

academic credentials, and, of course, his experience on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals. He was candid and open, professional and impressive.

I hope all of our colleagues will meet with Judge Kavanaugh to see for themselves. I have been told that he has been making calls to some Democratic Senators' offices, and they refuse to see him at all.

He is an accomplished jurist who will fairly and faithfully apply the law as written and adhere to the text of the Constitution, as judges are obligated to do, and leave the policymaking and the politics to the Congress and the executive branch. I look forward to continuing our vetting process and voting to confirm Judge Kavanaugh this fall—well in advance of the October term of the Supreme Court.

On a separate note, Mr. President, this afternoon, we will vote to confirm another accomplished legal mind, Andy Oldham, to the Federal Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which includes Texas.

Andy will join two other judges whom we have already confirmed in the Fifth Circuit earlier this year: Don Willett, a former member of the Texas Supreme Court, and Jim Ho, my former chief counsel, someone with impeccable legal credentials. They are already on the Fifth Circuit. I am delighted that Andy Oldham will be joining them.

As we like to say in Texas, Andy wasn't born there, but he got there as fast as he could. He grew up in Richmond, VA, where his parents instilled within him a sense of hard work. His father put himself through college, and his mother was one of the first women to attend the University of Virginia.

Following their examples, Andy attended the University of Virginia and was awarded the prestigious title of Jefferson Scholar. While he was at UVA, he helped found an advocacy group to prevent sexual assault. His group was particularly focused on educating young men on their responsibilities when it comes to sexual violence.

From there, he attended the University of Cambridge as a Truman Scholar, graduated with first class honors, and then went to law school at Harvard—very impressive academic credentials.

During law school, he helped represent a death row inmate in a habeas corpus petition and won a temporary stay of execution in the U.S. Supreme Court. Based on Andy's hard work, the then-Governor of Virginia, who is now a Member of the Senate, commuted the defendant's sentence to life without parole based upon Andy's legal representation.

After law school, he went on to clerk for Judge Sentelle on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, which I spoke about in connection with Brett Kavanaugh. Then he served as an attorney to the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel; that is, the lawyers for the lawyers at the Department of Justice's

Office of Legal Counsel, who issue authoritative guidance for the Department of Justice. And then, of course, he served as a law clerk for Justice Alito on the Supreme Court.

Following a period of private practice, the State of Texas came calling, and Andy became a deputy solicitor general in the office of the Texas attorney general; then it was Greg Abbott, whom he later followed to the Governor's office, where he now serves as Governor Abbott's general counsel.

On behalf of the State of Texas, Andy has argued two cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and filed countless briefs in support of the State. Because of his background and experience, Andy has earned bipartisan support, receiving recommendations from the general counsel to the Obama Foundation, as well as the Texas attorney general's office.

In his confirmation hearing before the Judiciary Committee, Andy spoke about his transition from a role as an advocate to that of a jurist. He explained how he views the role of a jurist as "fundamentally different," which it is.

He went on to say that "the oath of a jurist is simply to administer justice impartially, to do equal right by rich and poor, and to discharge justice in an equal and fair manner." This is exactly the type of judge we should want serving on our courts—someone who is impartial, not someone who will push for a particular ideology or political agenda on the bench. I believe Andy will follow this philosophy of impartially and fairly administering the law.

Andy spent all but 3 years of his career in public service, and he has advocated on behalf of Texans for many years. I am confident he will continue to serve them and the rest of the country well, and I look forward to supporting his nomination this afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The Senator from Utah.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise today to discuss the confirmation process for Brett Kavanaugh. By any honest measure, President Trump's nominee, Judge Kavanaugh, is exceptionally well qualified to serve on the Supreme Court. When he was nominated to the DC Circuit, he already had stellar credentials, a keen intellect, and an impressive knowledge of the law. He was confirmed to the DC Circuit Court in 2006, following years of Democratic obstruction. I have followed his work closely on that court for over a decade. His judicial record never ceases to impress.

