

help the people of Flint end this man-made emergency that is simply beyond their control.

All Americans deserve safe, clean drinking water, not just some of them. I hope my Republican colleagues will choose to help us to pass legislation to resolve this crisis, sending emergency funds to the people of Flint now.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The assistant Democratic leader.

NATIONAL SECURITY SATELLITE LAUNCHES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to address an issue of vital importance to America's national security. It is the issue of reliable rocket launches—launches which the Department of Defense and the national intelligence agencies count on on a regular basis to launch satellites to keep America safe.

There is a separate area of launches with NASA involving the civilian side, but this morning I want to focus primarily on the Department of Defense rocket launches.

We made a decision about 10 years ago that was wrong. Two companies that were competing at that time, Boeing and Lockheed, came forward to the Federal Government and said: We have a plan. Instead of our companies competing, we will join together. We will become one company—Boeing and Lockheed—for this purpose, under the term United Launch Alliance. They argued, convincingly at the time, that this was the best way to come up with affordable, reliable launches. Well, that was true for half of the projection. They were reliable.

In the last 10 years, the United Launch Alliance has been a reliable partner with the Department of Defense in launching satellites and other things into space which are critical for our national security. But, unfortunately, because they became a monopoly, with no competition, they became increasingly more expensive and we had no place to turn.

Recently, there have been new entries in this market in terms of launching satellites. One of the most promising is SpaceX. SpaceX, from its infancy, has matured into a company that could play an important role in the future of satellite launches in the United States. I noted this fact, and as chairman of the Appropriations Sub-

committee on Defense, I did something that doesn't happen around here very often. I had a hearing scheduled and brought together the CEOs of United Launch Alliance, the traditional partner of the Department of Defense in launching satellites, and this new company, SpaceX. I invited the CEOs from both companies to sit at the same table and to answer questions from the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. Then, at the end of the hearing, I did something that I thought might be positive and constructive. I said to each CEO: I would like each of you to write 10 questions that should be in the record answered by your partner at the table there. If we haven't covered everything to give a fair exposition of where this issue stands today, now is your chance.

That was in January 2014. It was the first time anybody had brought together two potentially competing companies and let them plead their case before the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. But I felt this was the best way to give SpaceX a chance to tell its story as a new entrant into this competition and for ULA to defend its position.

We then decided there was another element that was important. United Launch Alliance has several engines that can take a satellite into space. The most economical one is built by the Russians, the RD-180. I happen to believe that it is not in our best security interest to be dependent on the Russians to supply us with a rocket engine for vital satellites to be launched into space. So I started pushing in the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense to put money into a competition for an American-made, American-built rocket engine to replace the Russian RD-180. For 2 successive years we have appropriated more money for this competition than the defense authorizing committee.

It turns out that we are on the right track, but the timing is challenging. What we have been told is that replacing the Russian engine with an American-made engine will take up to 5 years. Who is the source of that statement? The Secretary of the Air Force. So the obvious question is, If we can't cut off the Russian engine today without jeopardizing our national security, what should we do? We decided in the current appropriations bill to extend the authority to the Department of Defense to take bids on rockets launched by the Russian engine from ULA through this fiscal year. I thought this was a prudent thing to do—to wean ourselves from dependence on Russian-made engines—but to do it in a thoughtful, sensible way that gave the Department of Defense some options. This request, incidentally, for options and flexibility came not just from the Secretary of the Air Force, but it came from the Director of National Intelligence as well as the Secretary of Defense. They said they needed these options to keep America safe.

That was the state of play until the senior Senator from Arizona decided he was going to come to the floor repeatedly and challenge this conclusion by the Appropriations subcommittee, then leading to an op-ed which he published yesterday in the Wall Street Journal. I come to the floor this morning to address that op-ed by the senior Senator from Arizona. It is titled: "Congress's Cynical Crony-Capital Gift to Putin."

