

Johnson signed that law—but it didn't. Even today, powerful forces combine to strip Americans of their lawful right to vote. States have passed restrictive voter ID laws, purged voting rolls, limited opportunities to register, and erected other barriers to the political process, all with the same goal—to make sure that people who wouldn't vote for them wouldn't get a chance to vote at all.

Federal courts have been on the frontlines of that battle. Citizens have sought justice by asking the courts to strike down laws that make it harder for people of color, low-income people, the elderly, disabled, or others to vote. The judges who sit on those courts have one duty—to uphold equal justice under law.

The Senate must determine whether Federal judicial nominees are prepared to meet that obligation. Thomas Farr, the nominee for the Eastern District of North Carolina, clearly fails that test. Instead of standing up for the rights of all people to vote, Mr. Farr has been the go-to lawyer for powerful interests who have worked to stop people of color and marginalized groups from exercising their right to vote.

Among the most appalling parts of Mr. Farr's resume is his work for Jesse Helms, the former U.S. Senator and shameless bigot. Helms made his views on civil rights and equal treatment clear. He opposed renewal of the Voting Rights Act. He led opposition to commemorate the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., as a holiday. He called LGBTQ individuals "disgusting, weak, and morally sick wretches." He supported the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Senator Helms led some of the most blatantly racist political campaigns in modern history. For example, to drive down Black turnout, his campaign mailed over 100,000 postcards to homes in predominantly Black neighborhoods threatening that those individuals could be criminally prosecuted if they voted. Helms's most infamous campaign ad was a television spot that showed White hands crumpling up a job application, with an announcer saying that the person needed that job, but it was taken by a minority.

These ugly appeals to racism were a core part of Helms's campaign, and Mr. Farr was right by his side, serving as Helms's campaign lawyer. But Mr. Farr's troubling record doesn't end there. In recent years, he has played a central role in resisting anti-discrimination efforts in North Carolina.

In 2013, the Supreme Court dismantled a key part of the 1965 Voting Rights Act in its *Shelby County v. Holder* ruling, making it easier for States to enact discriminatory voter laws. After *Shelby County*, North Carolina's Republican-led legislature wasted no time in restricting voting rights, searching for ways to make it harder for African Americans in the State to vote.

North Carolina legislators requested data about voting practices broken

down by race, identified laws that helped African Americans vote, and went about gutting each one of them. In just 3 legislative days, the State legislature rammed through an omnibus voter suppression bill. The bill included a voter ID provision that specifically excluded IDs that African Americans disproportionately used. It eliminated the first week of early voting. It ended same-day registration. It eliminated out-of-precinct voting. It stopped preregistration for 16- and 17-years-olds. These were all—every one of them—practices that helped boost African-American voter turnout.

The bill was challenged in court by faith groups, by civil rights groups, and by the U.S. Government. Where was Thomas Farr? Where was he? He was on the other side, defending the discriminatory law. The Federal appeals court rejected Mr. Farr's argument. It concluded that the North Carolina Legislature had intentionally discriminated in passing its voting laws, targeting African Americans with "surgical precision."

That case represents just one of many times Mr. Farr has defended powerful interests who discriminate against and harass those who are less powerful. I will mention a few more.

When North Carolina redrew its district lines in a way that diluted the votes of African Americans, Mr. Farr defended it. When Avis, a car rental company, was sued for discriminating against African-American customers, Mr. Farr was there once again defending discrimination.

Time after time, Mr. Farr has defended racial discrimination. He has also defended discrimination against workers, discrimination against women, and discrimination against LGBTQ individuals. For example, Mr. Farr defended an employer who created a toxic work environment for female employees, instructing them to wear skirts to attract clients, commenting that women belonged in the home instead of the workplace, and telling one woman that he would help her pick up her panties from the floor. He defended the discriminatory North Carolina law that prevents transgender men and women from using the bathrooms that reflect their gender identity.

