

I said, more jobs in other industries, including the automotive industry, than they saved in the steel-producing industry.

I know something about the aluminum industry. My dad worked most of his life at Alcoa's Tennessee aluminum smelting plant, which closed a few years ago because electricity was so much cheaper in other parts of the world. You use electricity—lots of it—to smelt aluminum. That is why those plants came to East Tennessee more than a century ago. But electric prices in the United States gradually rose over that century, and are still cheaper in other parts of the world. So today there are only eight smelting plants left in the United States. Seven of them are still in operation. Alcoa operates four and makes 46 percent—nearly half—of all of the aluminum produced in the United States. Alcoa opposes the aluminum tariffs because it also operates smelting plants in Canada and other countries that export aluminum to the United States.

The bottom line is this: The largest U.S. producer of aluminum, Alcoa, doesn't want the aluminum tariffs. The thousands of auto plants and other plants that use aluminum don't want the aluminum tariffs. So who is asking for the aluminum tariffs?

A second reason justifying tariffs is that other countries may have been unfair to the United States. There may be examples of that, but when did it become a good idea to solve your own problem by shooting yourself in both feet at once? It is hard to see how raising our taxes and destroying our jobs is a smart solution to unfair trade practices.

Then there is the question of whether tariffs help autoworkers. Raising taxes and prices and selling fewer cars wouldn't seem to help the American autoworker.

Will it cause foreign companies to build more cars in the United States? Well, that is already happening.

The foreign manufacturers have been doing exactly what we asked them to do. They have moved here. They produce cars and trucks here. They export many of those cars and trucks and auto parts to other countries. Today, about half the cars being built in America are being built by the so-called foreign manufacturers. Nissan's plant in Rutherford County employs 8,000 Tennesseans and is the largest and most efficient auto plant in North America.

I was with President Trump last year when he spoke in Michigan about all the autoworker jobs leaving the Midwest. Since 1994, 3.6 million of those jobs have left the Midwest, but they didn't go overseas; they moved to Tennessee and Alabama and other parts of the Southeastern United States, which gained 3.6 million auto jobs during the same period. Those new auto plants are in Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Texas. Those are all States where

the President is widely admired and States that he carried heavily in his election effort.

Those plants moved primarily to the Southeast because our part of the country offered right-to-work laws and an environment that allowed companies to make quality cars at a lower cost and sell them competitively here in the United States and around the world. In fact, my own view is that the movement of the American auto industry to the Southeast saved the American auto industry because where it was 25, 30, or 40 years ago was stuck in the Midwest in an oligopoly where the United Automobile Workers and three big companies were producing big, expensive cars, and the little foreign cars were coming in and eating their lunch in the marketplace. So now we have strong and effective American auto plants in the Midwestern United States and in the Southeastern United States, and half of them are made by so-called foreign manufacturers.

I agree with President Trump on many things—taxes, judges, regulations, the economy, Keystone Pipeline, and others. He has helped create today's booming economy and low unemployment. I give him credit for helping to do that, but these tariffs take us in exactly the opposite direction.

These tariffs are dangerous. These tariffs are going to cost us jobs. These tariffs are going to lower our family incomes. These tariffs are going to undo much of the good the President and this Congress have done during the last year and a half to create this booming economy.

I respectfully suggest that the President reconsider his trade policy, drop the tariffs as a tool for implementing his objectives, and find other, more effective means to persuade other countries to do for us what we do for them.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

OPENING OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL VA MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, this weekend, Colorado will be celebrating the opening of our new Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center in Aurora. I am incredibly proud that we will be reaching this milestone this weekend after more than a decade of work and some significant hurdles, trials, and tribulations along the way. I commend my colleagues for the work they did funding this project.

The Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center will be the crown jewel of the VA system. It wasn't easy to get here. A lot of people had to do a lot of work to make it happen, including the veterans, the leadership organizations in Colorado, our colleagues across the aisle, Congressman COFFMAN, Congressman PERLMUTTER, Senator BENNET—in fact, the entire congressional delegation for a number of years—Senator Salazar, Senator Udall, Senator Allard. They have all done incredible work to make this weekend a possibility.

Hundreds of millions of tax dollars were used for this facility. It did run over budget. It certainly ran over time. But we have learned a lot as a result of this facility, and the Army Corps of Engineers will now be taking over major construction projects like this. As a result of this facility, we have made changes on how designs are being made. It was a learning experience and unfortunately a costly one at that, but it doesn't change the fact that this will be a crown jewel in the VA system.

