

His writings mocked LGBTQ students for being sensitive when a group of drunk athletes vandalized a statue celebrating gay pride.

He mocked Latino students for being overly sensitive when they complained about the termination of a Latino administrator.

Then he wrote this, in an article about sexual assault on campus: "There is really nothing inherently wrong with the University failing to punish an alleged rapist—regardless his guilt—in the absence of adequate certainty; there is nothing that the University can do to objectively ensure that the rapist does not strike again. Only the legal system can do that, and if it lacks the certainty to do so, it is not necessarily up to the University to stick it to the suspect, anyway, just in case. Expelling students is probably not going to contribute a great deal toward a rape victim's recovery; there is no moral imperative to risk egregious error in doing so."

Not only did Mr. Bounds publish these writings, but he chose not to share his writings with Oregon's judicial selection committee even though the committee had asked him to disclose any potentially controversial materials.

Mr. Bounds said he didn't think he needed to disclose any information to the committee that preceded his time at law school.

As Senators WYDEN and MERKLEY pointed out in a letter to Chairman GRASSLEY, Mr. Bounds did share with the Oregon committee information about his high school days. He just conveniently left out his intolerant publications from college.

As Senators WYDEN and MERKLEY said in their letter, "Mr. Bounds' failure to disclose these writings, and the nature of these writings themselves, demonstrate a substantial lack of judgment that is unsuitable for a nominee for a lifetime appointment."

This is not a close call. The Senate should not be moving forward with Mr. Bounds' nomination on process or substance.

Republicans are failing to be responsible stewards of nominations. The fact that Senate Republicans are moving forward with this nomination is a troubling sign for how Republicans will handle the Supreme Court vacancy.

All too often, Senate Republicans are failing to serve as a meaningful check and balance on President Trump when it comes to nominations.

Last week, 50 Senate Republicans voted to confirm an unqualified lawyer who had represented a suspicious Russian bank as the head of the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

This week Republicans already voted to confirm Andrew Oldham, a 39-year-old circuit court nominee who refused to say whether he thought Brown v. Board of Education was correctly decided and who has described the Supreme Court as "the most dangerous branch."

Now, Senate Republicans are looking to confirm Mr. Bounds, who has shown terrible judgment with his published writings and with his failure to be forthcoming about them.

Senators have a constitutional obligation to scrutinize these nominees and to vote no if the nominees lack the experience, temperament, or judgment to be a fair and impartial judge. The Senate should not be a rubberstamp, but under President Trump, all too often, it has been.

I know Senate Republicans like to say it is unfair to nominees if we hold them accountable for their records. My Republican colleagues have been coming to the floor, day after day, complaining about what they see as unfair scrutiny of the Kavanaugh Supreme Court nomination.

Do they have amnesia? I would remind them that no Supreme Court nominee in history has ever been treated worse than Merrick Garland was treated by Senate Republicans in 2016. Senator MCCONNELL wouldn't even allow Judge Garland a hearing or the courtesy of a meeting.

The treatment of Merrick Garland was unprecedented, and it was disrespectful. His record and reputation were torn apart by Republicans who never gave him a chance to respond in an open hearing. Even Judge Bork got a hearing and a vote.

I hope my Republican colleagues are not going to simply rubberstamp President Trump's nominees. So many of these nominees are extreme. We need to review their full records and consider them carefully before voting to confirm them for life.

I have carefully considered Mr. Bounds' nomination, and I will vote no. I urge my colleagues in both parties to join me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

CUBA

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I rise today to give tribute to the spirit of the Cuban people—the people of my forefathers, who still live under a corrupt and violent Communist regime—and to honor the memory of Oswaldo Paya. Oswaldo was a champion for freedom. He died 6 years ago this Sunday, on July 22, 2012, in a car crash that is widely believed to have been orchestrated by the Castro regime.

The plight of the brave people of Cuba has been marked by terrible suffering under both the Castro regime and the brutal dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista before it. The Castros and their revolutionary terrorist lackeys, like Che Guevara, are responsible for the suffering and murder of countless innocent Cubans. It is because of these oppressors that my family fled their beloved home in Cuba for a better life in the United States.

My father, born and raised in Cuba, fought in the revolution, initially believing that the principles of freedom were what the revolution was all about. He fought against Batista, a

cruel dictator, and he was imprisoned and tortured by Batista's thugs.

