the decision last week—the week before—before the Supreme Court disgraceful is to say that she should have no chance. She should be gone. What has she got to offer to the United States of America, to the State of Tennessee, to our future? She has a lot to offer, and most Americans, even an overwhelming majority of Republicans, get that part of it.

Now the Senator comes before us today with a consistent record on Dreamers. Every moment that he has been in the U.S. Senate, whenever he has been given a chance—whenever—to help the Dreamers or to help DACA, the junior Senator from Texas has voted no, time and time and time again. He is consistent. Bless him for his consistency.

Today he is not even offering an alternative that would give this woman a chance—no alternative to the Dream and Promise Act. Instead he offers his own bill, which has nothing whatsoever to do with DACA and the Dreamers. The Cruz bill would increase penalties for immigration offenses, but anyone who commits any of the offenses that have been described by the Senator from Texas is already ineligible under DACA—ineligible. DACA requires applicants to clear criminal and national security background checks. Cinthya Ramirez has done that. To say that she is even close to committing a crime is an outrage.

Let's be clear. The junior Senator from Texas is in the majority in the U.S. Senate. If he were serious about advancing his bill, he could ask the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee to hold a committee vote on the bill. The Senator from Texas serves on that committee. Then he could ask the majority leader to schedule a floor vote. But he hasn't done that. This bill that he brings to the floor today he has not even introduced as a bill in this session of Congress.

In this session of Congress, with the Republicans in the majority, the immigration subcommittee chaired by the other Senator of Texas has held one hearing. The Senate Judiciary Committee has voted on one immigration bill. There has not been a single vote on an immigration bill on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

Clearly, the Senator from Texas has no intention of trying to advance this bill that he passionately defended on the floor. He is offering it today to try to muddy the waters and somehow tie up this wonderful young nurse in Tennessee with a horrible crime that was committed in California. She had nothing to do with it. There is nothing in her life that is even close to that crime, and to put that as the alternative to DACA and the Dream Act is fundamentally and totally unfair.

As long as I am in the Senate, I will come to the floor of the Senate to advocate for Cinthya Ramirez and all of the Dreamers. What an American tragedy it would be to deport this brave and talented young nurse who is saving lives in the midst of this pandemic.

America is better than that. We must ensure that Cinthya and hundreds of thousands of others in our essential workforce are not forced to stop working. We need them now more than ever, and we must give them the chance they desire to let them become citizens of the United States.

Madam President, I object to the unanimous consent request by the Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

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

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, COVID-19 has taken a wrecking ball to our Nation's health and economy. No corner of the United States has been spared.

Communities of color are being hit the hardest. We here in Congress must focus our work on helping these communities. We must take on the longstanding systemic reasons that these communities entering this crisis are

entering at a greater risk. We must enact real reform so that the next time the next pandemic or economic downturn hits, it is not these same communities that once again bear the brunt of the disaster.

Today, I want to focus our attention on American Indian and Alaska Native communities—communities where infection and mortality rates are much higher than the overall U.S. population and communities that can't escape the economic hardships this pandemic has caused.

We already knew that pandemics like this take an awful toll on Native communities. This was true 100 years ago during the 1918 flu pandemic when Native Americans died at four times the rate of the rest of the country. This was true a decade ago during the 2019 H1N1 outbreak when Native Americans died at the same high rates.

It is unforgivable that the administration was not better prepared.

The underlying reasons that Native peoples—whether living on Tribal lands, in urban settings, or elsewhere—are at risk are multifaceted. They are all rooted in historic systemic injustice.

First and foremost, many Native Americans do not have ready access to quality healthcare, despite the Federal Government's trust and treaty obligations to provide it—trust and treaty obligations taken on by this government in exchange for millions of acres of land and countless lives lost.

On the large, rural reservations and in remote Alaskan Native villages, the nearest healthcare facility might be hours away, and when you get there, if you can get there, there often aren't enough doctors or nurses or hospital beds.

These logistical barriers are compounded by the chronic, historic underfunding of the Indian Health Service, which many of us have fought for years to correct. While we have made progress, the IHS budget still only covers an estimated 16 percent of the need.

As a result of centuries of discriminatory land, agricultural, and environmental policies, Native communities also face the highest rates of underlying conditions, like diabetes, heart and lung disease, asthma, and obesity, that result in worse COVID-19 outcomes.

Battles over water rights and underinvestment in Tribal infrastructure have compounded the problems. We all know that washing our hands is a critical measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Yet Tribal communities are 3.7 times more likely to lack complete indoor plumbing than other U.S. households. On the Navajo Nation, which is confronting one of the worse coronavirus outbreaks in the Nation, 18 percent of households don't have complete indoor plumbing. So, again, it is no surprise that researchers have already found that COVID-19 cases are more likely to occur in Tribal communities, with a higher proportion of homes lacking indoor plumbing.

We also know that social distancing is key to preventing the spread of the virus. Yet almost one in six Native households is overcrowded, making social distancing not just difficult but physically impossible for many families.

All these institutional barriers combine to create a perfect storm. These barriers aren't the result of chance; they are the result of policy. It is these institutional barriers that we must acknowledge and finally address so that this pandemic is not one more example of the failure of the United States to meet our obligations. This time must be different. We must meet our responsibilities and help build a more just and equitable society.

Throughout this crisis, Native communities have fought back. They are resilient. They have fought back hard. For example, in my home State of New Mexico and in Arizona and Utah, the Navajo Nation has imposed strict curfews to prevent the spread. They have ramped up testing despite the complete lack of testing supplies in the beginning, and they have now, as of today, tested about 25 percent of their population, compared to 10 percent nationally.

Tribal responses to the pandemic have been repeatedly hamstrung by this administration and congressional inaction. As vice chair of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, I fought hard for funding targeted for Tribes. When the administration offered nothing for Tribes, we secured over \$10 billion in the CARES Act. When the administration fumbled distribution of Tribal funding, missing the statutory deadline for distribution by almost 2 months, Congress and the Tribes pushed back. Because Tribes are in crisis, days matter. It took a lawsuit and a Federal court order for Tribes to get their share of the \$8 billion set aside for them under the CARES Act.

Today, the Senate Indian Affairs Committee will hold an oversight hearing on implementation of Federal programs to support Tribal COVID-19 prevention, containment, and response efforts. Tribal witnesses will testify that policies and practices at FEMA, the CDC, HRSA, and a number of other Federal Agencies have made Tribal access to Federal COVID-19 resources much harder.

Whether it is denying Tribes access to coronavirus surveillance data, creating a confusing, Byzantine bureaucracy for requesting emergency medical supplies, or delaying access to grant funds, this administration continually makes decisions that disadvantage Native communities, decisions that threaten Native lives and prolong this country's legacy of systemic injustice.

The administration must do better, and Congress must do much more. Each day we fail to act to advance policies to address the disparities faced by Indian Country is a day we fail to uphold our oath of office. The Republican Senate majority has delayed far too

long. Infections are on the rise. The United States has surpassed every other nation in the world in the spread and death and destruction of this virus.

Now, 20 million Americans are out of work, which is the highest unemployment level since the Great Depression. State and local and Tribal governments and healthcare systems across the Nation are shuttering essential services and furloughing essential workers. None of this should come as news to the Republican majority.

Inaction in the face of this disaster is unconscionable. This body must get down to the business that we are here for and we are elected to do. It is long past time we pass another COVID-19 relief package. Our next package must include targeted funding and programs for Native communities and Tribes. We must infuse IHS with additional funding for Tribal healthcare and ensure it has parity in accessing Federal programs. We must provide Tribal governments with the resources they need to keep their communities up and running safely by providing \$20 billion in additional targeted funding within the Treasury's Coronavirus Relief Fund.

The Senate should pass bills I have introduced that have already been adopted by the House of Representatives in its Heroes package, which was passed over 6 weeks ago. We must make our strategic stockpile available to Tribes. Tribes should be able to access PPE, ventilators, and other necessary medical equipment just as States can. We must make sure that Tribes have equal access to the Centers for Disease Control and their resources to prepare for public health emergencies like this pandemic.

Seventy percent of Native Americans live in urban settings. Yet the Medicaid reimbursement rate for Urban Indian Health facilities is lower than the Federal reimbursement rate at other IHS facilities. We need to balance the scales and help the 43 Urban Indian Health facilities across the Nation expand their services.

As so much of our lives move to the internet, we must make sure that Native schools, healthcare facilities, and government services are not left on the wrong side of the digital divide. All Tribes must have access to high-speed broadband.

This public health and economic crisis has hit us all hard, but we shouldn't deny that some communities have been hit hard. We need to send immediate relief to those communities that have been so severely hurt, including Native communities, and we need to set our sights on genuinely taking on the systemic and institutional barriers these communities have faced for far too long. We can, we should, and we must do better.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today, with my colleague, the Senator from New Mexico, TOM UDALL, to call for urgent action by Congress to respond to the needs of Tribal nations and urban indigenous communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have not done enough. We have not lived up to our shared trust and treaty obligations. And in this moment, we are called upon to respond to the historic injustice and systems of oppression and institutional violence that are harming communities of color and indigenous people.

Over the last month, people in Minnesota and across our country have focused our attention on the deep systemic inequities that Black, Brown, and indigenous people face. This injustice is not new. It is as old as the colonization of our country, but, colleagues, this is a unique moment.

This public health crisis presents us with an opportunity to show that we are serious about repairing the damage done by our broken promises to sovereign Tribal nations and urban indigenous communities.

Some have said that COVID-19 is the great equalizer, but we know that COVID hits hardest those without a safe place to call home, those struggling with low wages and poverty and lack of healthcare, and Black, Brown, and indigenous people living with the trauma of having their identity and their very humanity called into question, even before this virus spread.

The impact of COVID on Native communities has been devastating. Native people have been hospitalized for COVID at five times the rate of White people. In mid-May, the Navajo Nation reached a higher per-capita infection rate than any other hotspot in the country.

Why is it that COVID is hitting Tribal nations so hard? Despite repeated calls from Tribal leaders and urban indigenous leaders, over the past few decades, the Federal Government has stood by and allowed the budget of the Indian Health Service to dwindle. They have neglected Indian housing programs, and they have ignored growing health inequities.

The Federal institutions dedicated to serving Indian Country are not broken. Unfortunately, these institutions have never been adequate to live up to our trust and treaty responsibilities, and they represent a broken promise.