This is not the end of a project, it is the beginning of a promise to be fulfilled—a promise to our veterans on the care they will receive, a place where they will find healing, where they will find support, and where they will find a return to good health.

To our men and women in uniform who currently serve, know that you have a place in Colorado where you will find incredible care.

To those who have served our country, who live in Colorado, know that with great pride, we open this facility this weekend.

But we have more work to do. We have work to do to make sure that it is easier to hire doctors and fill the positions at the hospital that have remained open for months around the VA system. It takes too long to onboard medical professionals. We should cut down that time, figure out how to cut through the redtape and the bureaucracy. If you are qualified to practice medicine at Swedish Hospital in Denver, or any of our other great facilities, why can't you just go to work at the VA hospital as well? So these are things that we can do to do a better job.

On Monday, I met with the Secretary nominee, Robert Wilkie, President Trump's nominee to be the new VA Secretary, and I talked to him about the work we have to continue to do to make sure that veterans receive the best care possible. This Congress has passed legislation, such as the Choice Act. We have made great reforms over the last several months to reduce wait times and wait lists and to eliminate them and make sure that we can provide that promise of care.

This weekend in Colorado there will be a great celebration as we open this facility. So many people put in tireless years upon years of work, from the leadership of the State to the leadership of Congress. I am grateful that this weekend we celebrate as we open a facility that begins to fulfill the promise made a decade ago for veterans in the region.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULIVAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to join my colleagues in making it clear just how

high the stakes are when it comes to our Nation's highest courts—for our families, for our communities, for our country, and for our future.

Since the day he took office, President Trump has made one move after another to turn the White House and the entire executive branch into a tool for those who have the most power, the most money, and the most influence to get even more power, more money, and more influence. From our public schools to our public lands and more, it is hard to find any Trump administration decision where the bottom line didn't come first.

But it is not just his administration. President Trump has systematically worked to roll back decades of progress through our courtrooms, from the Supreme Court on down, which will have long-lasting impacts stretching far beyond his time in the White House.

I know some of my colleagues were here last night to talk about the absolutely egregious circuit court nominees who would do everything they can to whittle away at our rights and freedoms as Americans. I want to talk about that for a bit as well, but I want to take some time first to talk about a nominee who would sit above those circuit court nominees in our Nation's Supreme Court and who, if confirmed, would overturn *Roe v. Wade*, eliminate protections for patients with preexisting conditions, reverse settled law and precedent, and give these extreme circuit court nominees even more room to do damage to our Constitution, our laws, our freedoms, and our way of life.

It is telling that President Trump and his Republican and special-interest allies are desperately trying to make the case that Judge Kavanaugh isn't well outside the mainstream, far outside the bounds of reasonable, and deeply opposed to what people across the country want when it comes to their rights and freedoms being protected. They may try, but they will not succeed because the record is clear and the facts are clear. Judge Kavanaugh is an extreme pick who would be devastating for our country if he is confirmed, and we need to do everything we can to stop it.

So I am standing here right now, on behalf of the families in my home State of Washington and across this country, to be very clear about what is at stake if President Trump and his enablers continue to try to turn our judicial system into one that works for massive corporations and special interests and against regular families.

Earlier today, a number of my colleagues stood in this spot to sound the alarm on what is at stake for our environment and our public health if the balance of this Court swings toward President Trump and his extreme special interests. I want to expand on those concerns, and I want to talk about just a few of the many issues that Judge Kavanaugh would impact should he be confirmed and how awful this would be for our families, commu-

nities, students, and workers and for our environment, our elections, our country, and more.

But before I get into some other issues—and, again, just a few of many—I want to start with two that I believe are most important and that every woman, every man, and every family should be thinking very hard about: protections for patients with preexisting conditions and *Roe v. Wade*.

First, President Trump has broken promise after promise he made to workers and families on the campaign trail, but he has never once wavered in keeping promises he made to extreme, ideological, rightwing special interests.

President Trump said he would make taking away patient protections—like those for preexisting conditions—and gutting policies that have made healthcare more affordable for millions a top priority. He failed to jam a bill through Congress here to make those things happen. So he has done everything he can to attack patients' healthcare from the Oval Office.

His biggest attack yet is Judge Kavanaugh—an extremely conservative nominee vetted by those same rightwing special interests who President Trump is so determined to keep happy, a judge who those special interests picked because they know he will help them undermine affordable healthcare from the Supreme Court Bench.

I believed President Trump when he said he was determined to undermine patients' healthcare in order to satisfy rightwing special interests. Healthcare coverage, especially for people with preexisting conditions, is on the line with this nomination, and we cannot afford not to take this threat seriously.