Anyone paying attention to judicial nominations knows that powerful interests are working to capture our courts. They have been having a field day in this administration. I have come before this Chamber on many occasions to oppose radical, pro-corporate nominees handpicked by those powerful interests. Thomas Farr is one of those radical, pro-corporate nominees. He is one of them, but he has set himself apart even from the many terrible nominees the Trump administration has forced through the Senate because Mr. Farr has directly worked to dismantle one of the most precious and fundamental rights of our democracy—the right to vote.

In a State that is over one-fifth African American, the Eastern District of

North Carolina has never had an African-American Federal district judge—not a single one. The Senate held up two thoroughly qualified African-American women for this same seat—two women who would have sailed through the Senate if they had gotten a vote, but they were held up so that a Republican President could fill the vacancy. And now President Trump has nominated someone who has spent much of his career defending discrimination against African Americans. Talk about rubbing salt in the wound.

Equal justice under the law is a cornerstone of American democracy, but that promise cannot be fully realized if we allow individuals like Mr. Farr to secure lifetime positions on our courts. Someone who thinks that States should be able to make it harder for Americans to vote based on the color of their skin or the likelihood that they will vote for a particular political party should be automatically disqualified from a Federal judgeship.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on Mr. Farr's nomination. The integrity of our courts is at stake.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 1551

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise today to fulfill a promise to continue to advocate for a solution that will address the critical issues of securing the border and protecting young immigrants impacted by an uncertain future—those who are part of the DACA Program.

Last month, I again offered legislation to extend the DACA Program for 3 years and to provide 3 years of increased funding for border security—a so-called 3-for-3 program. I think this is a way we can reach a compromise on this issue that will do two important things—one, provide much needed funding to secure the border. Being from a border State like Arizona, I can certainly understand that. We need a more secure border. We need additional resources, including barriers, technology, and manpower, and this legislation would provide that. At the same time, it would provide protection for those kids—numbering about 800,000 and many more eligible as well—who face an uncertain future because we haven't been able to extend or to make permanent this program.

By the way, these are kids who were brought across the border through no fault of their own when their average median age, I think, was about 6 years old. It is not their fault that they were brought here this way. For all intents and purposes, they are American—everything without the papers. Many of them have now graduated from college and face an uncertain future in the job market. Many of them are in school looking to continue that education. Many of them serve in our military. We have to do right by them and do what is good for the country, as well, and I think this legislation would do that.

Unfortunately, some of my colleagues have repeatedly chosen to block the measure. I am the first to admit that this solution is far from perfect. We need to do a lot of other things with immigration reform. We need to address long-term labor needs, as well as a more permanent solution for those who are here illegally who weren't brought across the border as children. But this is a compromise that can pass.

Given the action over the last couple of days in the House, where there was a group of House Members—Republicans and Democrats—looking to force that body to finally take action on this, it is again time to have the Senate make another attempt. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 300, H.R. 1551. I further ask that the Flake substitute amendment at the desk be considered agreed to; that the bill, as amended, 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?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, a couple of weeks ago, I started the first of what will be a weekly speech to bring attention to what I think is a travesty of justice occurring in Turkey.

I wish to speak about a pastor, a Presbyterian minister from North Carolina, who has lived in Turkey for about 20 years and who has done his very best to respect the laws of Turkey and to bring the Word to people who want to hear it.

Unfortunately, he has been swept up in a coup. He has been swept up in the emergency powers of Turkey. He has been in prison for 580 days.

I went to Turkey about 6 weeks ago to visit Pastor Brunson in prison because I heard that after being in prison for about a year and a half—and for much of that time in a cell that is designed for 8 people and had 21 people in it—he was then indicted. I heard he was afraid the American people were going to read that 62-page bogus indictment, with some of the flimsiest charges we could imagine—charges that wouldn't keep someone overnight in an American jail—that have kept him in prison for 580 days. About 2 months ago, he was indicted, but he said to his wife and friends, he was afraid the American people would read that indictment and turn their backs on him.

So it was important for me to travel over there and tell him face-to-face in that Turkish prison that is the last thing that is going to happen. We are

going to continue to work every day he is in prison. I am going to come to the Senate floor, and other Members are, every week for as long as he is illegally in prison, and we are going to make sure the American people and the Turkish people know what is going on and send a very clear message to the leaders of Turkey that this is an unacceptable way to deal with a NATO ally. It is a horrible way to deal with somebody who is only guilty of standing up for a church in Izmir.

