



July 9, 2017

**From:** Jim Unmacht  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 9, 2017 4:36 PM  
**To:** [Senator@mccain.senate.gov](mailto:Senator@mccain.senate.gov)  
**Cc:** 'Matiella, Nick (McCain)'; 'Tarallo, Julie (McCain)'; 'Hiller, Samantha (McCain)'; 'Podolak, Chuck (Flake)'; 'Davis, Buchanan (Flake)'  
**Subject:** The McCain Update June 2017  
**Importance:** High

Senator, thanks for the update.

We appreciate the magnitude of the issues you and your fellow Senators are dealing with, but we would argue one item is missing from your list below, the Grand Canyon Bison Management Act.

You might recall this is a bill you and Senator Flake cosponsored in 2015, with a companion bill in the House sponsored by Representative Gosar.

<https://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/?p=search&num=10&filter=0&q=Bison>

We now have a bipartisan bill introduced in the House sponsored by Representatives Gosar, Franks, Schweikert and O'Halloran. We need the same bill introduced on the Senate side again!

The National Park Service's (NPS) response to your March 13, 2017 letter appeared to be an effort to placate sportsmen with an opportunity to cull, which is not what we seek. Your staff has our input and suggestions, but essentially we want the NPS to use a similar model employed in Wyoming for elk in the Grand Teton National Park in collaboration with the Wyoming Game & Fish Department. An ethical, fair chase hunt managed by the Arizona Game & Fish Department in concert with the NPS, without using taxpayer dollars.

Candidly Senator, absent Congressional action, here's what we think is going to happen with the bison on the Grand Canyon National Park:

- -the EA proposed this spring (after 3 years of delay) will go directly to Court...  
<http://www.adlaz.org/sites/default/files/Final%20Comments%20on%20Grand%20Canyon%20Bison%20Environmental%20Assessment%20June%202014%202017.pdf>

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- -taxpayer dollars will be spent in court fighting animal rights groups
- -the bison population will continue to grow exponentially on the Park
- -sensitive habitat and resources will continue to be degraded and destroyed on the Park
- -buffalo (bison) hunting in Arizona will effectively end
- -thousands of your constituents that have paid into the system, in some cases for decades, will lose an opportunity to hunt the animal

We understand President Trump's signature on a Grand Canyon Bison Management Act is no guarantee the matter will stay out of the courts, but we do believe our Park, our resources, our tax dollars and our ability to hunt will all be better off with that bill signed into law than without it!

Please work with Senator Flake to make this happen.

Thank you.

**Jim Unmacht**  
**Executive Director**  
**Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation**

**From:** Senator John McCain [<mailto:Senator@mccain.senate.gov>]

**Sent:** Friday, June 30, 2017 8:40 AM

**To:** Jim Unmacht

**Subject:** The McCain Update June 2017



**JOHN ★ McCAIN**  
U.S. Senator ~ *Arizona*

## The McCain Update

### June 2017



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## **The Ongoing Healthcare Debate**

This week, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced that the Senate would delay its vote on the *Better Care Reconciliation Act*, legislation that would repeal and replace Obamacare. This delay affords me the opportunity to continue negotiations and work to include important measures in the bill that address Governor Ducey's concerns about potential impacts on Arizona's Medicaid system.

Arizona has been nationally recognized for running one of the most efficient and cost-effective Medicaid programs in the country. It's critical that this legislation rewards states like Arizona that are responsibly managing their health care services and controlling costs -- not penalizes them.

I continue to believe that we must repeal and replace Obamacare, which has hit Arizonans with some of the highest premium increases in the nation while insurers are fleeing the marketplace en masse. But we must do so in a way that recognizes our state's success, protects our economy, and ensures citizens who are most in need do not have the rug pulled out from under them.

## **A Victory for Arizona's Troops**

This week, the Senate Armed Services Committee completed markup of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2018, which authorizes \$700 billion in funding for the Department of Defense (DOD) and the national security programs of the Department of Energy. The committee has passed the NDAA for the last 55 consecutive years in a bipartisan fashion to authorize funding and provide authorities for the U.S. military, and this year is no different. The committee passed this year's NDAA unanimously, by a vote of 27-0. As Chairman of the committee, I could not be more proud of our bipartisan effort to produce a bill ensuring our brave service members have the training, resources and equipment they need to rise to the challenges of a more dangerous world.

This year's bill builds upon the sweeping reforms that Congress has passed in recent years and starts the process of rebuilding our military after six years of devastating cuts to our defense budget. By authorizing \$700 billion, this bill begins to address the readiness shortfall, crisis in modernization, and eroding military advantage by

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recapitalizing and reinvesting in our forces.

