

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

should expect in anybody who serves as a Justice on the Supreme Court.

A law professor from Yale wrote an op-ed for the New York Times last week titled “A liberal’s case for Brett Kavanaugh.” The professor called Judge Kavanaugh “a superb nominee” and said that “it is hard to name anyone with judicial credentials as strong as those of Judge Kavanaugh.”

Another liberal law professor called him a “highly qualified mainstream conservative judge.” He cited Judge Kavanaugh’s reasoning as “an example of the judging ideal, setting aside ideology and party politics, and just trying to get the law right.” That is a liberal former law professor. He said Judge Kavanaugh gives “an independent judiciary the job it is supposed to do: Interpret the law.”

There are lawyers who have appeared before Judge Kavanaugh who said the same things. I am not a lawyer, I haven’t done these sorts of things, but I understand there are surveys of lawyers who appear before judges in court, people who have won cases and people who have lost cases. They put up their ideas about what they thought about the judge afterward.

Across the board, they called him “an excellent judge.” They said that he “has a history of excellent legal argument and analysis,” someone who can think intellectually, think clearly, and come up with a legal argument and analysis to make the assessment, to apply the law as written. One lawyer actually said: “It is daunting and humbling to be in front of that brainpower.” This was an anonymous survey of lawyers who appear before Judge Kavanaugh. I don’t know if they won or lost, but people get to put in their opinions, winners and losers, after cases in anonymous surveys. “It is daunting and humbling to be in front of that brainpower.” This wasn’t people just trying to kiss up to the judge to win favor in a case; these are results from people after the case who were just telling it like it is. “Excellent legal judgment,” they say.

If you look beyond the courtroom, people are just as willing to talk about Judge Kavanaugh’s character as a person, not just a judge. That is part of it—to look at somebody’s legal philosophy, their intellect, and their character—when trying to assess a judge who has been nominated, to say: Is this person the right person to be a Justice on the Supreme Court?

The Washington Post even ran a piece by a woman who knows Judge Kavanaugh because he coaches her daughter’s basketball team. She wrote that she was impressed by “his traits of personal kindness, leadership, and willingness to help when called on.”

There are three things I look for in a nominee for the Supreme Court: judicial philosophy, a strong intellect, and a solid character. What we are hearing is overwhelming evidence from people who know him that Judge Kavanaugh has all of these qualities. He is some-

one who takes the law and the Constitution at face value.

The Constitution is a legal document, not a living document, and it was built for certainty. He knows that a judge’s job is to “interpret the law,” not to legislate from the bench, “not to make the law or make policy.” That is what he actually said in a speech last year.

He has an extremely strong intellect, and I can’t imagine there is anyone out there who can deny that. “It is daunting and humbling to be in front of that brainpower”—this is what one of the lawyers who appeared before him said. And he is a person of solid character. That is what we are hearing from people who have known him over the years from being extremely active in the community. The New York Times summarized it: “A conservative stalwart wins praise for his intellect and civility.”

So what is there for Democrats to come to the floor and object to? Why are they objecting to all of this? Why are some Democrats already saying they oppose a judge known for his intellect and civility? They were actually saying it before he was even named by President Trump. Whomever President Trump names, they are going to vote no. It is astonishing to see Democrats making that decision. Then they are asking for reams and reams of documents after they have already said they are against Judge Kavanaugh. What are they looking for? It is amazing.

That is what I believe the big difference is between Republicans and Democrats in Washington: Republican Presidents choose judges and justices to follow the law; Democratic Presidents seem to pick judges and justices who are guaranteed to push liberal policies and liberal agendas, preconceived notions of how they should rule on a case before they hear the facts. They know the way they are going to go, maybe using things like emotion, sympathy, and empathy. The Constitution is a legal document.

Even though you have legal experts from around the political world and around the spectrum of all sides of the aisle who praise his intellect and civility, it is not good enough for the liberal activists in this country. They don’t even want to consider Judge Kavanaugh’s qualifications, and they have said it here on the floor of the Senate and on television, if you listen. They are already making opposition to his nomination a liberal litmus test for Democrats in this Senate, and I am sorry to say that more than a few Democrats seem to be playing along. We have seen Democrats in the Senate who have already said that they don’t care about Judge Kavanaugh’s intellect; they don’t care that he is “just trying to get the law right”; they don’t care that, as one lawyer said, “it is hard to name anyone with judicial credentials as strong as those of Judge Kavanaugh.”

When you have someone with these qualifications, Senators ought to be looking at his record. They should look at the 300 decisions he has written in 12 years on the bench. It is absolutely the right thing to look at. They should meet him and talk with him.

We have just begun this confirmation hearing process. I hope that more Democrats in the Senate will have an open mind about this nominee. I hope they will consider the kind of person we should have on the Supreme Court and then make their decisions about whether Judge Kavanaugh has those qualities. From what I have seen, he absolutely does.

I plan to continue to look into his record and listen to people who know him best. I plan to sit down and talk with him. Everything I have seen so far tells me that this is someone who is exactly the kind of Justice we need on the Supreme Court.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, to my colleagues, let me just say that we must speak out and act.

President Trump’s appearance with Russia’s President Putin—a U.S. President capitulating to a strongman dictator, unprecedented in American history—compromised America’s national security and brings into question whether America can be relied upon as the leader of the free world.

With Mr. Trump standing with Mr. Putin while he discredited America’s investigation into Russian meddling—this is an American President, with a dictator, challenging the investigation being done against Russia—the President questioned the conclusions of U.S. intelligence agencies. He left unchallenged Mr. Putin’s lies and illegal military invasions.

In short, Mr. Trump did Mr. Putin’s bidding. In Russia, they are smiling; at the White House, they are scrambling.

Congress must speak out and act. Congress must repudiate the President’s actions to make clear to the American people and the world that Russia, directed by Mr. Putin, attacked our free election system in 2016 and tried to tip the scales in favor of Mr. Trump.

Russia illegally invaded the sovereign state of Ukraine and illegally annexed Crimea, which the United States must make clear we will never recognize. Russia, under Mr. Putin, murders its political opponents and journalists. Russia has interfered in the politics of several European democratic states.

Six months ago, I authored, on behalf of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Democrats, a report entitled “Putin’s Asymmetrical Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security.”

I sent a copy of that report to President Trump and hoped that he would absorb it and use it in his meeting with