

is to have a Middle Eastern map that isn't generating more failed states year over year that become the terror training camps of next year.

This country invented religious liberty. This is the most tolerant Nation the world has ever seen. Our people need a little less elite sermonizing about tolerance in our communities and a little more articulation of the shared constitutional principles around which we are united and a lot more articulating of an actual battle plan to win the war that is going to be ours for the next many decades.

If you are worried about backlash—if you are worried about the obviously over-the-top rhetoric from unserious Presidential candidates—perhaps it will be useful for those of us who have the actual job of protecting the Constitution to tell the truth. We should be clear about who we are and about the freedoms we stand for, and we should be clear about those who would try to kill us because we believe in these freedoms.

We are at war with militant or jihadi Islam, but we are not at war with people who believe in the American creed, which includes the right of people—every people, every faith tradition—to freely worship, to freely speak, to freely assemble, and to argue. We are not at war with all Muslims. We are not at war with Muslim families in Lincoln or in Dearborn who want the American dream amid our pluralistic society for their kids, but we most certainly are at war with those who want to spread a variety of Islam that aims to motivate the killing and the freedom-taking of other Americans.

This fight will be decades long, and we will win it, but we will not win it by denying that the fight exists. We will not win it by being unclear about who we are and who they are. We will win it instead by being clearer about both who they are and who we are. We will win it by reaffirming our core constitutional values. We will win it because of who we are: a people who believes in freedom and a people who is willing to fight and even to die to preserve a free society for all Americans.

Macbeth includes that aching line: "Life is a tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing." The context is an aimless people, drifting from who they are, drifting toward nihilism signifying nothing.

This should not be us. This cannot be us. For America does signify something—something special. America is the belief that everyone—Christian, Jew, Muslim, Black and White, man and woman, rich and poor, fifth generation, first generation—everyone is endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights. Our government is our shared project to secure and safeguard those rights. Our Constitution—our shared creed—gives us a framework for that order of liberty. When politicians—whether incumbents who seem to have forgotten their oaths or candidates trying to run merely on the

bluster of their personality—don't talk about the Constitution, when they don't defend first principles, when they refuse to prefer substance over sound bites, when they nonsensically say either that our enemy has nothing to do with Islam or conversely that every Muslim is to be prejudged guilty—well, then our national conversation crumbles into sound and fury. That is not us, for we are Americans.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS BILL

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Every Student Succeeds Act—the bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

We have only one goal in mind: to give all our children the best possible education. The challenge has been to figure out the right role for the Federal Government to do that.

This bill, which will replace No Child Left Behind, moves away from rigid standardized tests and respects the vital work our teachers do every day. I strongly support those changes. However, I voted against this bill when it was first approved by the Senate a few months ago because I felt it lacked even the minimum safeguards necessary to ensure that States would use Federal funds effectively to support teachers and students. I was deeply concerned that without stronger accountability, billions of dollars in taxpayer money would not actually reach those schools and those students who needed them the most.

Unlike the bill initially approved by the Senate, the proposal before us has significantly enhanced those safeguards. I argued that it was essential that billions of dollars a year of Federal funding must be accompanied by some minimum expectations for what States are going to do with that money. One of those expectations must be that States target their efforts toward schools that are most in need of improvement and resources.

That is why I am glad this final bill includes an amendment I offered with Senator CORY BOOKER to ensure that States address the 1,200 high schools in the United States, where fewer than two-thirds of students graduate every year.

When one-third of a high school's students don't graduate, we know we have a crisis on our hands. We can't just turn our backs. This provision will ensure that States can't ignore those kids, and it will ensure additional Federal resources for those schools that clearly need it the most.

This commonsense accountability provision had deep support across the board. It was supported by the Obama administration, the civil rights community, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the NEA. It wasn't in the

bill I voted against a few months ago, but I am glad to see it in the final bill before us today because helping schools with chronic dropout rates cannot be optional.

This bill also ensures that States cannot ignore any group of students who are consistently falling behind their peers. Let's face it. Historically, States haven't always stood up for their most vulnerable kids, and this bill makes certain that those kids will not be ignored again. That is why we have a Federal education law in the first place: to ensure that when the Federal Government gives States money to buy a good education for kids, that States have to use that money to support all of our kids—especially kids who need those resources the most. Senator MURPHY and I offered amendments to achieve this goal when the bill came before the Senate. They weren't included back then, but I am glad to see that the final bill ensures that if States want Federal dollars, they cannot turn their backs on vulnerable students.

This has been a very challenging process, but Senator MURRAY and Senator ALEXANDER kept the door open for improvement, and I am grateful for that. Many allies stood together to ensure that Federal dollars would actually be used to improve both schools and educational opportunities for children living in poverty, children of color, children with disabilities, and other groups of kids who have been underserved, mistreated or systematically denied even the most basic opportunities to get a good education.

One final note. States and communities cannot address persistent achievement gaps if they don't have good data. With this bill, parents, researchers, and educators across the country will, for the first time, be able to analyze the performance of African-American boys or Hispanic girls or low-income children with disabilities. The ability to analyze the interaction of race and gender or disabilities and income will help us better understand how our schools are serving students and identify student groups who need more help. I am very grateful to my cosponsor, Senator CORY GARDNER, the Presiding Officer this afternoon, in helping make sure this final bill includes this bipartisan data transparency amendment that we offered to achieve this goal.

When President Johnson first signed ESEA back in 1965, it was a landmark civil rights law. At the time, he said:

I know that education is the only valid passport from poverty—the only valid passport. . . . I believe deeply no law I have signed or will ever sign means more to the future of America.

Today, the majority of our children in public school live in poverty—the majority. Think about that. This law is more important today than it has ever been. I am voting for this bill because I believe we have been successful in ensuring that it contains a minimum set

of safeguards to protect our most vulnerable kids. I still have real concerns about what States will do with the new flexibility it provides, and many of us here will be watching closely to see if the States deliver for our kids.

I am committed to keep fighting for our Nation's public schools, and that includes fighting for more Federal investment. I hope this legislation truly lives up to the promises made half a century ago to support public edu-

cation fully and fairly enough to create real opportunities for all of our children.

If the changes in this law don't move us closer to providing a world-class education for every single one of our children, then we will be right back here to fix it. We owe it to our students, we owe it to our teachers, we owe it to our history, and we owe it to our future to get this right.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:26 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, December 9, 2015, at 10 a.m.