The Federal Government's failure has life-and-death consequences for Native people—for their health, for their well-being, and for their opportunity to provide for their families.

Think of this striking statistic: Unemployment in the indigenous community in the Twin Cities is at a terrible 47 percent—higher than any other group in our State.

Within Tribal nations, the economic impact of the coronavirus is equally devastating. Early this spring, Tribal governments in Minnesota and all around the country made the difficult decision to voluntarily close Tribal enterprises in order to protect public health. As a result, they lost significant government revenue and also experienced massive unemployment, not only for their members but for members from the surrounding communities. This lost revenue meant that Tribal governments were forced to scale back essential services, like nutrition assistance for elders, public safety, and education programming.

In the CARES Act, Congress agreed to \$8 billion in emergency relief to help Tribes respond to COVID. Even after congressional action, though, Tribal governments have had to continue fighting to get their fair share of those dollars. The Trump administration argued that some of this relief should go to for-profit Alaska Native corporations. Then it took the Treasury Department 40 days to distribute just the first 60 percent of the funds to Tribes, and not until 2 weeks ago, almost 3 months after passage of the CARES Act, did Tribal governments receive the rest. To be clear, these funds cannot be used to replace lost revenue.

We have so much work to do to fulfill our commitment to indigenous people and the simple proposition that Native families should have equal access to healthcare and housing opportunity as White Americans.

When I speak to Tribal leaders in my State about this cycle of historic underinvestment, inequity, and broken promises, I share their frustration. I don't know how anybody couldn't.

Indigenous leaders in Minnesota know that a lack of housing on Tribal lands leads to overcrowding, which increases the risk of contracting COVID. Tribes have asked over and over for sufficient funding for housing programs. They shouldn't have to ask anymore.

Indigenous leaders know a lack of access to healthcare and substance abuse disorder treatment lead to chronic health conditions, like diabetes, heart disease, and asthma, which worsen COVID symptoms. Tribes have asked over and over for sufficient funding to address these health inequities, and they shouldn't have to ask anymore.

Indigenous leaders know that a lack of access to credit and capital prevents urban indigenous households and folks living on Tribal lands from building wealth like their White neighbors, who can more easily, therefore, weather the storm of unemployment.

Native communities have asked over and over to enforce fair lending laws and to ensure access to credit for minority borrowers, and they shouldn't have to ask anymore. Long before COVID, these inequities have harmed indigenous people. Our inaction has placed Tribal nations in the untenable position of having to ask for what they are already owed.

So let's take this extraordinary moment—a terrible moment but a moment of real opportunity, a moment when our country is called to respond to this terrible pandemic and to reckon with systemic inequities that have hurt Native people and even sought to erase them—and let's turn this moment to good.

We have an opportunity not only to address the public health and economic crisis of COVID but also to live up to our obligation to Tribes, like providing them with the tools to build resiliency in their communities.

First, we need to provide rapid, flexible support to Tribal governments so that they can respond to COVID-19 and provide essential services to Tribal members at the same time.

Second, let's live up to our promises and fully fund the Indian Health Service and the NAHASDA housing programs. When we do this, we will be addressing the shortage of physical and behavioral healthcare for young adults and parents and elders, and we will make it easier for families to find affordable safe places to live and to build wealth through homeownership.

We can do this. It is within our power. We can end this cycle of underinvestment and institutional violence. This is the best moment in a generation to accomplish this.

I am committed to lifting up the voices of indigenous leaders in Minnesota and around this country. I follow their lead, and I will continue to advocate for these changes because they are so long overdue.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to join me in this work.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

FOURTH OF JULY

Mrs. LOEFFLER. Mr. President, 160 years ago, Abraham Lincoln reminded us that "at all times . . . all American citizens are brothers of a common country, and should dwell together in the bonds of fraternal feeling."

That bond—our commitment to coming together to move our country forward, our embrace of the challenges our country faces because we know we will come out of these moments strong—has made the United States exceptional.

As we approach the Fourth of July holiday, I want to take a moment to recognize what makes America who she is today and the values that have allowed us to carry on the Great American Experiment for 244 years.

The United States—the shining city on a hill, the land of opportunity, the land of the free and the home of the brave, the red, white, and blue—our country is exceptional precisely because we have never settled for anything less.

It was that very reason it was Americans who first discovered electricity, built the airplane, put a man on the Moon, developed chemotherapy, and

that other countries look to us for leadership during troubled times. It is why we prevailed in two world wars, defeated the axis of evil, and have since maintained the greatest Armed Forces in the world. It is why the ideal of the American dream exists.

Importantly, it is the American people, past and present, who have shaped our American character—the 56 men who put their lives on the line to draft and sign the Declaration of Independence in 1776; the volunteer army of farmers and shopkeepers who defeated the British and today has grown into the best fighting force the world has ever seen.

Fifty-five Americans came together to write the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing the freedoms for Americans to worship, to speak out, to bear arms, and to peaceably assemble. In the years that followed, America fulfilled its promise to form a more perfect union while acknowledging it is not perfect but always striving to do better.

We ended the injustice of slavery; 100 years ago this year, gave women the right to vote; overcame the Great Depression; fought for the equal rights of all Americans during the civil rights movement; and persevered after September 11.

Today we still have those heroes who make America what she is today. We see these works in our midst every day: our service men and women who bravely protect us across the globe and keep the enemy away from our shores; the dedicated men and women of law enforcement who work tirelessly to keep our communities and our families safe; our teachers, who provide the gift of education to our youth; our doctors and nurses, who save lives every day and have bravely taken on the challenge of COVID-19.

American exceptionalism started with our humble beginnings, and it has endured throughout the challenges our country faces.

It is tempting to focus on the divisions in America today, but we have much more in common that unites us. This Fourth of July is a reminder of the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that all Americans deserve.

President Reagan once said:

Freedom is a fragile thing and is never more than one generation away from extinction. It is not ours by inheritance; it must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation, for it comes only once to a people.

I agree, and I hope this Fourth of July we can stand together, proud that we will strive to make this country a more perfect union.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

S. 4049

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to address a glaring inequality in the law—one that leaves our servicemembers with fewer protections from discrimination than civilians. On June

15, the Supreme Court issued a momentous decision—welcomed by Members of both parties—extending civil rights employment protections to LGBTQ individuals in workplaces across America. That decision, however, does not apply to servicemembers. That means our servicemembers, who often come from communities that have for generations bravely sacrificed for the United States, currently enjoy fewer statutory protections than their civilian counterparts.

Think about what that says about our country: The law treats the people willing to risk their lives to defend our freedoms as second class citizens. It is unconscionable, and it is un-American. In this moment of reckoning on civil rights, we must ensure those rights extend to all of our military servicemembers.

The push for the desegregation of our troops, for gender integration into combat, and for the repeal of don't ask, don't tell were all met with similar arguments about how increased opportunity for the group in question would hamper readiness, unit cohesion, or otherwise weaken the military. Those arguments have been proven wrong every single time.

It is, in fact, the lack of protections for these groups that hamper readiness. Without protections, an able platoon sergeant can be stigmatized and driven from the military because he is transgender. His years of experience and the immense investments the military has made in him can be erased with the stroke of a pen.

Our military has grown only stronger as it better represents our country. But, right now, in the year 2020, people who are willing to make extraordinary sacrifices for our freedoms are being told no simply because of who they are.

We must do better. And we can. We can make sure the National Defense Authorization Act includes discrimination protections for all servicemembers.

My amendment with Senator COLLINS would codify in the law that servicemembers of all races, religions, and sexes are protected from discrimination. It would affirm that Americans of every race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and national origin have the right to join and serve and sacrifice in our military.

I was proud to have Senator John McCain join me in leading similar legislation to protect transgender troops 3 years ago. The late Senator said: "Any member of the military who meets the medical and readiness standards should be allowed to serve—including those who are transgender." I hope this will be the year that we deliver the results he wanted for our troops.

Placing language safeguarding this right into the NDAA can help us begin to overcome an unfortunate legacy of creating artificial, blatantly unfair barriers to service by underrepresented groups. It is a legacy that continues to

this day with the Trump administration's ban on transgender servicemembers.

That discriminatory ban is not only an insult to members of the transgender community who have served our country; it is an insult to every LGBTQ person who has given their life to protect it. Arguments against open transgender service have no basis in experience or in science.

Transgender individuals served openly in the military for more than 2½ years without any readiness or cohesion issues. I know because I asked all four service chiefs and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and they all confirmed it. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mark Milley, who was then Chief of Staff of the Army, told me that he had received "precisely zero reports of issues of cohesion, discipline, [or] morale" caused by transgender individuals in the service.

The American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and other experts agree: There is no medically valid reason to exclude transgender individuals from military service. Anyone who can meet the military standards should be allowed to serve—and serve in an environment free from discrimination. It is that simple.

Our Armed Services should reflect the best of what this country has to offer—in their values and in their ranks. We cannot allow for laws that unnecessarily limit their ability to recruit and retain the best person for the job.

I ask my colleagues to support our troops with more than lip service. I ask my colleagues to extend to them protections from discrimination based on race, religion, or sex. These are people who are willing to fight for our country. These are people who are willing to die for our country. This body and our country must be willing to fight for them. My amendment will do exactly that. I ask all of you to support its inclusion in this year's NDAA.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I rise again to address another issue. I rise because, according to the Pentagon's recent biannual survey, almost 21,000 servicemembers were sexually assaulted in the year 2018. That was a 38-percent increase from the year before.

I rise because the current climate of retaliation in our armed services and the lack of justice provided by the chain of command meant nearly three-quarters of those assaults went unreported, and less than 10 percent of cases considered for command action went to trial—less than 10 percent.

I rise because I stood in this very Chamber in 2013 and shared essentially the same statistics.

Year after year, the leaders of our armed services come to Congress and commit to making things better. They commit to us in hearing after hearing:

We will get this right. Yet, year after year, thousands of servicemembers are raped and sexually assaulted, and their assailants are not held accountable.

In many of those cases, the assailant is someone in the survivor's chain of command—the same chain of command that will decide the case, picking judge, jury, prosecutor, defense counsel—all decided by a commander in that chain of command.

There is no other judicial system in America that would ever allow this to happen. This system is not delivering justice. The chain of command is not delivering justice. These decisions—these fundamental civil rights decisions—need to be made somewhere else. They need to be made by trained, impartial military professionals, prosecutors, lawyers—people who are trained to make this very hard decision.

