

running into some McDonough. You see it in how he has treated everyone he has worked with, when he worked in the Senate, when he worked as President Obama's Chief of Staff. I also will assure my fellow Senators that he will listen to Senators. He will have respect for the people who work here. You see it every day in how he always puts his country first.

During his distinguished career, Denis has approached each and every job with the spirit of respect, honesty, collaboration, and a willingness to make himself accessible to his colleagues and his team. He is deeply committed to supporting the workforce at the VA.

I want our veterans to know he will do two things so well: He will listen, and he will get things done for you.

One of my favorite stories about Denis involves this—listening and then getting things done. We were having a lot of trouble up in northern Minnesota with the iron ore mines closing down, as you all remember, kind of coming out of the downturn. It never really bounced back. Then we had the steel dumping going on from China and other countries, the illegal steel dumping, and that really spread through the country and led to the closure of many of our mines.

We tried to introduce legislation, and finally I asked Denis to come up to northern Minnesota, since he was from our State, as President Obama's Chief of Staff and sit down with a bunch of mayors from northern Minnesota, from Minnesota's Iron Range, with workers and with mine owners.

There was this long, long table, and nearly everyone had spoken. Near the end, a miner named Dan Hill was the last to go, and he said: Well, everything has been said, so I will just tell this story. He said that he was out of work, and he said that his son had just graduated from preschool. The teacher asked them at the graduation: What do you want to do when you grow up? The kids were saying all kinds of things—that they wanted to play basketball or they were going to fly an airplane and all kinds of cool things—and Denis's son looked at the teacher and said: I want to be a miner like my daddy.

At that moment, Dan Hill took this steelworker T-shirt that he had in his hand and he threw it across the whole long table. And I remember sitting next to Denis thinking, you were a football player; catch the T-shirt. And he caught the T-shirt.

Dan Hill said:

Mr. McDonough, make it come true. Make it come true.

Denis listened, but then he acted. He went back to Washington and he didn't just ignite a fire under the Commerce Department to get them to do even more work than they were already doing on enforcing tariffs and going after this illegal dumping and bringing things to the International Trade Commission, he also looked at other agencies, and he helped us, along with

SHERROD BROWN and so many others, to pass legislation that made a difference.

All of this happened, and Dan Hill got his job back. Then I invited Dan Hill to come to one of the last State of the Unions for President Obama, and Denis invited Dan Hill to the White House, and Dan Hill got to meet practically everyone surrounding the President.

That is Denis McDonough. He listened, but he didn't just say "Oh, I got there. I went. We will try our best"; he actually followed through the minutia of government to get things done.

I am going to end with the words of a poet whom President Biden happens to love. Given Denis's Irish roots, I can't think of a better person to quote from today, and it is Mr. Heaney, who once wrote: "Anyone with gumption and a sharp mind will take the measure of two things: what's said and what's done."

So Denis will not just say words to the veterans of this country; as your Secretary, he will get things done.

With that, I ask my colleagues to support the nomination of Denis McDonough as Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

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

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

#### IMPEACHMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it has been more than a month since a violent mob stormed this building and attempted to disrupt the congressional certification of Presidential electors—the vote of those electors. Rather than a peaceful transition of power, some of the mob turned their grievances into violent action. But, again, that is the problem with mobs. No matter what the intentions were of those who were simply exercising their rights to free speech and free assembly, mobs invariably degenerate into the lowest common denominator.

That element of the mob assaulted police officers, destroyed property, and trespassed in the halls of the U.S. Capitol. Some roamed these halls in search of Members of Congress against whom they actually threatened harm. And if not for the heroism of the men and women of the Capitol Police, the human cost would have likely been higher.

The criminal acts of the mob were disgraceful and indefensible. Regardless of party or politics, there should be no disagreement on that most basic point. The people making up this mob came to Washington with the idea that the results of the 2020 election were not final. President Trump fed that fantasy by repeatedly claiming the election was stolen, even after he had exhausted

all of his legal remedies in dozens and dozens of lawsuits. The President's actions were reckless. He should have known better than to stoke a flame he could not and did not control.