It is a small church. Actually, the seating area down below, maybe if it was packed, could hold 150 people. It opens up to a street. It is in a residential area. They let anybody come in. They open their windows. They actually talk with the police about security matters so they know what is going on, but it is just a small church, and all he was trying to do is provide aid and comfort for those who want to seek it.

Every once in a while, he would go to Syria or other parts of Turkey to try to provide aid and comfort to those who need it, Syrian refugees or anyone else. Part of the charges are actually related to that. If you provide aid and comfort, food, to a Kurdish person, in Turkey today, you may be considered a terrorist or a coup plotter. That is what he has been charged with.

In my second trip, I spent 12 hours in a Turkish courtroom to hear every word of the testimony from secret witnesses—whom Pastor Brunson didn't get to face—about the horrible things he did. One of the charges was that one night a witness saw for 4 hours a light on in one of the rooms in the church. Here is the problem with that charge: That is the room. It doesn't have a window. So unless they had x-ray vision, there is no possible way they could have observed that, but it became weighty testimony in the courtroom.

It is a kangaroo court. I want to continue to say, if you don't know "kangaroo court," there is the definition. It is just a trumped-up theater that bears no resemblance to anything you would ever see in American jurisprudence.

Let me give another idea of the level of absurdity of the charges. Pastor Brunson's daughter posted how much she enjoyed a meal with friends. It turns out the prosecutor thought this particular meal was something that was enjoyed by people who participated in the Gulen movement, and therefore her father must somehow be associated with the coup attempt. These are actually serious discussions going on in a Turkish courtroom.

I wasn't able to make it back to Turkey on Monday. I understand that basically the same thing happened, but it got worse. On Monday, when Pastor Brunson and his defense attorney had asked that 10 other witnesses testify on his behalf, they weren't allowed to testify because they were suspects. They weren't convicted. They apparently have been charged or considered to be charged, but in Turkish jurisprudence

standards, to be suspect is enough to prevent you from actually helping defend someone who is on trial for a 35-year sentence.

He has been in prison for 580 days. He has lost 50 pounds. He is struggling to keep his wits about him, and he and his wife are doing an extraordinary job. This is a miscarriage of justice.

I believe, today, as I said in a speech 2 weeks ago, and I will say it again: Don't travel to Turkey right now. If you are thinking about making a trip to Turkey, make sure you don't eat this meal—and, for goodness' sake, if you do, don't post how much you enjoyed it because you may be considered a Gulenist. Don't take a picture with friendly people on the street whose ethnic origins you don't know because they may have you associated with somebody who is suspected of plotting a coup. That is the reality of Turkey today.

I can't guarantee the safety of North Carolinians because I have yet to actually speak with people in their state department and their foreign ministry who actually understand the absurdity of what is going on in Turkey today.

I hope we can get back to a better position, but until this man is released, and others who have been falsely charged are treated fairly, I am going to have to come to the Senate floor each and every week we are in session to make sure the American people know what is going on in Turkey and to make absolutely certain that people like Pastor Brunson who are in prison know they have people in the U.S. Senate.

In fact, 66 Senate Members have signed a letter—that is a big lift in the U.S. Senate to get any 66 Members to agree on something—to send a very clear message that we are watching, and there will be consequences if this man is wrongfully imprisoned and could potentially spend the rest of his life in Turkey.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with my friend and colleague from Oklahoma.

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

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, with that approval, I will pass it over and thank Senator LANKFORD for his hard work—he has been aware of this issue from day one—and collaboration on it.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I thank Senator TILLIS and the Presiding Officer for acknowledging our time to have this conversation. This is a serious conversation because this is a NATO ally.

Dr. Andrew Brunson has been in Turkey 24 years. For 23 of these years, he served as a pastor in humanitarian work. He took care of providing food and clothing and pastoral ministry for anyone who would come, just like anyone does.

That has not been an issue in Turkey for decades because Turkey has been very open to all faiths, all religions, and they have prided themselves on