We are asking survivors to come forward in an environment where they know that there is less than a 10-percent chance that the chain of command will try their assailant for a crime and—worse—that there is only a two in three chance that they themselves—themselves—will face retaliation.

Despite repeated efforts to stamp out the scourge of retaliation against military sexual assault survivors, the most recent Pentagon survey found that 64 percent of these survivors have experienced some form of retaliation for reporting the crime. This figure is statistically unchanged from 2016. It is unacceptable.

I ask you: Who is this system designed for?

I think so often about a Marine veteran who told me:

When I reported the assault, my command responded with retaliation . . . ostracism, intimidation, and isolation. The humiliation of the retaliation was worse than the assault because it was sanctioned from those same leaders I once would have risked my life for.

The climate of retaliation comes from the top. It comes from the chain of command. They should not be deciding these cases. They do not have the background or the impartiality necessary to deliver justice. This system is broken, and it is failing our servicemembers.

This Congress has passed and spent hundreds of millions of dollars on incremental reforms since 2013. During this time, an estimated 137,000 servicemembers have been assaulted.

Let me say that again. During that time, 137,000 servicemembers have been sexually assaulted.

What are we doing here? Can we not hold the U.S. military accountable? Can we not do our jobs? Can we not stand up for the men and women who risk their lives for us every day?

Incremental change that leaves the power in the hands of the chain of command is not enough. We have the proof and the evidence.

"We've got this ma'am; we've got this." They say it every year. They don't have it, and they haven't had it for the last 7 years we have been fo-

cused on this very issue. It does not do enough to protect our servicemembers from sexual assault in the ranks or to punish perpetrators who commit these violent crimes.

Just for a minute, imagine this is your daughter or your son. Imagine just for a minute that your children decide to go into the military. Do you think they will be protected?

My bill, the Military Justice Improvement Act, is being offered as an amendment to the NDAA. This amendment will professionalize how the military prosecutes serious crimes like sexual assault, and it will remove the systemic fear that survivors have to report these crimes. Survivors don't report these crimes because they fear the retaliation against them.

This bipartisan and commonsense reform leaves the majority of uniquely military crimes, as well as all crimes punishable by less than 1 year of confinement, within the chain of command. It would only move one decision—literally, one decision—that only 3 percent of commanders actually have the right to make, and that decision will be made by a trained military prosecutor.

These prosecutors, or military JAGS, are required to be licensed attorneys in good standing with their State bar associations and are subject to professional rules of ethics. Those are commonsense standards, but they are not the standards that commanders have to meet. Commanders aren't typically lawyers. They are not typically criminal lawyers. They are not trained in how to make this fundamental decision about whether a crime has been committed. So why wouldn't you let military police investigate the crime just as they do today?

They take that investigation and, instead of putting it on the commander's general counsel's desk, they will put it on a military prosecutor's desk. The military prosecutor gets to make a decision: yes or no; I can prosecute or I can't. Then, that file goes right back to the commander. So when the commander wants to do nonjudicial punishment, he gets to do it. Every time a prosecutor says there is no case here, he gets to have the same authority he has today.

Under today's standards, only 10 percent of these cases go to trial. That would mean the commanders don't get to make that one decision that 3 percent of them get to make 10 percent of the time because 90 percent of the time it comes right back to the commander to do whatever nonjudicial punishment he or she thinks is appropriate.

This is a very small but important change because when you make this change, the survivor sees that the decision isn't being made within her chain of command. She or he sees that the decision is being made by somebody trained to make the decision—someone who is actually a prosecutor. He or she will then believe it is worth reporting the crime.

So many of these crimes don't even get reported and, sadly, the percentage of those that are being reported is going up—the percentage of those reported confidentially. It doesn't show that there is any faith in the system if people will only report if they don't name their perpetrator.

This reform is nothing new. This reform has been done all across the world by our allies. Our allies in the United Kingdom, Canada, Israel, Germany, and Australia have all removed reporting and prosecution of violent sex crimes out of the chain of command. Leaders in those militaries have reported that these changes have not diminished their ability in any way. It has not diminished their commanders' ability to maintain good order and discipline, to train their troops, and to do what they are there for.

Congress owes our servicemembers a debt of gratitude that can never be fully repaid. These brave men and women who have experienced the unimaginable are counting on us this year to finally take real action. Until we do, we continue to fail in our responsibility to protect them.

Madam President, this is something we have worked on together for over 7 years. This is something that, on a bipartisan basis, this Chamber has worked on for 7 years. We have been denied a vote on this over the last 5 years—denied a vote on this the last 5 years. The military has fought tooth and nail to not put in these fundamental reforms. They ask us over and over: Trust us; we got this. Trust us; we got this.

They don't have it. They haven't had it, and they don't focus on it.

If you just look at the report from this year alone, we are up to 20,000—over 20,000—sexual assaults in the last year. The percentage of cases that are being reported confidentially is going up. The percentage of cases that are being reported openly is going down. The percentage of cases that are going to trial is going down. The percentage of cases ending in conviction is going down. So under no measure today has the military succeeded in this mission, under absolutely none. They say they got this. They don't have it. They never have. And if we don't do our job this year, they never will.

This is not something new. This is something that other countries that are our allies have done. It professionalizes the military. It gives hope to survivors. It creates permission for them to report these crimes. If more crimes are reported, more prosecutions will be completed, and more cases will end in conviction.

Send a message: Convict perpetrators. Protect survivors. Honor the sacrifice and legacy of every man and woman who serves in the military today who will give their life for this country. That is our responsibility.

I urge everyone in this Chamber to stand with our troops. Stand with the men and women who sacrifice every-

thing, and do the right thing. It is our job. We are supposed to provide oversight and accountability over the U.S. military. It is the Senate's job, and every year that we don't address this fundamental scourge is another year we fail.

I am tired of this Chamber failing our servicemembers. I am tired of our commanders and our military failing our servicemembers. We owe everything to them.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MCSALLY). The clerk will call the roll. The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, last night, the Senate approved legislation to extend the Paycheck Protection Program, better known as PPP, through August 8, while we continue bipartisan negotiations on a bill to provide additional assistance to our small businesses that have been especially hard hit by COVID-19 mitigation measures.

I very much hope that the House of Representatives will act quickly to extend this important lifeline for our small employers, as new PPP loans cannot be issued until the bill that passed the Senate last night is enacted and signed into law, even though approximately \$130 billion remains available for the program.

Let me, again, commend my partners in this endeavor, Senators MARCO RUBIO, BEN CARDIN, and JEANNE SHAHEEN, for their continued work on this vital program.

Back in March, the four of us formed a small business task force. We looked at ways that we could help our small employers and their employees survive this pandemic. We put forth a bold plan, the Paycheck Protection Program, to help small employers and their employees. Our concept was straightforward: provide forgivable loans to small employers to help them maintain that vital connection with their employees, so that both could rebound and thrive once the pandemic passes.

In some cases, that meant that a small business could retain an employee who, otherwise, would have been laid off. In others, it has meant that the small business could recall workers who had already been laid off. And in yet other cases, it allowed employers to continue to send paychecks to employees who had been furloughed so that we could keep that link between employers and their employees, so that when the reopening occurred, they could be reunited quickly and the business could get up and running much more rapidly.

The response to this program has been phenomenal. Since its launch in

early April, it has provided \$518 billion in forgivable loans to 4.8 million small employers across the Nation.

According to an ongoing U.S. Census Survey, nearly three out of every four small business respondents reported that they had received assistance under the PPP program. In Maine, nearly 27,000 small businesses have received forgivable loans, totaling more than \$2.2 billion. Just to give you an idea of how much of a stimulus that is, that is equal to almost half of the entire State budget. That works out to an average loan size of \$83,400, which translates into a small business with approximately seven employees. All told, this program is helping to sustain nearly 200,000 jobs in the State of Maine.

As Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin testified last month:

The [Paycheck Protection Program] is supporting the employment of approximately 50 million workers and more than 75 percent of small business payroll in all 50 states. This is an extraordinary achievement.

It is, indeed. It has made such a difference to our small employers. It has kept our small businesses afloat, prevented them from giving up and shuttering their doors forever, and provided paychecks to their employees.

When we first drafted this program in early March, we did not know how long government-ordered closures would last. In fact, most of them had not even gone into effect at the time that we drafted the law. We also did not know how severe the impacts of these government-ordered closures would be. We did not know how long the pandemic would last. How I wish that we could announce today that COVID-19 had been conquered; that America's small businesses were flourishing once again; and that the millions of jobs that they provide had been fully restored. Unfortunately, that is not the case, and we have a long road ahead of us.

According to a survey released last week by NFIB, an organization that is dedicated to providing a voice for America's small businesses, half of its members anticipate needing additional financial support in the next 12 months.

I fear that, if Congress fails to act, despite our good work to date, millions of our small businesses will be put at risk, and millions of jobs will be lost.

A case study of how the pandemic has threatened the viability of small businesses can be found in Maine's tourism sector. Tourism is one of our State's largest economic sectors. It supports 110,000 jobs. That is one out of every six jobs in our State. In 2018, total tourism expenditures exceeded \$6.2 billion. That is \$7 million per day.

In late March, there was the expectation that the 2020 tourism season would certainly be lower than the norm but active enough for the tourism businesses to survive. But, as the Fourth of July draws closer, near empty hotels, inns, B&Bs, and restaurants portend a long-lasting disaster, as many of our

State's seasonal businesses rely on the busy summer season and fall season to pay their major bills for the year, including their mortgage and property taxes, not to mention their all-important employees.

Two weeks ago, a Maine innkeeper in York County told me that her inn would normally have a 94-percent occupancy rate at this point in the summer. She currently has an occupancy rate of 6 percent.

As one observer put it, the word "Vacationland," which appears on our license plates in Maine, might well be replaced with "Vacancy Land."

I have heard from so many hotel owners throughout Maine, and their stories all have a familiar theme: Reservations made months ago for July and August are being canceled, and cancellations for the fall are also starting to come in. In addition to putting hotel staff at risk of losing their jobs, or having their hours cut drastically, or not being hired in the first place, the vendors that supply these establishments are losing sales. Local retailers and restaurants are losing summer customers. Planned improvements and expansions are being postponed, causing harm for local tradespeople.

I talked to a restaurant owner who operates a wonderful restaurant in Portland. Right now, she has to depend on outside seating and lives in fear of a bad storm, where people won't be able to eat outside. Only slowly is Maine allowing in-restaurant eating to resume in the most populous parts of our State. All of us understand that we have to put the health of people first, but these restaurant owners are getting desperate, and they are trying very hard to comply with all the CDC regulations.