But the events of January 6 are only part of the story, and it is the congressional response, including impeachment, that I now want to talk about. Simply put, this snap impeachment raises serious questions about fundamental fairness, due process, or, more accurately, a lack thereof. Unlike previous impeachments, there was no formal inquiry, no investigation, no hearings, no witnesses, no cross-examination, no nothing. We know impeachment is not like a traditional judicial proceeding. It is not a court of law. But it does make common sense—and I think this was the direction we gave the House during the last impeachment trial—that it is the House's obligation to investigate, develop the evidence, and then charge, not the other way around.

Historically, this has been true for impeachment proceedings. Each time, the House has conducted a full-scale investigation before a vote on the Articles of Impeachment. As I said, that was the case last year when the House spent months deposing witnesses, holding hearings, building a case against the President before ever announcing formal charges.

But this time around, they took an entirely different approach. In attempting to justify this unprecedented departure from a fair and dignified proceeding, some of our Democratic friends claim that no evidence needs to be presented, saying that we were all witnesses to what happened on January 6 and that we can be jurors, witnesses, and, in the words of at least one Democratic Senator, victims all at the same time.

This week, President Trump's defense team will have the opportunity to present its case, and I expect the lack of due process to be a major area of focus and rightfully so.

Unfortunately, that is not the only problem with this impeachment trial. The Constitution requires the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court to preside over the impeachment trial of a President. But since this is the trial of a former President, a private citizen, someone who no longer holds office, Chief Justice Roberts will not be presiding. As a result, the senior Senator from Vermont will now serve as both a judge and a juror, in addition to being a witness, I presume, and, in the words of another Senator, a victim.

I respect Senator LEAHY, but the fact of the matter is, he cannot be an impartial arbiter. He has a conflict of interest. Following the House's impeachment vote, Senator LEAHY called President Trump "the greatest threat to the Constitution and to American democracy in a generation." He voted to convict Donald Trump during the last impeachment trial and apparently has already decided to do it again in this trial.

The fact of the matter is, no American, let alone a former President, should be tried before a juror who has already determined guilt or innocence and who also serves as a judge. I want to be abundantly clear, though, on one point. President Trump's words and actions leading up to the attack were reckless and wrong, but as we all know, the constitutional standard for impeachment isn't recklessness.

Treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors—those are the offenses that the Constitution allows Congress to impeach and remove a President from office for violating or from committing, which brings us to one of the biggest concerns I have. Donald Trump is no longer President of the United States. He is a private citizen. Our Democratic colleagues moved so fast that they could impeach the President while he was in office but failed to transmit the Articles to the Senate until he became a private citizen.

Legal experts have debated not only the constitutionality of trying a former President but also the wisdom of doing so, and I share concerns on both those fronts. I think this ill-timed impeachment trial sets a dangerous precedent for future former Presidents.

As politicized as impeachment has become, it could become a reoccurring political exercise that would be toxic for our democracy. Prominent Democrats have warned about the dangers of using impeachment as a political weapon against an opposing party.

During the impeachment inquiry of President Clinton, Senator LEAHY himself counseled:

A partisan impeachment cannot command the respect of the American people. It is no more valid than a stolen election.

I agree with him. The problem with one party using impeachment to exact political retribution on an opposing party's President at the end of his term or even after that President has left office seems quite obvious to me. It is political retribution.

Depending on which party controls Congress and which occupies the White House, this could turn into a regular blemish on our democracy. Rather than focusing together on our future and a new administration, seeking common ground and unity, as President Biden has called for, such a precedent of trying a former President could create an endless feedback loop of recrimination.

I think this is a dangerous and destructive path, and I would implore my colleagues on both sides to consider the long-term implications of this precedent. As Justice Story explained, the Framers saw the Senate as a tribunal, in his words, "removed from popular power and passions . . . and from the more dangerous influence of mere party spirit," and was guided by "a deep responsibility to future times."