Then my aunt, his younger sister, my tia Sonia—who was there after the revolution succeeded, who discovered along with the rest of the world that Fidel Castro was a Communist, who saw the torture and the murder—my aunt fought in the counterrevolution against Fidel Castro, and she, too, like her brother, was imprisoned and tortured, except this time by Castro's thugs.

Both my father and my aunt were kids. They were kids who believed they were fighting for freedom, and they discovered they went from one tyrant to an even worse tyrant, a Communist dictator who would line up dissidents and shoot them.

The betrayal, the brutality, and the violence experienced by my father and by my aunt were all too typical of the millions of Cubans who have suffered under the Castro regime of the last six decades. Fidel may be dead, Raul may be retired, but the evil of the Castros persists. It still molds the Cuban regime's fundamental opposition to truth, to freedom, and to human rights.

But the malice and menace of communism cannot break down the will of the Cuban people. Instead, it has strengthened their resolve. It has further united them to fight for freedom and build a better future for their country, to establish a free Cuba—a Cuba not streaked by the ashes of dissident literature or littered with the corpses of defenseless teenagers; a Cuba built on human decency and individual liberty, where citizens are heard, not murdered, and speech is protected, not silenced. It is the Cuba envisioned by Oswaldo Paya Sardinias, his Christian Liberation Movement, and their fellow activists who continue to stand against the Castro regime. It is the Cuba of the young bloggers who expose the regime's crimes and corruption at the risk of arrest, deportation, torture, or worse.

With time, the oppressions of the Castro regime gave rise to remarkable leaders like Oswaldo Paya, whose life's work was the peaceful overthrow of communism and whose legacy we honor today. Oswaldo dedicated his life to promoting democratic freedoms and human rights in Cuba. His memory continues to inspire dissidents in Cuba and in other countries under tyrannical rule, countries like Venezuela, where Nicolas Maduro routinely imprisons and murders those who dare speak out against him, or Nicaragua, where the corrupt Ortega regime desperately clings to power by persecuting journalists and violently putting down protesters.

Last year, I introduced legislation to commemorate Oswaldo's legacy by naming the street in front of the Embassy of Cuba, located right here in Washington, as "Oswaldo Paya Way." It would send a powerful statement that here in the United States of America, we stand with freedom fighters

like Oswaldo Paya who are working to bring hope and liberty to oppressed nations, who are working to make a better Cuba, free of the horrors of Communist rule.

I have never been to my father's homeland. I have never been to Cuba. My father has not returned to Cuba in over 60 years. I look forward to one day visiting Cuba, hopefully with my dad, with my tia Sonia, my cousin Bibi, with my whole family, my two girls, and seeing a free Cuba—where people can live according to their beliefs without fear of imprisonment, violence, or oppression, but today is not that day.

There are many, like Oswaldo, who have fought for this vision for a free Cuba, who are no longer with us, but their struggle will endure, and their spirits will shine a light through the darkest nights. We will never forget them, nor cease fighting to bring about the free Cuba they died for. Today, and on July 22, and each day thereafter, they will be remembered, "Viva Cuba libre."

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, soon, the Senate will vote on the Ryan Bounds nomination, and I want to make sure each Member of the Senate is aware of two important issues as they prepare to cast their votes on the Bounds nomination to serve on the Ninth Circuit.

First, Mr. Bounds flagrantly misrepresented his background to our bipartisan Oregon judicial selection committee. This is the committee that was tasked with vetting his nomination—a process I have worked on with Republicans for literally two decades. I was pleased to work with our former colleague Senator Smith on this. I worked with the late Mark Hatfield on this. Now it is a pleasure to work with Senator MERKLEY, and the bipartisan efforts we have had produced this selection, a process. Mr. Bounds misrepresented—in my view, really lied—as he covered up disturbing, intolerant writings from his past.

Among many hateful matters he wrote about, he defended homophobic vandals who damaged a gay pride monument. He argued against efforts to protect the survivors of sexual assault on college campuses because, he wrote, he didn't think that would guarantee absolute safety.

As I indicated earlier, what outraged me, and shocked me, was his comparison of organizations that promote multiculturalism and tolerance in America to Nazi rallies. I am the child of Jewish parents who fled Nazi terror in Germany. Not all of our family got out. My great Uncle Max was among the last to be gassed at Auschwitz. For Mr. Bounds to compare groups that lift up minorities in America to Nazis is an extraordinary and dark stain on his character. For him to have concealed these writings from Oregon's bipartisan selection committee is disqualifying.