There is no doubt that similar disruptions are occurring across the country. That is why it is so important that we reach bipartisan agreement to allow those small businesses that have been especially hard hit by the pandemic to receive an additional forgivable loan. As we continue our bipartisan negotiations on such a plan, I have come to the floor to outline some of my own priorities for a second Paycheck Protection Program loan.

First, I do believe that we will achieve bipartisan agreement to allow the hardest hit small business employers—those who have seen their revenues decline by 50 percent or more in any quarter this year compared to the same quarter last year—to receive an additional PPP loan. This is absolutely essential to the ability of these businesses to survive as the fight against COVID-19 continues.

Second, because we must stretch the \$130 billion that remains in the PPP funds as far as we possibly can, I support generally limiting eligibility to entities that have 300, rather than 500 or fewer, employees with a special provision for seasonal employers.

Third, I believe that we need to expand forgivable PPP expenses in some

commonsense ways. For example, we should allow forgiveness for supplier costs and investments in facility modifications and personal protective equipment that employers are buying to protect their employees and their customers, such as plexiglass shields, patio installations for outdoor dining, masks, gloves—that kind of equipment. It is especially important to restaurants facing dining restrictions and those struggling to get the high-quality food supply that they need. We should also clarify that employer-provided group health benefits are included in forgivable payroll costs.

Fourth, we should extend the PPP to small 501(c)(6) organizations that are not lobby organizations. I am talking about local chambers of commerce, business leagues, economic development associations, and boards of trade, which are doing a great job but are struggling to themselves survive.

Fifth, we should clarify in statute that forgivable loan funds can be spent through December 31 and allow borrowers to apply for loan forgiveness, at the time of their choosing, after 8 weeks from loan origination.

Finally, to ensure transparency in the PPP loan program, we should require the Small Business Administration to comply with data and information requests from the Government Accountability Office or Federal inspectors general within 15 days.

There are many other ideas that the four of us who are members of the Small Business Task Force are taking a look at, but today, I just wanted to outline for my colleagues some ideas that I am particularly interested in including in this bill.

As the shutdowns have grown longer, it has become clear that millions of small employers need additional help if they are to keep their heads above water and survive. It also has been clear that many of these employers must make substantial investments to modify their operations, to protect their employees and customers, to mitigate the spread of the COVID virus.

Most of all, we need to always keep in mind that we are talking about employees. It is the small businesses of our country that employ the majority of the people who are working.

We are close to reaching a bipartisan agreement, and I know we are going to be working very hard over the recess to do so. I also know that, for small businesses that are struggling, such an agreement cannot come soon enough.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues—Senator MARCO RUBIO, Senator BEN CARDIN, Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN—for their dedication and good-faith efforts to reach an agreement.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I came before the Chamber yesterday and made the case as to why Congress needs to begin negotiations on another

COVID-19 emergency supplemental bill and to do it now. The needs are real. They are immediate. In fact, when the House passed the Heroes Act, we should have begun those negotiations in the first week after it had passed it, but we didn't. We should have begun the negotiations in the second week after it had passed it, but we didn't. We should have begun the negotiations in the third week after it had passed it, but we didn't—and the fourth and the fifth and the sixth.

Every day, I talk with Vermonters, sometimes hundreds at a time in statewide conference calls. From small businesses, to families, to schools, to hospitals, to Federal employees, I hear their urgent needs. So I want to talk today about just one of those urgent needs—funding for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, USCIS.

It plays an important role in our Nation's immigration system. It processes requests for immigration benefits, American citizenship, and it screens asylum seekers. The agency is staffed by more than 19,000 dedicated men and women across the country, including roughly 1,700 in my home State of Vermont.

Last Friday, furlough notices were sent out to 13,350 of the 19,000 USCIS employees. They are effective next month, on August 3. That is just 4 weeks from now. In Vermont, 1,111 men and women received this notice, which is over 65 percent of the USCIS workforce in Vermont. These are men and women who, day after day, do important work for the Nation. They have continued to do that work every day even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

And they have been told, even though they have been doing the work loyally and effectively, after August 3, a month from now, they can no longer do their job; they will no longer receive a paycheck.

Nationwide these are 13,350 new and urgent reasons why the Senate must act on our Nation's real and immediate needs, and the Senate majority must make that possible now. We have lost 6 weeks since the House acted on this. It is time the Senate acts.

I have been ringing the alarm bells for more than a month on this issue. We know that due to declining revenue, immigration-related application fees coming into USCIS, the agency is facing a budget shortfall of \$1.2 billion, and the furlough notices that were suddenly sent out last week are the result of this shortfall. USCIS is simply saying they can't pay employees with revenues they do not have.

I would remind everybody the shortfall is not entirely due to COVID-19. The agency has not lived within its budget for the last 3 years of this administration, and, frankly, the Trump administration's mismanagement and extreme immigration policies have only worsened the situation.

As part of the President's efforts to erase our identity as a nation of immigrants, he has not just tried to shut

our Nation's doors to asylum seekers and refugees, he has attempted to restrict almost all immigration to this country.

He has created obstacles for immigrant workers, created a wealth test for immigrants, even exploited the current public health emergency to impose additional immigration restrictions that have nothing to do with public health.

And because USCIS has not been able to issue visas or process other immigration benefits as they normally do as a result of President Trump's anti-immigrant policies, revenue, of course, has fallen.

No matter the cause, the budget shortfall is real. We have to address it. Furloughs would not only disrupt the processing of immigration benefits and American citizenship and other critical services provided by USCIS, but it is going to cause unnecessary hardships on thousands of Federal employees and Federal contractors. It is going to come at a time when our Nation is already dealing with record job losses.

The loss of these valuable jobs will also cause hardship to the communities across the Nation where these Federal workers live and work. These are communities already struggling with the pandemic. They were dealing with people who have skills that have been built up over years of experience.

So let's craft a fair, responsible solution to this problem. That would require emergency appropriations and accompanying legislation to ensure transparency and accountability.

Time is of the essence. I know, as vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee, we have agreement on the vast majority of the possible appropriations bills. There has been a concern by the Republican majority not to bring them up because they do not want something on COVID.

Well, every Senator can go home and talk to their people in their State. They will hear, as I do every single day in my calls from Vermonters, there is a need to do something regarding COVID.

Now, there have been numerous calls by myself and the Democratic leadership in the Senate, and despite those calls, the White House and the Republican majority have refused to move forward on a fourth COVID-19 emergency appropriations bill where we could address this and other critical issues caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

We should not wait any longer. In fact, we must not wait any longer. I call on Majority Leader McCONNELL to begin bipartisan negotiations on a COVID-19 emergency relief bill now so we can solve this problem before furloughs are necessary.

The Senate is about to recess for 2 weeks, but that doesn't mean our work stops. With millions of people working from home due to the coronavirus, including in the U.S. Senate, we have shown that we can do our job from wherever we are located.

I know, on the major COVID bill, my staff and I worked 7 days a week, sometimes very late into the night, and we are all in separate locations, but we got it done, and we got an appropriations bill through here that almost all Republicans and Democrats voted for because people worked together. We worked together. We passed legislation this country needed.

We showed it can be done, so we can and we should begin bipartisan, bicameral negotiations. Do it during the next 2 weeks so that when the Senate is back in session, we have legislation to consider and debate. We can enact the bill into law expeditiously.

If there are amendments people want or things they want to change, vote them up or vote them down. We should be willing to stand here and vote, and then we can enact a bill into law and do it expeditiously.

The American people deserve no less. The dedicated men and women at USCIS deserve no less, but I would say the men and women of every single one of our States deserve no less.

There are 100 of us here. We have shown we can work together. We have done it before. We have done it with appropriations bills. We sat here, voted for or against amendments, and then did what is best for the country. Let's do it. Let's not be afraid to vote.

I see my distinguished friend from Texas on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I thank my friend from Vermont for his courtesy.

Yesterday, Texas reported almost 7,000 new coronavirus cases, setting a new single-day record.

As cases have climbed in recent weeks, it has become clear that we need to take what we have learned about this virus and adjust our strategy.

In the beginning, we were still learning about this novel virus and how it is transmitted, while also trying to maximize scarce resources. I think the best analogy I can think of—we were trying to design and build an airplane while we were flying it.

Because of that, only individuals with symptoms or who had been in contact with a person who had tested positive could be tested themselves, but we know a lot has changed in the last few months. We have learned that individuals can have the virus even if they aren't showing symptoms.

Recent studies in North Carolina and New York have shown that somewhere between 12 and 20 percent of people could have the COVID-19 antibodies. In other words, they have had the virus, and they recovered, but they didn't even know they were sick in the first place, but the problem is they can still spread it to others.

As our knowledge about the coronavirus has increased, so have our testing capacities, but I think it is im-

portant to take stock of where we are and to see how we need to adjust further to, again, what we have learned by hard experience.

On Sunday, I traveled to Dallas, TX, with Vice President MIKE PENCE for a briefing on the coronavirus response efforts, and we were joined by two of those members—Dr. Deborah Birx and HUD Secretary Dr. Ben Carson.

On the flight down, I was able to spend some time talking with Dr. Birx about testing strategies and the ways we can more effectively identify positive cases and stop the spread, especially among asymptomatic individuals who have no incentive, no motivation to request a test in the first place. If I am feeling well, why would I go ask for a coronavirus test unless I am just curious. That is the conundrum.

Dr. Birx talked about the concept of pool testing, which is one of the most efficient ways to test large numbers of people using the least amount of time and resources.

Let's say, for example, that a number of employees at a meat packing plant are tested simultaneously. Rather than running each sample individually to see if any of the employees had the virus, you would pool the sample together and run it as a group. If the pool sample comes back negative, you know that each individual within that pool is negative. And if it comes back positive, each sample is run individually to identify positive cases.

But this is a way to magnify the number of testing cases we can do by maybe as much as a factor of 10.

This pool-testing model makes it much easier to conduct repeated tests for individuals in a single setting such as workplaces, schools, or nursing homes.

This is exactly the kind of strategy we are going to need as we contemplate sending our children back to school.

Dr. Birx was recently quoted as saying: "If you look around the globe, the way people are doing a million tests or 10 million tests is they're doing pooling."