A nominee with such a sterling reputation should receive wide bipartisan support. But over the years, I have seen firsthand the deterioration of the judicial confirmation process. When Justice Kennedy announced his retirement, I knew the Democrats would, again, play politics with the Supreme Court. It is what they have done for more than three decades. It is a matter

of grave concern to me, especially with an eminently qualified nominee. They are casting about looking for something—really, anything—to stop Judge Kavanaugh's confirmation.

Because Democrats want political judges, they politicize the confirmation process. This is what they did to oppose Justice Neil Gorsuch when he was nominated. They took a few cases out of the thousands he had decided and distorted what he had said. They attacked him as being unfit to serve. They said he was unqualified to be a Justice, but Justice Gorsuch had an unassailable record as a principled jurist on the Federal bench.

We fought back against the misrepresentations, the caricatures, and the exaggerations, and the American people saw through the Democrats' ruse. They saw the kind of Justice Neil Gorsuch would be—a Justice who says what the law is, not what he wants it to be, a Justice who respects the separation of powers, a Justice who will stand up to the executive and legislative branches when they overreach. I believe the American people will see the same thing when they look at Judge Kavanaugh.

The debate over Judge Kavanaugh's confirmation should be a debate over his qualifications. Does he understand the proper role of a judge under our Constitution? Does he have the experience needed? Will he respect our Constitution and the rule of law?

With hundreds of opinions, Judge Kavanaugh has built a reputation as being one of the most respected and influential judges in the entire country. His incisive reasoning has led the Supreme Court to adopt his positions in at least 12 cases.

Fidelity to the Constitution and to the rule of law are hallmarks of his opinions. Importantly, his vast body of work shows a deep commitment to the separation of powers. His opinions demonstrate his commitment to the principle that judges should interpret the law, not make it.

Judge Kavanaugh should be asked questions about his rulings and his approach to the law. As a judge, he has developed a reputation for his preparation in court. I have no doubt that he can stand up under the most rigorous questioning.

Yet what we have seen so far is a mix of hyperbole, mudslinging, and distortion. Attacks aimed at Judge Kavanaugh have not focused on whether he is qualified to serve. They have not focused on whether he understands the role of a judge. They have not focused on how he will interpret the Constitution and the laws passed by Congress. When it comes to what we should be asking about a nominee, what we have seen so far is not even in the ballpark.

After scouring Judge Kavanaugh's financial disclosure, progressives thought they had struck gold with a shocking revelation that would, surely, turn public opinion against him. So

what salacious scandal did they uncover? What damning evidence did they find that would dash all hopes of confirmation?

The Presiding Officer is not going to believe this, but they discovered that Judge Kavanaugh enjoys America's pastime. That is right. Judge Kavanaugh loves baseball—horrors. Honestly, I couldn't believe it either. But wait. It gets worse.

Not only does Judge Kavanaugh love baseball, but he was once a season ticket holder at Nationals Park. OK, but here is the real kicker. Judge Kavanaugh bought those season tickets with a credit card—with a credit card of all things. As was the Presiding Officer, I was speechless too. I have been racking my brain all week trying to figure out how a credit card-using baseball fan could slip through the cracks of the White House's vetting process.

Now, I am being facetious to prove a point. We are only 9 days into the confirmation process, and progressive opposition is already beyond parody.

Of course, this is nothing new. Everything we have seen so far comes directly from the Democrats' playbook. Throw every rumor, half-truth, and exaggeration at the nominee, and just see what sticks. When nothing sticks, double down on partisan attacks, take past statements out of context, mischaracterize his positions, and lob a hyperbolic Hail Mary if you have to. Do everything you can to denigrate, disparage, and dehumanize the nominee no matter his qualifications or character.

If Democrats continue down this path, we are going to lose all ability to debate matters of public importance. We cannot expect that all debate will be well reasoned, but opposition should, at the very least, be rational. It should never be hysterical. The rhetoric used to oppose Judge Kavanaugh crosses that line.

Just last week, when speaking about Judge Kavanaugh's impressive resume, I said you could not knock Yale, Harvard, or Georgetown. Maybe I spoke too soon. Shortly after the announcement that Judge Kavanaugh would be the nominee, Yale Law School released a statement with praise of Judge Kavanaugh from professors and administrators.