I am particularly proud that the NDAA once again recognizes and enhances Arizona's unique contributions to national security. From keeping the A-10s flying at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson and funding additional Apache Attack Helicopters that protect frontline warfighters, to training the next-generation of fighter pilots at the unparalleled Barry Goldwater Range, the NDAA will ensure Arizona's proud service members are well-funded and well-equipped.

Learn more about the NDAA [here](#).

### **Holding Russia Accountable for Attacking our Election**

This month, the Senate overwhelmingly [passed legislation](#) imposing new and stronger sanctions on Russia for its brazen attack on our 2016 presidential election. This legislation was an amendment to an [Iran sanctions bill](#) that will hold Iran accountable for its destabilizing behavior across the Middle East. Both the Russia sanctions amendment and the Iran sanctions bill incorporate some of the best ideas from different pieces of legislation already introduced in the Senate to impose new sanctions, strengthen existing sanctions, and require congressional oversight of any attempt to ease sanctions especially on Russia.

Since January, months of congressional hearings, testimony, and investigative work have reinforced these conclusions: that Russia deliberately interfered in our recent election with cyberattacks and a disinformation campaign designed to weaken America and undermine faith in our democracy and our values. Vladimir Putin's brazen attack on our democracy is a flagrant demonstration of his disdain and disrespect for our nation. And unless and until Russia pays a price, these destabilizing activities will continue.

The Senate's sanction legislation is the beginning of a more serious response, and it is essential that the Congress delay no further and send this legislation to the President for his signature. It is then incumbent on the President and the Congress to work together to develop a strategy to deter Russian aggression, both across its borders and in cyberspace. If we do not, our continued weakness will be further provocation to Vladimir Putin, and no one should be surprised when he continues to attack our interests, our values, and our allies.

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## In Case You Missed It This June

**President Trump Signs VA Accountability and Whistleblowers Act:** I am gratified President Trump this month signed [legislation](#) I was proud to cosponsor that would allow Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary David Shulkin to hold all employees accountable for wrongdoings and ensure appropriate protections for whistleblowers. This bill finally corrects the archaic and broken civil service system and advances critical reforms to change the culture that led to the scandal in care at the VA. We have a long way to go to fully reform the VA, but this law is an important step forward in ensuring our veterans receive the best quality health care they have earned and deserve.

**North Korea's Murder of Otto Warmbier:** This month, the country was saddened by the [death of Otto Warmbier](#) following his unjust imprisonment and torture in North Korea. I send my heartfelt condolences to Otto's family and friends as they grieve this tragic loss. Have no doubt: Otto Warmbier, an American citizen, was murdered by the Kim Jong-un regime. The U.S. cannot and should not tolerate the murder of its citizens by hostile powers.

**We Need a Strategy in Afghanistan:** After nearly 16 years of war, the United States is at a [stalemate in Afghanistan](#). This month I called on the administration to send Congress a long-overdue strategy to end that stalemate and achieve victory. If the administration fails to develop a strategy for success, Congress will need to play a greater role. We owe it to our brave men and women serving in Afghanistan, their families at home, and all of the American people.

**Demanding Answers for Veterans Choice Program Funding Shortfall:** This month, my colleagues and I sent a letter to VA Secretary David Shulkin regarding reports that the VA will not have enough funds to operate the Veterans Choice Program through the fiscal year due to the VA's failure to accurately track demand for the Choice Card. We demanded a thorough explanation as to what the VA needs to [sustain the Veterans Choice Program](#) after this funding shortfall. As a nation, we cannot send our veterans back to the pre-scandal days in which veterans were subjected to unacceptable wait-times for appointments and were treated more like a burden instead of heroes who deserve the best care our country has to offer.

**VA Integrates Veterans' Medical Records:** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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(VA) [announced](#) its adoption of the DOD's Electronic Health Record (EHR) system for veterans' medical records. This will allow the two departments to seamlessly transition the records between the two departments. I sent a letter with Senators Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and Jerry Moran (R-KS) to VA Secretary David Shulkin and Defense Secretary James Mattis praising this transition and encouraging the two departments to work together to provide seamless and high-quality care to service members as they transition to veteran status.

**Mismanagement of Funds by Navajo Housing Authority (NHA):** I released a [report](#) regarding Navajo Housing Authority's (NHA) misuse of \$803 million dollars from the Indian Housing Block Grants given by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Over the past ten years, the NHA built only 1,100 homes of the 34,000 needed to properly address the Navajo Nation's housing shortage. I called on my colleagues in the Senate to join me in holding a congressional hearing and [develop legislation](#) to advance much-needed reforms.

**Montenegro joins NATO:** Early this month, [Montenegro joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization \(NATO\)](#), making it the first new member in eight years. In the face of renewed Russian aggression, increasingly frequent terror attacks, and looming cybersecurity threats, the NATO alliance is an important symbol of strength, freedom, and peace.