So as we are seeing spikes in Texas and a number of other States across the country, it is clear we need to adapt to everything we have learned and embrace a new and different strategy. We need more efficient and effective ways to test broad swaths of people so we can identify positive cases as soon as possible.

Now, we know this virus is particularly deadly if you are over 80 years old or if you have underlying health problems. For the rest of us, honestly, if you get symptoms, you are probably going to recover. Sadly, some will have to be hospitalized, but, actually, the level of fatalities we have seen from the coronavirus infection have remained remarkably low because our healthcare providers have discovered new treatments and new ways to save lives.

A data scientist and associate professor at Cornell University named

Peter Frazier has said about pool testing that “if you don’t test people without symptoms and focus only on symptomatic people, then you miss the epidemic and continue spreading.”

We need to constantly reevaluate and adapt our strategy to ensure that we are identifying cases as soon as possible to stop the spread and to protect the most vulnerable among us.

I know the administration and the task force are working around the clock on this, but to be frank, we need to up our game, and I hope we will focus on developing a comprehensive testing strategy based on what we have learned from this hard experience to combat the rise in cases and community spread we are seeing in places like Texas and elsewhere.

S. 4049

Madam President, this week, the Senate is fulfilling one of our most basic responsibilities—and that is to support our common defense.

Passing the strong, strategic, and bipartisan national defense authorization bill is something we have done for the last 60 years. It is how this body has ensured that generations of servicemembers would be paid, that they would have the equipment and training they need, as well as the weapons, the planes, and the ships to bring them home safely. It is how we have taken stock of the evolving threat landscape and made adjustments to ensure that our military remains the very best in the world. It is a belief in peace through strength.

We know our adversaries are constantly watching us to see whether we are hesitant or pulling back from our world leadership or maybe we are not investing like they are in modern weapons systems that can defeat our defenses.

Well, we know for all the technologies and innovation that have made our lives simpler and more efficient, that these changes in technology have made safeguarding our national security that much more challenging.

We are seeing new technologies on the battlefield, and the race to develop next-generation weapons, such as hypersonic missiles, has allowed our competitors to get a few steps ahead of us. The bottom line is, unless we continue our investment and our determination to remain No. 1, we are going to be losing ground against our adversaries. We no longer enjoy the across-the-board strategic edge that we used to have, and it is time for us to take bold action to reverse the tide before it is too late. That is what I believe we can achieve with this year’s National Defense Authorization bill.

I appreciate Chairman INHOFE and the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which operates almost entirely on a bipartisan basis. It really is a great tradition and one we don’t want to break, passing the Defense authorization bill each year.

It also provides funding to both modernize and grow our aging fleet, so we

can send our troops around the world with the confidence that they have the best equipment available.

I’m glad this legislation includes a provision I offered to increase the number of new F-35 aircraft. When we talk about providing our servicemembers with the best possible equipment, the F-35 is a prime example. This 5th generation fighter gives our servicemembers an edge in stealth, surveillance, and weapons systems.

Growing our F-35 fleet has been a priority for a number of years, and this legislation will continue moving us in the right direction. These aircraft will be made by hardworking Texans in Fort Worth, and provide our servicemembers around the world with the most advanced and capable aircraft to see them through their missions.

But maintaining a competitive edge requires much more than a fleet of top of the line aircraft or a stockpile of innovative weapons. It also requires end to end security in our supply chains.

The COVID-19 pandemic has really shone a light on the vulnerabilities that come from a reliance on other countries for critical manufacturing. We lean heavily on China and other countries for masks, gloves, gowns, ventilators—all the equipment we’ve needed over the past few months. That reliance has led to a shortage of these supplies at the most critical time, and forced our medical workers to go into battle without their traditional armor.

It’s been a wake-up call on supply chain vulnerabilities, and a reminder that we need to keep our most critical supply chains right here at home. One area where we need improvement is with 5G. For all the rewards that come with this advanced technology, there are also a lot of risks, and we need to ensure we’re protecting this critical asset. That’s why Senators BURR, WARNER, and I introduced the Secure 5G and Beyond Act, which is now law.

It requires the President to develop a strategy to ensure the security of next generation telecom systems, and help our allies protect their systems as well. But I believe we need to take this a step further, and safeguard not only the networks themselves but the supply chains that produce them. The reality is, a lack of domestic industry has caused the U.S. to fall behind our foreign adversaries in developing 5G technologies.

I’m glad the NDAA includes an amendment I offered to support these critical supply chains. It would give the Department of Defense the flexibility to partner with industry for commercial development and deployment of 5G technologies. This will ensure we’re investing in American companies to strengthen and secure our critical networks, which are vital not only to our national security, but to our everyday lives.

Beyond supporting 5G, another critical supply chain we need to support is for semiconductors.

These devices are everywhere—they’re the underlying technology in

everything from our cell phones, to computers, to cell towers, to missile defense systems. Despite the pervasiveness of these devices in our everyday lives, we’re largely relying on other countries to manufacture them. Since 2000, the U.S. has dropped from producing roughly a quarter of the world’s semiconductors to only 12 percent.

Meanwhile, China has gone from manufacturing zero chips to 16 percent of the world’s supply, and plans to invest another \$1.4 trillion in semiconductor technologies. America has lost ground to global competitors, and unless the U.S. takes action, it’s estimated that by 2030, 83 percent of global semiconductor manufacturing capacity will be in Asia. We need to bring back some of the talent that was first created here in the U.S.

Of course, that’s much easier said than done. Building a new foundry is a very expensive undertaking, and it’s going to require an investment from the federal government.

That’s why Senator WARNER and I introduced the CHIPS for America Act, and I hope we can include a version of this bill as an amendment to the NDAA. This would create a federal incentive program through the Department of Commerce to encourage semiconductor manufacturing in the U.S.

In short, this would help stimulate domestic advanced semiconductor manufacturing, and boost both our national security and global competitiveness.

I mentioned, these devices are everywhere—military systems, telecommunications, healthcare, agriculture, manufacturing. Virtually every industry stands to benefit from a more secure semiconductor supply chain and our economy would reap the benefits of bringing these manufacturing jobs back to the United States.

This legislation would serve as a boon to both our national security and our economy, and I’m hoping it will be included as part of the NDAA.

I’d like to once again thank Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED for upholding the now 60-year tradition of a bipartisan process to get this legislation over the finish line on time. I’m glad this legislation prioritizes advancements in the critical technologies that will modernize our national defense, and restore our competitive edge.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, first of all, I would make a comment in reaction to the comments of our good friend from Texas. What he says is true, and the American people are not aware—and I don’t say this critically of the previous administration—but during the Obama administration, his top priority was not really defense. He had his own agenda, and, consequently, we suffered at that time.

In the last 5 years, which would have been from 2010 to 2015, he reduced the

funding of our military by 25 percent. What people don't realize is, during that same timeframe, Russia increased theirs by 34 percent, and China increased the funding of their military by 83 percent. That put us in a situation in which we have to do what we are doing, and that is why this and the last bills have been very important.

We are still working on the National Defense Authorization Act. I consider it to be the most important bill of the year. I know my colleagues agree with me that this is very significant, and this is something that we know is eventually going to pass. This will be the 60th consecutive year.

Our military is the best in the world. This week, with this bill, we are going to make sure it stays that way. The goal of having a strong military is deterrence—to make sure that we don't have to use it—and to send a signal to our enemies that they can't win against us. This is the message we need to send today, tomorrow, and forever. That is what the national defense strategy tells us.

I don't have the national defense strategy book here, but we have been adhering to it. It is a strategy that was put together a few years ago by 12 Democrats, 12 Republicans, and all the experts in the field, and we have been using it as our model ever since. So we want to make sure that we have enough ships and planes and everything in place.

China and Russia have caught up in some areas, and I think it is important, as the Senator from Texas said about the hypersonic weapons, that we are talking about offensive and defensive weapons; we are talking about something that is state of the art. They actually are ahead of us right now, but with this bill we are going to get caught up.

Our superiority rests on our staying ahead of our competition. We ceded that advantage under the last administration, and we are going to correct that. That is where we are right now.

I see the minority leader is here, and I would like to propose a unanimous consent request.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—AMENDMENTS
EN BLOC

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that, at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader, the following amendments be made pending en bloc and the Senate vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed without intervening action or debate: Paul amendment No. 2011; Sanders amendment No. 1790; third, Cornyn-Schumer-Cotton amendment No. 2244.

I further ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be called up en bloc and the Senate vote on adoption of the amendments en bloc with no intervening action or debate.

I hesitate to do this. It will take me a minute to actually name all of the amendments because it is important

for our Members who are watching to be aware of where they stand in line.

I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be called up en bloc and the Senate vote on adoption of the amendments en bloc with no intervening action or debate: Moran, No. 1694; Hyde-Smith, No. 1881; Romney, No. 1883; Portman, No. 1891; Kennedy, No. 1987; Romney, No. 2018; Sullivan, No. 2391; Johnson, No. 2077; Wicker, No. 2178; Fischer, No. 2231; Risch, No. 2238; Gardner, No. 2241; Portman, No. 2243; Inhofe-Reed, No. 2248; Peters, No. 1753; Warner, No. 1803; Coons, No. 1808; Warner, No. 1907; Tester, No. 1968; Bennet, No. 1977; Smith, No. 2058; Cortez Masto, No. 2186; King, No. 2215; Merkley, No. 2251; Cantwell, No. 2255; Cantwell, No. 2256; Hirono, No. 2269; Menendez, No. 2270, and Peters, No. 2275.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Reserving the right to object, while I know the committee is working hard and I know the Senator from Oklahoma and the Senator from Rhode Island are working hard together in a very good way, I know they have been trying to work up an agreement on three amendments to come, as well as a managers' package, but there are certain amendments that our side feels should be debated.

In a moment I will ask the chairman to modify his request to include reasonable numbers of amendments that we believe should have rollcall votes. None of these are "gotcha" amendments. None of these are extraneous. They are not dealing with impeachment or the records of the President or anything like that. Every one of them is related to the NDAA bill, and there is sincere feeling on our side that these amendments should be debated and voted on.

This is not an attempt to block or obstruct; this is an attempt to come together. As we know, to make this work, we need bipartisan agreement. All of them, as I said, are related to the NDAA bill.

The modification I am asking for also includes the two Republican amendments, one from Senator CORNYN and one from Senator PAUL.

I appreciate the chairman's desire to start voting on these amendments, but I hope he will modify his request so that several more Members of the Senate on both sides of the aisle can amend the bill as well, and we can move forward.