He never acknowledged these writings until they were uncovered and then posed a threat to his nomination. To this day, he has not fully recanted the abhorrent views that are reflected in that content. Five of the seven members of the bipartisan judicial selection committee, including the Chair, said recently they would not have included Mr. Bounds among their recommended candidates had they known about the writings as he was vetted.

Our bipartisan committee forwarded Mr. Bounds' name, along with others, as part of this process, and they said if Mr. Bounds had been straight with them, he would have told them about these offensive writings, but he misled them by keeping that secret.

The second issue, this is the first time in the 101-year history of what is called the blue-slip process where a nomination moved forward without a blue slip from either home State Senator. Senator MERKLEY and I withheld our blue slips specifically because of what I described, these lies about omission. We didn't consent to a hearing, a debate on the floor, but Chairman GRASSLEY and Majority Leader MCCONNELL barreled right ahead.

Leader MCCONNELL even told the New York Times that blue slips ought to be viewed as nothing more than an indication of how Senators might vote on a given nominee. That was not the tune Republicans were singing in 2009. Democrats then occupied the Oval Office, held the gavel of the Judiciary Committee, and every Member—every Member—of this body who sat on that side of the Chamber in the Republican conference sent a letter to President Obama and then-Chairman LEAHY saying that the nomination's process was "needlessly acrimonious." They wanted to return to an era of bipartisanship. Then, they said:

We hope your Administration will consult with us as it considers possible nominations to the federal courts from our states. Regretfully, if we are not consulted on, and approve of, a nomination from our states, the Republican Conference will be unable to support moving forward to that nominee.

In 2009, while in the minority, everyone who sat on that side of the Chamber rushed to defend blue slips as a statement of senatorial courtesy and collegiality. What a difference a few years makes.

What is happening now cheapens the advice and consent role of the Senate, something delegated to us by the Founding Fathers. The White House wants the Senate to act as a rubberstamp on whatever nominees are sent our way. The majority seems perfectly willing to go along with that.

My colleagues on the other side need to be aware of the new reality—this new reality where the blue slips don't matter—they are creating. This is going to be the end of the blue-slip process as it has worked in the Senate to promote good government on both sides of the aisle. This breach of a cen-

tury of bipartisan protocol is going to further drive the judiciary to the partisan extremes.

As we consider this nomination in a few minutes, this means lights-out—lights-out—for this important bipartisan tradition. The nominee we will be voting on concealed disturbing, intolerant writings from his past, misleading the bipartisan committee that reviewed his candidacy. Moving his nomination forward, in the face of that information and without the blue slips from Senator MERKLEY and myself, destroys more than a century of bipartisan tradition and certainly expands the power of the executive branch of the President.

What we learned earlier this week is it would take only one U.S. Senator on the other side—of all the people sitting over there, it would take only one to stop this abomination of a process. I hope one of my colleagues will be swayed by the horrendous writings Mr. Bounds lied to conceal.

This has been a sad moment for the Senate and a rejection of the kind of bipartisanship this body ought to bring to judicial nominations, the kind of bipartisanship I have been honored to be part of in Oregon for two decades. I urge my colleagues to vote no on the Bounds nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Michigan.

#### FAST-GROWING STARTUP COMPANIES

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, when you think about fast-growing startup companies, you might think about Silicon Valley, Boston, or Boulder. Though all these cities certainly have very vibrant ecosystems, innovative startups and small businesses are launching and growing across the United States, including in my home State of Michigan.

In every State, there are hard-working entrepreneurs who have established job-creating startups. These dynamic companies act as business leaders, innovators, and job creators within our communities.

This is why I am working with Senators WARREN, TILLIS, and SCOTT to commemorate Startup Week Across America and celebrate the ingenuity and entrepreneurship in our States and across the country. I kicked off this annual event in 2013 while serving in the House of Representatives. In the years since, I have had the privilege of visiting startups in Grand Rapids, Detroit, and Traverse City.

I have met with business founders who code apps for Fortune 500 companies, design and produce high-end jeans and other denim products, and grow and deliver farm-fresh products.

This Monday I visited Ferris Wheel, a new coworking space in Flint, MI, a community of hard-working Michiganders who are focused on their future.

The people of Flint are committed to building a stronger, healthier, more prosperous community, and they are