That is not the only healthcare issue under threat. President Trump said he would appoint Supreme Court Justices vetted by these groups for their willingness to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. He said women should be punished for having an abortion. In office, he and Vice President MIKE PENCE have done virtually everything they can to restrict women's access to healthcare and to chip away at women's constitutionally protected reproductive rights. Unless women and men across the country stand up to stop them, they will succeed in putting another Supreme Court Justice who has the ideological rightwing's stamp of approval when it comes to striking down *Roe*.

There is no sugarcoating this. We are on the precipice of five men voting to overturn a historic ruling that has made women healthier and made them more equal and more free in the United States. We cannot let that happen.

Those are two issues that so many of us are focused on, and they are so important, but they are far from the only ones. Another key issue I want to briefly mention today is the rights and freedoms of our LGBTQ friends, coworkers, neighbors, and fellow Americans. We have made progress, but there are many questions and cases in this area

that will come before the Supreme Court in the coming years—whether it is questions regarding equality under the adoption laws for all couples or the rights of a couple to buy a wedding cake, whether transgender troops can serve their country, whether someone can continue being fired simply for being LGBTQ, and more. So there is a whole lot at stake. Anyone who cares about this issue or anyone who simply believes that everyone in this country should have fundamental rights and freedoms—no matter who they are or who they love—should join us in rejecting Judge Kavanaugh.

That is not all. We have known from day one that President Trump would be hostile toward our bedrock environmental laws, that he was eager to do the bidding of the coal, oil, and gas industries, that his slogan of putting America first actually meant that the United States would be dead last in the fight against climate change, and that Trump's economic agenda has more to do with rolling back rules that help to keep our kids safe from toxic pollutants, protecting our drinking water, or preventing health problems in senior citizens—the ones those special interest groups try to call pesky regulations and what the rest of us moms, grandmothers, and ordinary people call commonsense protections.

But it is apparently not enough just to attack our environment for the administration. If you really want to shape our Nation's environmental laws for generations to come, you put someone on the Supreme Court for life who will consistently side with the massive corporations and special interests that put profits ahead of the health and well-being of families, and, boy, did those CEOs and special interests hit the jackpot with President Trump's nominee.

You don't have to spend long looking at Judge Kavanaugh's record to see that, should he be seated, nearly five decades of environmental protection are at risk, including the protections enshrined in the Clean Air Act, which has significantly cut the smog, soot, and chemicals that choked communities prior to 1970 and prevented hundreds of thousands of premature deaths and cases of heart disease in the years sense.

Also at risk is the Clean Water Act, which, if erased, would take us back to the bad old days before commonsense protections—like when the Cuyahoga River was so polluted that it caught fire; when shellfish beds were closed in Puget Sound, nearly decimated by pollutants; or when an estimated 20 million gallons of sewage effluent flowed into Lake Washington every single day.

I could go on and on about the strides our country has made to keep our families safe, but the bottom line is that because of our landmark environmental laws—like the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act—our rivers are cleaner, our air is easier to breathe,

and families are better protected than ever before.

Though we have a lot of work yet to do, it would be a grave mistake to go backward, and that is just what so many people fear would happen with Judge Kavanaugh on the Bench, given his past rulings and given the test that President Trump applied and his commitment to only nominate someone screened and approved by the extreme right, especially his stance that could take decisions away from our Nation's scientists and nonpartisan professionals and put those decisions into the hands of special interests.

That takes me to another issue I want to run through briefly: making sure our elections in this country are free and accessible and that corporations don't have a louder voice in our process than ordinary voters. These are issues where our courts have failed to serve us well in recent years, but by confirming Judge Kavanaugh, we would be cementing this awful pattern for a generation and making necessary reform so much more difficult.

Judge Kavanaugh will continue his habit of ruling to make it harder and harder for citizens to vote and have a voice in this democracy. We know this. We saw how he ruled in favor of stricter voter ID laws—ones where the intention to make it harder for Americans to vote was clear and absolutely the wrong way to go. We cannot have a Supreme Court that continues to allow voter suppression.

So I ask my colleagues: If you believe that voting in our country should be open to all and that people shouldn't have less access to the voting booth because of where they live or the color of their skin, join me in rejecting this nominee and demanding someone who will protect our elections and our democracy. If you believe that Citizens United was an awful decision that perverted the First Amendment and put shameful amounts of power into the hands of the mega rich and the biggest corporations, join me in rejecting this nominee and demanding someone who would put our ordinary voters first.