So I ask this question of my friend the chairman: Will the Senator modify his request to include the following amendments to be called up and voted on in relation to Sanders No. 1788, in lieu of Sanders amendment No. 1790—that is the 10 percent cut to the Pentagon; Tester No. 1972 on Agent Orange; Shaheen No. 1729 on the PFAS study; Gillibrand No. 1755 on transgender policy; Manchin No. 2361 on NNSA; Menendez No. 2396 on the Bounty Act; Van Hollen-Rubio No. 1845

on the DETER Act; and Schatz-Murkowski No. 2252 on the section 1033 program?

I ask the Senator to modify his request to add those amendments, and then Members on our side who have serious concerns can have their amendments considered.

Mr. INHOFE. First of all, let me respond by saying that this has been a long process, and it is one that has involved leadership on both sides, and we are attempting to do that. I think that by looking at the list I have read off, the Senator will see a lot of Democrats and a lot of Republicans there. For that reason I think we have an adequate number that several of us have agreed on, so I would object to modification of my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection to the modification is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. SCHUMER. Reserving the right to object, I hope we can continue these discussions in a productive and fruitful way, but at this point I must object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. INHOFE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

RUSSIA

Mr. KAINÉ. Madam President, I rise to speak about the disturbing reporting regarding Russian efforts to harm Americans in Afghanistan through payments to the Taliban and the Haqqani network. This is deadly serious and we—the Congress and the American public—must get answers to a number of questions.

When did the United States first receive information suggesting that Russia was providing financial support to Taliban or HQN operatives to kill American troops?

What investigation has been done by DOD or intel agencies to corroborate the charge?

What investigations have been done into the deaths of U.S. troops in Afghanistan during the relevant time period to determine whether they might be linked to Russian payments?

Was information about this allegation contained in the President's daily briefing in late February? If so, why are the President and the White House maintaining so strongly that the President was never briefed?

When did the United States first brief allies—specifically, the United Kingdom—on the intelligence concerning the Russian bounty allegations?

What events led to an administrative interagency meeting on this topic in late March?

What options were explored at that meeting? Were any undertaken?

To the extent that there is a difference of opinion about the existence of such a program among U.S. agencies, what explains the differing conclusions?

Did President Trump discuss the matter in any of the numerous phone

calls he had with Russian President Putin from late March through this month?

If the President knew of the concern, why did he persist in trying to get Russia invited as a participant to the G7 meeting to be held in the United States this fall?

Why hasn't the President condemned the existence of any such program or at least pledged that there would be serious consequences if such a program existed?

That Russia might behave in a hostile manner toward U.S. troops in Afghanistan would not be a surprise based upon Russia's track record of bad behavior all over the globe, but what has been surprising has been the administration's actions regarding this explosive allegation, and I believe the Senate must get to the bottom of it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LOEFFLER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, since last week, the Senate—ostensibly one of the great deliberative bodies in the world—supposedly has been “debating” the \$740 billion National Defense Authorization Act. It has been a very, very silent debate because of the 700 amendments that have been filed to this bill. There have been no rollcall votes on any of them. I do understand that in the managers' amendment, some of the noncontroversial, non-significant amendments have been accepted and absorbed, and that is fine. We have had a vigorous debate, but nobody in the world has heard that debate because there has not been one amendment here on the floor.

Knowing the way the Senate does business, I worry very much—and I hope I am wrong, and I will do my best to prevent it, but I worry very much that we are supposed to be getting out of here for the Fourth of July break tomorrow night. Right now, it is a little after 2 p.m. on Wednesday, and we are out of here on Thursday.

Given the fact that we are talking about 53 percent of the discretionary budget of the U.S.A., I am just a little bit worried about how many real amendments, significant amendments, are going to be offered.

Let us be clear that over the last year, we have been part of what I consider to be the biggest do-nothing Senate in the modern history of this country. This country faces enormous crises in terms of the pandemic, faces enormous crises in terms of an economic meltdown, enormous crises in terms of racial injustice and police brutality, enormous crises in terms of being the

only major country on Earth not to guarantee healthcare to all people as a human right, and enormous crises that in Siberia last week, the temperature was 100 degrees, which is frightening the scientific community because they understand this is the tip of the iceberg regarding climate change. We have all these crises out there, and nothing much happens here in the Senate.

Well, I think maybe it might be a good idea to start some real debate right here. I have introduced six amendments that are significant. I will discuss each of them. Other Members, Democrats and Republicans, have also introduced significant amendments.

Given the fact we have done virtually nothing over the last year, I think it is not inappropriate to have some serious debate on one of the very major pieces of legislation we will be dealing with.

We are talking about a bill that will spend some \$740 billion. That is more money in terms of military spending than the next 11 nations combined. Does anybody have a problem with that? Some of us do. Maybe others don't. Let's debate it.

We are talking about a bill that will be spending more money on the Pentagon than we did during the height of the Cold War and the height of the wars in Vietnam and Korea. Does anyone have a problem with that? Well, I do. Maybe some other people do. Maybe you don't. Tell me why you think we should be spending more money on the military today in terms of inflation than we did during the war in Vietnam. Let's debate it.

We are talking about a bill that will provide 53 percent of the entire discretionary budget to the bloat and wasteful Pentagon at a time when the Defense Department cannot even pass an independent audit. We have a huge budget for the Pentagon. They cannot pass an independent audit, and the response of the Senate is, well, let's give them even more money. It may make sense to some people. It doesn't make sense to me.

In my view, it would be rather disgraceful for us to leave town, recess the Senate for 2 weeks without getting a vote on a single amendment and then come back in a couple of weeks to pass a \$740 billion Defense bill without any opportunity to amend that bill.

If the horrific pandemic that we are now experiencing, where tens of thousands of people are coming down with the virus every single day—if the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that national security, the well-being of our people, and protecting our people is a lot more than just building bombs and missiles and jet fighters and tanks and submarines. Our people are in trouble today in an unprecedented way with the pandemic and with an economic meltdown in which tens of millions of people have lost their jobs over the last couple of months. We have to focus on how we protect those people. It is not just spending money on planes and guns and bombs.

In order to begin the process of addressing some of the most important issues facing our country, I have introduced five amendments, all of which I think are important and all of which I believe need to have a vote and a debate. Let me very briefly explain what those amendments are and what they would do.

The first amendment would reduce the military budget by 10 percent and use that \$74 billion in savings to invest in distressed communities in every State in this country that have been ravaged by extreme poverty, mass incarceration, deindustrialization, and decades of neglect.

It is no secret to anybody that the American people are hurting all across this country. We have communities where unemployment today is 20, 25, 30 percent, where people are sleeping out on the streets, where schools are underfunded, where decent-quality childcare is virtually not available, and where air and water pollution is rampant. It is time that we stop turning our backs on those communities.

What we are doing right now is focusing attention on the fact that 40 million Americans are living in poverty. Half of our people are living paycheck to paycheck. And maybe—just maybe—instead of investing more money in nuclear weapons and submarines and God knows what else, maybe we want to invest in our own people, in jobs and healthcare and education, so that they can live their lives with dignity and security.

I believe right now, in the midst of all of the crises this country faces—the crisis of the pandemic, the crisis of the economic meltdown, the crisis of racial injustice, the crisis of 100 million people being uninsured or underinsured, the crisis of climate change—I think the American people want real transformation. They are tired of the status quo. They want a government that represents all of us, not the 1 percent and wealthy campaign contributors.

I do understand that the people behind this military budget who love it so much are the military-industrial complex and the defense contractors. They are doing phenomenally well. It is a great budget for them. Their CEOs make tens of millions of dollars a year. They make huge profits every single year. It is a good budget for them. But maybe we may want to get our priorities right and have a good budget for working families and low-income families in America. That is what my amendment does.

This amendment is being cosponsored by Senators MARKEY and WARREN. It is also being supported by over 60 organizations throughout this country representing millions and millions of people, including organizations like Public Citizen, Union of Concerned Scientists, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the Coalition on Human Needs. These organizations are saying that maybe—just maybe—instead of investing in weapons of destruction, instead

of spending more money on the military than the next 11 nations combined, maybe we should invest in our people.

What this amendment would do is provide funding, again, for 1,000 distressed communities, from Vermont to Oklahoma, which would receive Federal funding to hire more public school teachers, provide nutritious meals to children and parents, and offer free tuition to public colleges, universities, or trade schools.

At this pivotal moment in American history, we have to make a fundamental decision that we want to continue spending billions on endless wars in the Middle East, on weapons of mass destruction—of which we have more than enough—or do we provide decent jobs and education and healthcare for millions of people in our country?

Further, a major reason why there is so much waste, fraud, and abuse at the Pentagon is, in fact, that the Defense Department remains the only Federal agency in America that hasn't been able to pass an independent audit, which deals with the second amendment that I have introduced.

I don't think it is too much to say that the largest agency of the Federal Government has to pass an independent audit.

There is nobody in the Senate who does not believe there is massive waste and fraud at the Pentagon. Defense contractor after defense contractor has pled guilty to fraud. We have massive cost overruns.

In the second amendment that I am offering, which has been cosponsored by Senator GRASSLEY, a longtime Republican leader here; Senator LEE, a Republican from Utah; and Senator WYDEN, of Oregon, all that we are asking is that there be an independent audit of the Defense Department and that it be completed no later than fiscal year 2025. It is not a very radical idea.

The third amendment I am offering is one that, I would hope and expect, would have wide support right here. I think it does have support among the American people, and it certainly has widespread support among the medical community and the epidemiologists of this country.

Just yesterday, I was participating in a hearing of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. We had the leading experts in this country, including several representatives of the Trump administration—Dr. Fauci and others—talking about the pandemic and what we could do about it. There was widespread consensus. Nobody, I think, has any doubt anymore, except maybe Donald Trump, that masks are a very, very important preventive measure. They are not going to solve all of the problems, but the evidence is overwhelming that the people who wear masks in public, when they are around other people, are less likely to transmit the virus or to receive the virus. Nobody doubts that anymore.

So the question that we have to ask ourselves is this: How does it happen that, in the wealthiest country in the history of the world and with the strongest economy in the world, we have doctors and nurses today who are dealing with people with COVID-19 and don't even have the personal protective equipment that they need? How in God's name does that happen?