The senior Senator from Arizona referenced me by name in this article, as he has repeatedly on the floor of the Senate, though many would argue that violates the Senate rules. Notwithstanding that personal aspect of this, I want to address the issue that is before us.

Why does the senior Senator from Arizona continue to single me out personally? It is because I happen to agree with the Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Secretary of the Air Force about a vital, important national security issue. The senior Senator from Arizona disagrees with them.

The issue is deadly serious, despite the name-calling by my colleague. It is about competition for launching defense satellites into space. Here are the facts. One company, United Launch Alliance, or ULA, held a monopoly for nearly 10 years. The cost of launches rose out of control. Today, there is finally an opportunity for competition. A new company I mentioned earlier, SpaceX, has entered space launch. They are challenging ULA. As I said earlier, in January 2014, I recognized this option—this possibility, this opportunity—and held a hearing with the CEOs of both companies testifying under oath. The result of this competition is that costs are dropping, exactly what we wanted to achieve, and the taxpayer is beginning to see savings. However, as I mentioned earlier, the ULA rocket most often uses a Russian-built rocket engine, the RD-180. After the Russian invasion of Crimea and eastern Ukraine, the Department of Defense and Congress agreed it was time for us to phase out any dependence on this Russian-made engine and to make an American product as soon as possible. I couldn't agree with that more.

Developing and testing a new, American-made rocket takes time—more time than I imagined. The Secretary of the Air Force, testifying before the committee of the senior Senator from Arizona, estimated that it would take to at least 2021 or 2022 until there was an American-made rocket engine that can replace the Russian engine that is being used today. However, the senior Senator from Arizona doesn't want to wait that long to replace the Russian engine. In his Wall Street Journal diatribe, he writes that "we don't need to buy any more." And he is apparently considering a total ban on the Department of Defense using these Russian engines, despite the fact that we have received, in writing, from the Secretary of Defense and the Director of

National Intelligence a warning that doing this would in fact create a gap which could endanger our national security.

In May 2015, the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence wrote to the chairman of the defense authorization committee, and they shared his goal of replacing this Russian engine. But they warned the senior Senator from Arizona that if he followed his own plan, it could harm U.S. national security. They were alarmed, in this letter, of the proposed cutoff of access to Russian engines before an American replacement was ready. Secretary Carter and Director Clapper do not want to trade one launch monopoly, ULA, for another launch monopoly, SpaceX. They are encouraging and standing for competition. They want to keep them competing so they can have lower costs and options if one of the companies, for whatever reason, is unable to meet its obligations.

Also, our defense and intelligence satellites must not be dependent on one type of rocket. A SpaceX launch failed last summer, and it took 6 months before they could return to launches. With only one supplier of rockets, a crash could stop vital satellite launches for months, endangering America's national security.

The senior Senator from Arizona ignored the arguments being made by the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence. After all, it is hard for a Senator to argue with the senior national security leader, Secretary Carter, whose doctorate is in theoretical physics, and it would be unconscionable to call our Nation's highest intelligence official—a former Air Force pilot and career civil servant—a “Putin crony.”

But I take warnings from our top national security experts seriously. My Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense has been working to address these issues the right way, the safe way. Rather than attack fellow Senators in the press, the senior Senator from Arizona should face the facts.

When the Defense appropriations bill was marked up in June of 2015, the bill included a bipartisan provision to allow the Department of Defense to conduct full and open competitions for rocket launches for 1 year. An amendment was offered by the Republican senior Senator from the State of South Carolina to strike that provision. But after a full debate, he withdrew his amendment when it was clear there was bipartisan support for the bill. The provision was modified in conference, but the effect of the provision remains the same—to make sure that the Department of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence have some answer to their concerns about a launch monopoly.