If we can't stem the flow of dark, unaccountable money in politics, and reverse the tide of the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations being allowed to have the loudest voices in our elections, we are going to keep running into massive challenges as a nation. Without a Supreme Court willing to do that, without rejecting Judge Kavanaugh and demanding someone else, we can't do that. Giving the most powerful among us an advantage in our elections is not the only way Judge Kavanaugh is working for those at the top, and I want to briefly discuss another.

Last month's Janus decision made it clear that workers and their unions need a fair voice on the Supreme Court. Unfortunately, Judge Kavanaugh has a long record of weakening worker protections, undermining union rights, and making it easier for corporations

and special interests to tilt the scales of justice in their favor.

I would urge my colleagues who claim to care about the rights and economic security of working families to join me in rejecting this nomination and put the power back into the hands of working families and the middle class.

This point is especially potent given the disgrace we witnessed in Helsinki. Every American should be deeply concerned about President Trump putting someone on the Supreme Court who is prepared to protect him from legal attack and do his bidding.

As we all watch, many of us in horror and dismay, as President Trump continues to do everything in his power to try and discredit the Mueller investigation, we cannot forget, for a moment, that his Supreme Court nominee suggested in a 2009 law review article that a sitting President should not be subjected to criminal investigation or civil or criminal litigation.

Does anyone think, for one second, this isn't something President Trump was looking for? Is there anyone who has seen how President Trump has acted, listened to what he said who thinks he is not thinking about what happens if something related to this investigation goes to the Supreme Court?

President Trump controls the White House. His Republicans control both Houses of Congress. The last thing we need, the last thing any American who truly cares about our country should want is to place the last remaining branch—the final branch intended to be independent, to put our Constitution first—into the hands of a Trump lackey. That would be awful. It would eliminate even the pretense of checks and balances. If Judge Kavanaugh is confirmed, with his record and given what we know about President Trump, that is exactly what would happen.

If you believe we should be taking the Russian election interference into U.S. elections seriously, join me in rejecting this nominee and demanding someone who would be truly independent and place an appropriate check on Executive power.

If you believe a President is not above the law, join me in rejecting this nominee and demanding someone who will take our Constitution and our judicial independence seriously.

If you believe Executive power is not unilateral and that real checks and balances are required, join me in rejecting this nominee and demanding someone who will clearly and unequivocally make sure that continues to be a reality.

Finally, I want to highlight Judge Kavanaugh's troubling record on commonsense gun safety. This is an issue that certainly hit close to home for far too many people in recent years. Churches, schools, concerts, it seems like no place is immune to the rampant gun violence happening in the country, which is why millions of Americans have taken to the streets in recent months to demand action.

Yet, at the same time, Judge Kavanaugh has taken a far more expansive interpretation of the Second Amendment and has vigorously argued that assault weapon bans are unconstitutional. His position is far more extreme than even the late Justice Scalia. It is no wonder the NRA immediately applauded Judge Kavanaugh's nomination and has pledged now to spend untold amounts to seal the deal on his confirmation.

Those are just a few issues weighing on so many people's minds right now. I could go on about what is at stake if President Trump turns his White House, and potentially now the judicial system, into one that favors the powerful few.

I would like to close by saying there are few things I take as seriously as a Senator than my duty to consider and vote on a Supreme Court nominee. In my time in the Senate, I have had the opportunity to consider nominees from Democrats and nominees from Republicans. I voted for some of them, I voted against some of them, each on their merits, and each based on how I think they would serve.

This time is different. We know exactly where President Trump's Supreme Court nominee will fall on the specific issues, no matter what vague answers Judge Kavanaugh chooses to deliver through this process.

Why do we know this? Because President Trump told us openly, publicly, and repeatedly. The President laid out specific tests and promised to only pick nominees from a prescreened list of people who would absolutely meet them.

Nobody should be fooled. Judge Kavanaugh is a rubberstamp. He will stand with special interests over families, and he will take our country in the wrong direction.

I urge my colleagues, stand with me in rejecting Judge Kavanaugh's nomination and join me in calling on President Trump to send us someone who would stand with women, with our workers, with our families, and who would truly commit to respecting settled law and the rights and freedoms we all hold dear and the longstanding protections that help keep our families safe and healthy.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

NOMINATION OF RYAN BOUNDS

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I rise to speak out in opposition to the nomination of Ryan Bounds to sit on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

I will be voting against his confirmation, and I ask all of my colleagues to do the same. My reason for this is not just the fact that in expressing his disdain for multicultural values in a series of college writings, he compared efforts to build tolerance and promote diversity to Nazi book burning; it is not just the fact that he advocated against policies designed to make