So, as before, I don't take my role as a juror lightly, and I will reserve final judgment until both the House im-

peachment managers and President Trump's defense team have had the opportunity to present their cases. But I do think, indeed, I fear, we are skating on very thin ice and are in danger of inflicting great harm to our country by this rushed, unfair, and partisan proceeding. May God help us.

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

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

#### ISSUES FACING AMERICA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, when President Biden addressed the Nation on Inauguration Day, he promised unity and bipartisanship. It was a big part of his inaugural address, and so far the Democrats here in Washington are not living up to that promise. Their message, and we saw this last week, is not unity; it is submit and conform.

On his very first day in office, President Biden rubberstamped 17 separate Executive orders. Since then, he has approved so many changes that a lot of Tennesseans can barely keep track of the orders and memos and directives that are flying out of the Oval Office.

It is safe to say the only benchmark they have to work with is the number of lost jobs we will see as a result of all of this paper-and-pen governance and paperwork. Jobs gone—stroke of a pen.

The American people are very unsettled by this. I am hearing it from Democrats, Independents, Republicans, Libertarians.

Last week, I came to the floor, and I spoke in detail about how this lack of clarity about the future has made many Tennesseans fearful of the impending changes to our national security policy. They are very unsettled.

So many of our veterans in Tennessee have talked with me about this. They don't like all this soft talk when it comes to talking about China and Russia and Iran and North Korea. They are worried about what comes next. The domestic policy mandates have done nothing at all to give reassurances or calm spirits.

Last week, the Senate Democrats put forth a budget proposal that treats struggling communities like hypotheticals that could work with theoretical changes, all created for a graduate-level economics exam. They are not dealing with real problems and real life.

For about 15 hours, we debated and voted on a fraction of the almost 900 amendments filed in an attempt to do some damage control to that budget resolution. But when Friday morning came and went, all the Democrats had to offer was a glaringly partisan resolution that blatantly contradicted President Biden's stated commitment to unity and bipartisanship.

And, you know what, in a perfect world, the solutions the Democrats have come up with just might work. But we do not live in a perfect world; we live in a fallen world.

This country is not created in the image of the Democratic Party. To anyone who has ever managed a small business budget, what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are trying to do just does not make good common sense.

One of the top issues I hear about from people back home in Tennessee is this proposal they have for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage. I feel I should remind my colleagues that resistance to this mandate doesn't come from a place of stinginess or classist hatred but from a place of absolute confidence that it will destroy small businesses, even with the phase-in period.

I have not heard from a single business owner who will be able to pay the wage and employ the same number of people—not one. They will have to let staff go.

A report by the Congressional Budget Office released just today echoes and confirms their concerns. By 2025, the Democrats' proposal will cut jobs for 1.4 million workers, at a time when workers are struggling to get back to work. So much for job creation, and we all know the best economic stimulus is a job.

Just 6 weeks ago, Congress passed a \$900 billion COVID relief package. Very little of that money has been spent. Yet Democrats and the White House continue to demand trillions—that is right, trillions—in overbroad spending that targets no specific problem and has no actual bipartisan support. If that is not bad enough, billions of dollars from last year's bipartisan relief packages, all five of them, also remain unobligated.

So we are at \$3.6 trillion in spending, and they are wanting another \$1.9 trillion, with little idea of the effect that remaining unobligated funding will have on the economy. But still, the data shows that what has been spent already has made a difference and will continue to do so.

Relief should be timely. It should be targeted. It should be temporary. Those that need the help should get the help, but we do not need overbroad spending.

The Congressional Budget Office released another report just over a week ago showing that if we leave the laws governing how we tax and spend alone—leave them alone on the books, in force—the GDP will continue to rise and the economy will get back to its prepandemic health without, without Congress authorizing one more penny in relief spending.

So the American people want to know why, why are the Democrats claiming that the only solution to our present crisis is to spend as much as possible, as quickly as possible, without considering which sectors of the economy actually need the help, which families need help, which individuals need help.

What we do know is what we saw in 2009 and 2010 and 2011 and 2012 and 2013 and 2014 and 2015, which is that, if you