The senior Senator from Arizona has proposed another solution—that ULA offer another rocket called the Delta IV, which, of course, is not a Russian

engine. According to the Pentagon's top weapons buyer and ULA, each of those rockets endorsed by the senior Senator from Arizona costs about 30 percent more than the Atlas rockets with Russian engines. So if that figure is correct, the plan of the senior Senator from Arizona requires American taxpayers to pay approximately \$1 billion more in launch costs over the next 6 years. This Senator, who comes to the floor frequently telling us that he is such a budget hawk, is proposing a plan that will cost us at least \$1 billion more over the next 6 years. That figure could be higher. His plan could triple the cost of launches for some satellites that are too heavy to be launched on a single rocket.

Under the plan of the senior Senator from Arizona, the taxpayers would foot the bill for a new government-created monopoly. It is in fact a \$1 billion windfall and gift to one defense contractor in California if we follow the plan of the senior Senator from Arizona, and it would also put our national security at risk if there is a technical failure.

If spending \$1 billion of taxpayers' money to increase the risk that the United States won't be able to launch a satellite to keep track of Russia sounds like a counterproductive and questionable idea, you would be right. Last year, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee said many times that the Defense authorization bill isn't a budget bill. Now, as vice chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense—the subcommittee that has to make the math work—I can say that spending an extra \$1 billion at this moment in the history of the Department of Defense doesn't make sense.

There is another aspect to this. I don't know if the senior Senator from Arizona is going to look into it or attack it as well. When it comes to supplying the space station, we are reliant on Russian-made engines. If the senior Senator from Arizona wants to cut off access of NASA to these Russian-made engines, it will be a dangerous proposal. There are a variety of NASA missions ahead that rely on this Atlas rocket. These include multiple resupply missions to the International Space Station, a mission to take samples from a nearby asteroid, a new Mars lander, a probe to study the sun, and several weather satellites.

If there is the will to ignore the national security concerns of the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence about access to space for national security, we had best take care. The senior Senator from Arizona will now say that supplying the space station is somehow a sellout to Vladimir Putin.

We have appropriated \$448 million to develop all-American engines, which is more than the Armed Services Committee has authorized. In a few years, we will have real competition for space launches that will help lower costs for a long time to come—but only if we lis-

ten to our top defense and intelligence leaders, who favor a responsible transition to the next rocket in the interest of national security and oppose the plans put forward by the senior Senator from Arizona.

One aspect of this article in the Wall Street Journal that troubles me the most is the suggestion that I take lightly the adventurism of Vladimir Putin and his bloody invasion of Ukraine. I am proud to be the cochair of the Ukrainian Caucus with Senator PORTMAN of Ohio. We have a large Ukrainian population in my State. I have spoken to them many times, and I have visited Ukraine many times to make it clear that I detest what Putin has done in invading their country and threatening their sovereignty. The irony is the senior Senator from Arizona personally invited me to accompany him to Ukraine, where we both protested Putin's actions. To suggest my position on these rocket engines is somehow a give-in to Putin is shameful and wrong. I think my statements—public and otherwise—have made it clear.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this morning at 11 a.m., the President released the budget, his final budget for his Presidency. Unfortunately, rather than something that sends a signal that he wants to work with Congress, it is basically more of the same—a \$4 trillion budget that is unserious, partisan, and contains reckless spending. In it, he does include several new proposals, proposals he knows will be dead on arrival here in the U.S. Congress.

From my perspective, coming from an energy State, one pretty astounding measure he suggested was putting a \$10 tax on each barrel of oil. What that would do is translate into 25 cents a gallon more for consumers at the pump. How in the world would that help American families who are suffering as a result of stagnant wages due to slow economic growth in this country as well as additional costs, such as ObamaCare, that have been imposed upon them by the administration? The simple fact is that it doesn't help the average American family get by. It is the opposite.

At a time when our country is producing more energy domestically than it ever has and just beginning to export that energy to our friends and allies around the world, the President's budget reveals that he has little interest in growing our energy independence and little interest in jump-starting our economy.

All he has to do is look at Texas, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and other places to see how our domestic energy production has helped create thousands of jobs and helped grow the economy. Instead, the President makes these job-