One professor even noted that "politics have deeply harmed our Supreme Court nomination process," but she lauded Judge Kavanaugh as being a "true intellectual," an "incomparable mentor," and a "fair-minded jurist who believes in the rule of law." She went on to say that "he is humble, collegial, and cares deeply about the federal courts."

The response from some Yale Law School students, staff, and alumni was swift, forceful, uncompromising, and completely ridiculous: "People will die if he is confirmed." As these Yale alumni were feverishly opposing the nomination, Judge Kavanaugh was spotted volunteering his time with a

local charity to distribute food to the poor. His decision to keep his commitment to volunteer the week he was nominated to the Supreme Court says more about Judge Kavanaugh than any letter could.

This overwrought reaction, sadly, comes as no surprise. Crying wolf is the left's trademark strategy in attempts to sabotage Republican nominees. Back in 1990, a group that opposed then-nominee David Souter warned that he was a threat to the "lives, health and livelihoods of millions of women and their families." It wasn't true then, and it isn't true now.

I hope that the Senate can raise the level of debate as we consider the nomination. In doing so, we should focus on whether Judge Kavanaugh is qualified.

I hope my Democratic colleagues can resist the temptation to politicize this nomination as they have with others in the past. Some of what we are seeing now has me worried.

We have also heard a lot from Democrats about how important transparency is to the confirmation process. Because of Judge Kavanaugh's long record of public service to our Nation, the executive branch has been asked to produce a large number of documents. Democrats have been demanding that they be given access to these documents as quickly as possible.

Some of my colleagues have expressed shock that Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein requested that assistant U.S. attorneys help to review these documents. The truth is that the Office of Legal Policy at the Justice Department always assists with nominations, and that Office is composed mostly of career attorneys. It is not uncommon for attorneys from other offices in the Justice Department to help with the review of nominations.

The government attorneys at the Department of Justice who work on nominations are extraordinarily thorough. Given the reportedly large number of documents, it makes sense that to facilitate this process, the DOJ would seek extra help.

When we spoke last week, Judge Kavanaugh said he was proud of his opinions, and he hoped people would actually read them rather than just read about them. I think those who do that will be just as impressed by Judge Kavanaugh's work as I am. I hope Senators will take the time to sit down with him.

Judge Kavanaugh has spent more than 23 years in public service. As a good man, a decent man, and an honest man, Judge Kavanaugh is the type of person we should all hope is nominated to a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court. That is why I am so pleased that President Trump nominated Judge Kavanaugh. I intend to do everything I can to support his nomination, and I hope that all other Senators will do the same.

We have to quit this mudslinging and mischaracterizing of people's characters. Judge Kavanaugh is one of the

finest people I know. He is also one of the smartest. He is conservative—no question about that—but he is honest. To me, these are some of the most important keys to these judgeship positions. I hope we get rid of the unjust representations against the judge. I hope we will start treating the Senate like the great deliberative body it really is.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

(The remarks of Mr. BARRASSO pertaining to the introduction of S. 3229 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, last week, President Trump nominated Judge Brett Kavanaugh to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. People have begun looking over his extensive record, and he has been getting rave reviews around the country. Just look at a few of the headlines we have seen across the country.

The New York Times, July 10: "A conservative stalwart wins praise for his intellect and civility." The New York Times—it is astonishing.

The Wall Street Journal said: "Trump's nominee will be an intellectual leader on the bench."

The Detroit News said his record suggests that "he will maintain a commitment to interpreting the law as it is written, and not how he may wish it had been crafted." That is exactly what Americans should be looking for in a Supreme Court Justice because a judge's job is to apply the law, not to rewrite it.

People looking at Judge Kavanaugh's record and reaching the conclusion that he knows the right way to approach this very important job.

It is not just newspapers that are saying wonderful things and singing the praise of Judge Kavanaugh; legal scholars are lining up to commend his independence and his wisdom as a judge. Some of them are extremely liberal people he has worked with over the years. They just respect him that much as a judge who they find has been devoted to the law and the Constitution. Imagine that. That is what we