We are spending 18 percent of our GDP on healthcare—twice as much as any other country. Yet we cannot provide a \$1 mask to a doctor or to a nurse whose life is at stake. It is not only doctors and nurses.

What a number of countries around the world are doing, which is very smart, is producing or acquiring large numbers of high-quality masks, and they are distributing those masks to all of the households in their countries. We should be making sure that every household in this country has the masks that each needs. That will save lives. There is an estimate from the University of Washington that it could save 30,000 lives during this pandemic if 95 percent of the American people were to wear masks. It would also save us a substantial sum of money because it is a lot cheaper to invest in masks than in the hospitalizations for those who have the virus. I should mention that other countries that are not as wealthy as we are—countries like South Korea, France, Turkey, Austria, and others—are doing just that.

Again, this is an idea that has won support from not only Dr. Fauci but from other leading healthcare experts who testified before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions yesterday. That is the third amendment—making sure that we utilize the Defense Production Act to produce the masks that our medical professionals and the American people need. We can save tens of thousands of lives and hundreds of billions of dollars by doing it.

The fourth amendment I have filed would prohibit funding for military aid and logistical support for the disastrous, Saudi-led war in Yemen. I believe it is past time that we put an end to our unconstitutional and unauthorized participation in this war.

On this issue, I am certainly not alone. A bipartisan majority of the U.S. Senate has already voted three times—not once, not twice, but three times—to halt all U.S. military support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. It is time for us to do that again—this time, not just in words but in action. We should have no money going toward U.S. participation in this horrible war, which is destroying a nation with some of the poorest, most desperate people on Earth.

So that is the fourth amendment, and I think it would be hard for anybody here to deny that it is an important amendment. This has already been, in one form or another, passed three times. So let's get some teeth into it.

The last amendment that I have filed would reduce the defense budget by one-tenth of 1 percent—not a lot of money—and use that money to make our Nation safer by reaching out to people throughout the world and expanding educational and cultural exchange programs.

In other words, the theory behind this whole bill is that, by spending \$740 billion on the building of planes and tanks and guns and the most sophisticated weapons of mass destruction in the history of the world, it will make us safer. Well, I am not so sure. Maybe what makes us safer is when we break down the fears and the hatred that exist between peoples all over the world. Maybe what makes us safer is when we get to know each other—that is, as human beings—whether we are Chinese or Russians or Iranians or Brazilians or Canadians. Maybe we all share the same human aspirations.

Throughout history, it has always been easy to demonize people you don't know—always easy. That is what demagogues have always done. We are fearful of Jews, of Blacks, of the Irish, of Italians, and of gay people. It is so easy to demonize people with whom we are not comfortable and don't know. They are not in our communities, and we don't know anybody. Let's demonize the people of Iran, and let's demonize the people of China and Russia.

This is not saying that I or anybody else here is in agreement with their policies, but are weapons the only approach we have toward them? Yes, we need a strong military, and I believe in a strong military. Do you know what I also believe? When we have kids from the United States who go to other countries and when other countries send their kids, their farmers, their doctors, their nurses to America and when we get to know each other, we have a shot at breaking down the irrational hatred which foments so many problems throughout the world.

As a former mayor, I can tell you—and I am not alone—that this idea of sister cities is certainly not a radical idea. I suspect that almost everybody here in the Senate comes from a State in which a sister city program exists or that you have programs with cities in other countries. In Vermont, we have a number of them. I started several of them when I was the mayor of Burlington. It was a beautiful thing to see—kids from another country coming to our country and our people going to other countries and learning.

All I am asking for is one-tenth of 1 percent—\$7 billion—no, less than that. What am I talking about? All I am asking for is \$700 million to encourage cultural and educational exchange programs. By taking this tiny fraction from our defense budget—one-tenth of 1 percent—and applying it to these exchange programs, we will send a message about the critical role these exchange programs play. They exist all over this country already, but I want to see them grow, in supporting not

only American security but our common, global security. Therefore, I have listed and described five amendments.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up the following amendments en bloc: Senate amendment Nos. 1788, 1920, 1789, 1919, and 1918; that they be reported by number; further, that there be 2 hours of debate on the amendments, equally divided and controlled by me or by my designee and by Senator INHOFE or his designee; and that, following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the adoption of the amendments, in the order listed, without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I object; although, I would like to have the opportunity to look at all five of these amendments to see which ones would not be consistent with the negotiation that is taking place right now.

I would like to make sure that everyone understands that, at this very moment, Democrats and Republicans are looking at a lot of amendments, as we have done every year for 60 years, to make sure that we are getting the right amendments in order to make the bill the best we can.

Now, it will just take a few minutes for me to do this. Until then, I reserve the right to object. If we have a timing problem on this, I will object, but it might be that there is one I would like to consider at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I would like to be recognized in order to make a comment.

First of all, I have great respect for the Senator. I have worked with him many times, and we have really gotten quite a bit accomplished. I know that my friend is sincere in the statements that he makes, but I find myself in a different position.

I see what has happened in previous administrations, and, during the last 5 years of the Obama administration, I saw when, in his budget, the President reduced the military by 25 percent at the same time that China was increasing its by 83 percent and Russia was increasing its by 34 percent. I am sensitive to this, and it is one of the considerations we make.

I do object to this amendment, but I am going to work with the Senator to see which of these might be appropriate and can be sellable to a majority of the people in the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, Senator INHOFE is right. He and I have

known each other for years and, I think, respect each other. We have very, very different philosophical leanings, but that does not mean we cannot respect each other.

All I would say to my friend from Oklahoma is that the function of the Senate is for 100 Members to determine what is important, not just a few. What may not be important to me may be important to you, and what may be important to you may not be important to me. Yet I think, especially on a bill of this significance, the Members—Democrats and Republicans—have a right to come forward and bring forth amendments. If I don't like an amendment and you have brought forth the amendment, it is likely I am going to vote against it, and you are going to vote against my amendment. I get it. It is called democracy. It is the process we go through here. I just cannot understand why we are not voting on amendments. When we get back, I would rather see a process take place whereby dozens of amendments are brought up and debated and voted up or voted down. That is what, I think, this Senate is supposed to stand for.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, if the Senator would yield for one more comment so I may address that, Senator REED and I are both in agreement. We have been wanting amendments. We have been asking on a daily basis—now for about 2 months—for Members to bring their amendments down so we can consider amendments. We are in the process now of seeing which amendments we are able to bring up that we might have reached an agreement on. We are doing that. It is not an easy process, and it does take a little bit of time. Yet I am hopeful that we will have amendments. I anticipate we will.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, if I may respond to my friend, JACK REED is a good friend of mine, and I know that you and he are working hard and well together. Yet you are two Senators, and there are 98 others of us, and on what you two may agree to be important or not to be important others may disagree.

All I am saying to the Senator is to let people bring up their amendments. If the Senator doesn't like it and I don't like it, we will vote against it. I just don't know why we are restricting amendments in a Senate which is supposed to be one of the great deliberative bodies in the world. The world is supposed to look at us, but they are not looking well at us when a few people determine what is going to be voted on or not.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I would respond by saying that I don't take issue with that, but I will say that we all remember what happened a year ago when this bill was up. One of our Members objected to all amendments coming up, and, as a result, no one got an amendment up.

That isn't happening this year because the individuals who were opposed to amendments last year are no longer

opposed to amendments. We are just trying to—with the understanding and the realization that things are done in the Senate with unanimous consent and that one person has a lot of power to stop a lot of other people, we don't want that to happen. We want to encourage amendments, and we are going to try to consider as many as we can.

Mr. SANDERS. I would simply say to my friend, he is quite right—unanimous consent gives every Member a lot of power, and I do not want to be objectionable, but I feel very strongly on this issue, and I hope we can work on something.

Mr. INHOFE. Thank you.

Mr. SANDERS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

S. 4049

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to continue this debate about the Armed Services bill we are considering on the floor today, and I would just note for my colleagues that I know that it is a general practice, but my colleague from Vermont is bringing up a very big, important point about amendments, and that is that the NDAA is marked up in a secret, closed-door session. It is not like we all have a bright light, and we know what is in there. In fact, they held the language for 3 weeks and then now, all of a sudden, thrust it onto the Senate floor and then don't want us to offer any amendments.

In my case, I am objecting, along with the Senator from Vermont, as to a major shift in policy that is in this proposal that shifts money away from the Department of Energy and onto nuclear weapons, where we didn't even vote on it. We didn't vote on it, and members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee are in disagreement about this, the fact that we weren't consulted and that it is basically raiding jurisdiction.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter signed by myself, Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, Senator HEINRICH, Senator CASSIDY, Senator WYDEN, Senator BARRASSO, Senator RISCH, and Senator SANDERS from Vermont.

We object. We are members of the committee. We are very senior members of the committee. We understand the DOE budget. We understand the DOE responsibilities. We don't think it is right for somebody to mark up, in a closed-door session, in the middle of the National Defense Act, a taking of money, basically neutering the Secretary of Energy, basically saying: You only have half of your budget because we are going to dictate over at the Department of Defense exactly how you are going to spend those dollars.

So that is a big power grab by a very few people and certainly deserves a vote by the U.S. Senate. It certainly deserves a bright light by the American people because not only are we talking about this from the perspective of the taking away DOE resources and

focus from the Secretary of Energy, we are also talking about putting into the hands of the Department of Defense what has been civilian oversight—civilian oversight of the production of our nuclear weapons.

So why is this so important, who is in charge of DOE's budget? Well, I think the Secretary of Energy is. I think he comes before Congress. I think he discusses with Congress what that budget is. I think he talks and we talk and we review his nominees and the work they do on this.

For me, in the State of Washington, we have the largest nuclear cleanup site in the entire world. So cleaning up Hanford from the plutonium production that was done for our efforts in World War II is a massive, multibillion-dollar-a-year cleanup. I wish it wasn't that much, but it is, and it has been for decades.

And people constantly look at that \$2 billion and think: We can shave some of those dollars off. I am here to tell you, you can't, not with leaky tanks leaking into the groundwater and moving toward the Columbia River—no. We cannot have people taking half of the DOE budget and then basically deciding that the Department of Defense is going to decide what to do with it.

Hanford isn't the only site. There are other cleanup sites—Paducah. There are still things to do with Savannah River. There are cleanup sites all over the United States.

To, in the NDAA bill, basically, preclude us from even discussing such a major policy change that is not supported by the Secretary of Energy, not supported by the chairwoman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee or the ranking member, Senator MANCHIN, whose amendment we would like to seek a vote on—so I submit to the RECORD this letter from my colleagues on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee also objecting to this language.