**Bill to Expand School Choice for Native American Students:** I [introduced](#) the Native American Education Opportunity Act, legislation that would expand education options for students enrolled in Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, which, despite their high cost, include some of the most underperforming schools in the nation. This bill would provide Native American students the best opportunity to succeed by empowering parents and tribes to customize education options and offer alternative opportunities outside of the BIE system.

**Bill Expanding Amber Alert System on Native American Reservations:** The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs passed my *AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act of 2017*, legislation that would [expand AMBER Alert child abduction warning systems](#) on Native American reservations.

**Protecting Sacred Native American Cultural Artifacts:** I joined a bipartisan group of senators this month to introduce the *Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony Act (STOP Act)*, legislation that would prohibit the exportation of sacred Native American artifacts

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and increase penalties for stealing and illegally trafficking tribal cultural patrimony. This legislation would [protect sacred and cultural artifacts](#) and keep them within the Native American community.

**Expanding National Service Opportunities for American Youth & Veterans:** This month, I joined a bipartisan group of senators to introduce legislation that would [increase national service opportunities for America's youth and returning veterans](#) in Arizona and across the country.

**Passing of Dean Flake, Senator Flake's Father:** Cindy and I were saddened to learn of the [passing](#) of Dean Flake, the extraordinary father of my friend and colleague, Jeff Flake. A beloved husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather, Dean Flake devoted his life to family, raising his 11 children on a ranch, teaching them the importance working hard and being humble.

**Arizonan Brenda Burman Nomination to be Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation:** This week, I applauded the nomination of Brenda Burman of Arizona to be the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, the federal agency under the U.S. Department of Interior. Brenda brings a wealth of knowledge on [federal water policy and drought conditions in the West](#) forged through years of service at the Department of Interior and as legislative counsel to former U.S. Senator Jon Kyl, one of the nation's foremost experts on federal and tribal water law.

**Withdrawal of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) Rule:** This week, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed [withdrawal of the "Waters of the United States" \(WOTUS\) rule](#). The EPA made the right decision to roll-back this onerous expansion of federal regulatory control over businesses vital to Arizona's economy.

**Malware Attacks Around the Globe:** A few days ago, more reports arose on malware attacks currently infecting computers and systems across the globe suggesting that the last major ["WannaCry" attack was from North Korea](#). The NDAA for FY'18 takes a significant step forward in advancing a cyber-deterrence policy. Among other provisions the bill establishes policy that the United States should employ all instruments of national power, including the use of offensive cyber capabilities, to deter, respond and defend against cyber attacks or other malicious cyber activities that target U.S. interests.

**State Department's "Trafficking In Persons" Report:** This week, the State Department

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released its 2017 Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Report, the annual assessment of [global efforts to end human trafficking](#). Despite increased efforts, human trafficking remains a global epidemic with more than 20 million people forced into labor and sexual slavery around the world each year. The U.S. must do more to eradicate this form of modern slavery once and for all and ensure that fundamental freedoms are afforded to all people.

**Russian Court's Convictions for Murder of Boris Nemtsov:** The Russian court's convicted five people for the [murder of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemstov](#), yet the true murderer remains ensconced in the Kremlin. My friend Boris was killed because of the culture of impunity that Vladimir Putin has created in Russia, where individuals who dare to speak the truth about Putin's tyranny and corruption are routinely persecuted, attacked, and often killed, but those responsible are never held accountable. Vladimir Putin and his thugs may have succeeded in taking Boris's life, but they did not silence him.

**Goodwin Fire in Prescott Valley, Arizona:** The Goodwin Fire has been growing in intensity in Prescott Valley, Arizona over the last few days. I am grateful to the firefighters and emergency responders working around-the-clock to provide Arizona residents with support, and urge those impacted to utilize the resources at your disposal to stay safe. Please [visit my website for resources](#) to stay informed and safe.

## Event Spotlight

I was honored to return to Vietnam this month to meet with the men and women serving aboard the [USS John S. McCain](#), a ship named for my father and grandfather who were the first father-son pair to attain a 4-star admiral rank.

Checking out a portrait of my father and grandfather in the wardroom of the USS John S. McCain, while the ship was on a port call in Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam.

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Aboard the USS John S. McCain, also known as the "[Big Bad John](#)," with my friends and colleagues Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and John Barrasso (R-WY).

I was deeply honored to preside over [one reenlistment and three promotion](#) ceremonies aboard the USS John S. McCain.

Our delegation had a productive meeting with Defense Secretary James Mattis at the [Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore](#), where we discussed Asia-Pacific security and top challenges in the region.

### **Social Media Spotlight**

Don't forget to join me every Thursday at 12:00p.m. ET / 9:00a.m. PT for a Facebook Live Town Hall! I encourage you to tune-in each week and ask your questions via [my Facebook page](#).

For updates on my work on Capitol Hill, add me on SnapChat by snapping a picture of the icon above. You can also follow me on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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