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

UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, DC, July 1, 2020.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHARLES SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JIM INHOFE,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. JACK REED,
Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, MINORITY LEADER SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN INHOFE, AND RANKING MEMBER REED: As the Senate considers the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we write to express our opposition to the inclusion of controversial and far reaching provisions that would fundamentally alter the Department of Energy's (DOE) responsibilities for the nuclear weapons budget.

As members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, we write in support of Secretary Brouillette's June 29,

2020 letter to Chairman Inhofe and share his concerns that provisions in the Senate NDAA bill undermine DOE's ability to meet its mission goals and responsibility for maintaining the viability of the nation's nuclear deterrent.

As currently written, the Senate NDAA bill would strip the Secretary of Energy of the ability to manage some of the most sensitive national security programs that account for almost half of the Department's budget. Such changes could impede accountability and Congressional oversight, as well as imperil future funding for other critical DOE responsibilities such as promoting scientific and technological innovation, managing our National Laboratories, sponsoring basic research in the physical sciences, and ensuring cleanup of the nation's nuclear weapons complex.

Sweeping changes impacting civilian control of our nation's nuclear weapons programs should only be made in consultation and coordination with the committee of jurisdiction in an open and transparent manner. The changes included in the Senate NDAA bill have been met with opposition from the Trump Administration, former Secretaries of Energy, recent NNSA Administrators, and the Congressional Advisory Panel on the Governance of the Nuclear Security Enterprise.

We therefore request that the provisions be removed from the pending bill or that the Senate be allowed to vote on the relevant amendments filed by Ranking Member Manchin.

Sincerely,

MARIA CANTWELL, MARTIN HEINRICH, RON WYDEN, MAZIE K. HIRONO, BERNIE SANDERS, LAMAR ALEXANDER, BILL CASSIDY, JOHN BARRASSO, JAMES RISCH.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, what else is at stake?

Also, at stake are our National Laboratories. Our National Laboratories do incredibly hard work for us. I know what ours does in the Pacific Northwest because they are an expert on cybersecurity. They are an expert on detection. They are an expert on terrorism and fighting terrorism.

So now, all of a sudden, you are going to let the National Nuclear Security Agency decide what that budget looks like because they are going to take more money from it.

Now is not the time to allow the Department of Defense, without our oversight that we are sent here to give, to decide what this budget should look like. That is not their role and responsibility.

So the fact that somebody thinks they can stick this in, in a closed-door session, and then jam us, without a vote of this body to consider such a major policy change, is appalling.

Now, I know that people tried to do this 2 years ago or a year and a half ago and basically got taken out by the House of Representatives, but that is no excuse for doing it now. People jam so many things into this bill. Last time, they jammed in basically the relicensing of a hydroelectric dam. Basically, written into this for the chairman was the revision that said they no longer have to be regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Well, I can tell you, there are lots of people in the State of Washington who

would probably love to know that the hydro system didn't have to go through FERC relicensing, but they did have to go through FERC relicensing.

And so the fact that that was in a panoply of things stuffed into NDAA, in the final negotiation in the House, they couldn't get it out. So we are being held hostage one more time on the NDAA bill for bad policy that has not had the broad discussion of the U.S. Senate.

So I would say to my colleagues: If you care about nuclear waste cleanup, if you care about the agenda of our national laboratories—and I will tell you, you think people are threatening you right now? People are threatening us on cybersecurity. People don't stick a sub into your waters anymore, taunting you or flying aircraft overhead; they basically put software tools into your powerplants, into your military sites. We need our National Laboratories to do their job, not have the money subverted by some agency that we don't see, they don't come to us—they go to a few Members. They go to the Senator from Oklahoma, but they don't come see us and talk about their agenda. They basically just want an increase, and instead of going through the normal legislative process, they basically are trying to short circuit both appropriators and authorizers on this important issue.

So if people are proud of that language, if they think it stands, they think it is the right policy, then they should let us have a vote. They should let us have a discussion of who is in charge of DOE's budget because, I guarantee you, most Americans think it is the Secretary of Energy and not a five-, seven-member subcommittee level over at DOD.

This is appalling, and it has to stop.

TRIBUTE TO JOEL CONNELLY

Mr. President, if I could, while I am out here on the floor, pay tribute to one of the most iconic newspapers in the State of Washington, the Seattle P-I, and one of its noted journalists who is retiring this week after 47 years writing for the organization.

This newspaper, which was part of the Northwest history for decades, finally stopped the print edition several years ago, but it has still been online. Joel Connelly has been an icon of the Northwest, writing about Presidents for decades; writing about Northwest policy, such as the outdoors; writing about the relationship, on international issues, particularly with Canada.

Joel said it best. Once he said about his employer, the P-I: "We do our best to inform you, to intrigue you, amuse you, and at times get under your skin."

I miss those days of journalism today, where someone has so much knowledge and information about our region, about politics in general, about society that they help keep us informed and engaged.

Joel once interviewed Bill Clinton on Air Force One and obviously interviewed many Presidents—both Bushes, Clinton, Obama.

He once was a Pulitzer Prize runner-up for his coverage of the Washington Public Power Supply System, and obviously he covered Hanford issues, which I just talked about many times, and many northern border issues.

He probably was best known in his coverage of Idaho Governor Cecil Andrus and wrote a book about him and the many fights that happened in the Northwest on land issues for many, many years.

So I can't even begin to explain what it will be like without Joel Connelly at the helm of political national commentary for us in the Pacific Northwest.

Nobody sharper. Nobody keener. Nobody more experienced. Nobody who struck more fear in me when I had to get on the phone with him because chances were he knew the issue even better than I did, and I had been pretty studied on it, but that is what you get after 47 years in journalism.

So I wish him all the best, but I also hope his retirement is a call for all of us to remember how important journalism really is; that the tool and trade of people who basically cover these policies, understand them, and help give commentary in their columns or in their journalism and oversight is what helps us keep our democracy here in the United States.

So, Joel, I know you will be up there on Whidbey Island and you will be watching us from afar. I know we are not done hearing the last of you, but I know we have heard a great commentary for 47 years of the P-I and your comments, and we greatly appreciate it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE
AGREEMENT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today the United States, Mexico, and Canada launched a new chapter in our historic partnership with entry into force of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada agreement—USMCA for short.

Thanks to the decisive leadership of President Trump, the USMCA will open the door for robust economic growth.

At the same time, regarding his decisive leadership as President, this isn't an issue just now. This is something the President said in 2016; that the NAFTA was the worst trade agreement that we have had, and he was going to get rid of it or revise it. Most Presidents run on a platform. They may not serve on that platform. This President is serving on that platform, and today the USMCA going into force for the first time is absolute proof of this President keeping his promises and getting the job done.

He also needs to compliment and thank Ambassador Lighthizer, the negotiator on this whole agreement.

The USMCA brings to bear, then, a trilateral trade agreement that will lift prosperity across North America. The USMCA paves the way for freer markets and fairer trade. It replaces NAFTA and puts America in a better position to expand market access for U.S. workers, farmers, and businesses.

Specifically, the USMCA modernizes rules of origin for autos, sanitary and phytosanitary standards, intellectual property rules, digital trade, financial services, customs, labor, environment, and more.

Some of these issues I just mentioned weren't even around 30 years ago when NAFTA was negotiated. Modernizing NAFTA into the 21st century was the right thing to do.

As we enter into this agreement, the world is navigating uncertain times, as we know. The unprecedented public health crisis has turned the economy upside down. Now, more than ever, our farmers, businesses, and workers need and deserve certainty that they can count on us to turn things around and accelerate economic recovery.

As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, with jurisdiction over trade, I will be keeping a close eye on the implementation of this historic trade agreement. I want to ensure that any kinks that come up are ironed out with appropriate flexibility, taking into consideration unforeseen circumstances from the pandemic, such as automakers and others who were shut down or repurposed operations to produce medical equipment, and that is just one example. I also will keep watch to hold accountable all stakeholders and ensure full compliance with the trade agreement.

Now more than ever, North America must work together to harvest the fruits of the USMCA. That is how we can foster investment, innovation, and job creation for the 478 million people who live in these 3 countries.

The U.S. International Trade Commission estimated that the USMCA within 5 years would raise U.S. GDP by \$68 billion, forecasting 176,000 new jobs in the United States. That is music to the ears for everyone in America who has been hard hit by the pandemic's economic fallout.

Farmers in my State have enjoyed one of the best planting seasons in decades. However, our livestock, poultry, and biofuels producers have faced catastrophic disruption to their operations since the virus swept across the country. Iowa is the Nation's No. 1 producer of pork, eggs, and corn. Our economy depends on exports to grow and for our economy to flourish.

American farmers depend on exports to pay their bills and earn a living. Farmers simply want to grow and produce for the marketplace, not for government bailouts.

Today's inauguration of the USMCA offers a bright ray of hope for North America to plow forward and to plant the seeds for a robust economic recovery.

With every trade issue that comes, it is always important to remember what President Kennedy said in his Presidency about trade legislation and the benefits of it—that if it benefits one country, it benefits the others. He said that “a rising tide lifts all boats.”

I am confident the USMCA will steer America's workers, farmers, and businesses to better days ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

NATIONAL BORINQUENEERS DAY

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and honor a very important group of people in our Nation's history. The 65th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army known as the Borinqueneers was comprised of U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico.

The Borinqueneers courageously fought for decades to defend the freedoms we enjoy today. They answered the Nation's call to serve, and they are the longest standing and only Active-Duty Latino military unit in U.S. history.

On April 13, 2016, Congress awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment in recognition of the Borinqueneers' numerous contributions to American history and outstanding military service from World War I to the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Today, I am honored to join my colleagues in recognizing the bravery, service, and sacrifice of the Puerto Rican soldiers of the 65th Infantry Regiment and to express deep gratitude for the contributions to the Armed Forces that have been made by hundreds of thousands of patriotic U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico.

I am honored to designate April 13 as National Borinqueneers Day to ensure their legacy lives on. History will forever pay tribute to the sacrifices these individuals and their families made to defend our freedom.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate in Spanish.

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

(The English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. It is my honor to recognize the service of these brave American citizens from Puerto Rico who fought for our Nation. Your legacy will live on. Thank you for your service.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 641, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 641) designating April 13, 2020, as “National Borinqueneers Day”.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be