

just what we have done, and it is just what we will continue to do.

This week, we will conclude the hugely important appropriations bills before us. After that, we will turn to the 17 nominees on whom I filed cloture yesterday. There are a variety of impressive men and women whom the President has asked to serve both in the judiciary and in the executive branch. None are particularly controversial. All are qualified. No more obstruction. No more delays. It is time to confirm them all, and the Senate will continue to work right through August until every single one of them is confirmed.

This week, we have been considering appropriations measures to fund the Department of Defense and the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. These bills will make Americans stronger overseas and right here at home. They attend to national priorities like providing the resources needed to better prepare our forces for combat and to deter our enemies. The funds meet many of the requirements of our military commanders, equipping and training units to meet and overcome the most dangerous of emerging global threats. As ever, our obligation to this All-Volunteer Force is to provide adequate training, weaponry, and skills so that Americans always prevail on the battlefield.

Here at home, this bill marshals new resources for our national battle with drug abuse and opioid addiction and gives our National Institutes of Health the resources to stay on offense against everything from Alzheimer's to infectious diseases.

With private sector surveys showing that hiring skilled workers is a top challenge for American business, this legislation continues and expands our investments in apprenticeship programs, in training and employment grants to States, and in support for dislocated workers.

These are national efforts, so how do they translate locally? Every Senator can describe how this legislation will help families and communities in their home State.

In my home State of Kentucky, we are looking forward to increased funding for Pell grants and the millions we have secured to support work colleges, like Berea College and Alice Lloyd College.

Kentuckians will benefit from new funding for community health centers to support patients struggling with addiction and from a new CDC initiative that will prioritize funding for counties most at risk for outbreaks of HIV and hepatitis due to injection drug use.

Of course, the Department of Defense funding touches every single community that proudly calls itself home to the men and women of our armed services. Kentuckians in uniform and their families will enjoy their well-earned pay raise—the highest in nearly a decade—which this bill provides to all American servicemembers, and the

communities that revolve around Fort Campbell, Fort Knox, the Blue Grass Army Depot, and the Kentucky National Guard can count on the funding they need to keep their important operations going. They are national priorities, of course, but all have local impacts.

I am proud of what these bills contain and how the Senate has crafted them. I want to particularly thank Chairman SHELBY and Senator LEAHY once more. I look forward to voting to pass these measures very soon.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. President, on a final matter, this week Judge Brett Kavanaugh has continued meeting with Members of the Senate. So far, I believe the only Senators who have met with this nominee and then had negative things to say about him were Democrats who had already announced beforehand they were going to oppose him.

I suspect that with Judge Kavanaugh you have to go in with a closed mind in order to come away unimpressed. This man has served with distinction for more than a decade on what many scholars consider the second highest court in our Nation—the DC Circuit. His legal brilliance and his fair, open-minded approach have won him vocal praise from those in the know all across the political spectrum.

Here is one quote:

I think it's very hard for anyone who's worked with him, appeared before him to, frankly, say a bad word about him. I mean, this is an incredibly brilliant, careful person . . . legendary for his preparation.

That is Neal Katyal, who served as Solicitor General to President Barack Obama, describing Judge Kavanaugh.

Here is another quote, from former Obama Solicitor General Donald Verrilli:

Judge Kavanaugh is a brilliant jurist . . . he carries out all phases of his responsibilities as a judge in a way you'd want, in an exemplary way.

He is, Mr. Verrilli explained, “a distinguished jurist by any measure.”

This is what it sounds like when legal experts who happen to be on the political left make a fair, unbiased assessment of this impressive, mainstream nominee.

In contrast, about one-third of the entire Democratic caucus stood up the first week—the first week—after Judge Kavanaugh was announced to declare they had seen enough—seen enough—and were dead-set against confirming him. One Democrat, a member of the Judiciary Committee, in fact, announced that she would oppose whomever—whomever—the President selected before Judge Kavanaugh was even nominated, and the ink was barely dry on Judge Kavanaugh's nomination when my friend the Democratic leader said that he would oppose it with “everything I've got.”

All this reflexive opposition occurred well before there was any mention of documents or any of the other reasons our colleagues have come up with to delay the hearing.

Remember, Judge Kavanaugh has written over 300 opinions from the bench, and the Judiciary Committee has already received more than twice as many pages of documents pertaining to this nominee than for any other Supreme Court nominee in American history—more than 400,000 pages and counting.

So however you slice it, every Senator will be historically well-equipped to provide advice and consent on the President's nominee. No shifting rationales or partisan complaints can mask one simple fact: Everyone who is willing to give this nominee a fair hearing will be able to do precisely that.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRUMP PRESIDENCY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, by any account, this has been a momentous week in the history of the Trump Presidency and the history of Presidencies in general. President Trump's former campaign manager was convicted on eight counts and still has another trial to go. The President's former personal attorney—his lifelong compadre for so long—pled guilty to multiple violations of bank fraud and campaign finance violations, implicating the President of the United States himself in one of those crimes. Let me repeat that. President Trump was named as an unindicted coconspirator in a Federal crime.

What did we hear from our Republican friends on the Hill? Was this the moment when Republican leaders finally stood up and said “enough”? Amazingly, apparently not. Apparently, my Republican colleagues cannot rouse themselves to offer even a word of criticism for a President now implicated in a Federal crime; a President who casually tosses around the idea of pardoning his convicted former campaign chairman; a President who speaks favorably about that convicted felon because he didn't break, while disparaging a former confidant for collaborating with law enforcement. It sounds like a scene out of the “Godfather.”

Imagine if President Obama's campaign manager was convicted of several serious Federal crimes. Do you think my Republican friends would give circumspect quotes to reporters, or do you think they would be beside me on the floor beside themselves? The answer is obvious. Yet, when it comes to a President of their own party, there is hardly a word of criticism or censure from our Republican friends.

At some point, after the “Access Hollywood” tape, after Charlottesville, after the Helsinki summit, and now after these most recent revelations, the broad failure of the Republican Party in Congress to condemn the President’s behavior and what that behavior is doing to the American character becomes a form of complicity.

Without strong voices in his party to tell him when he goes too far, the Republicans have become complicit in bringing down the character of the United States, which is probably the best thing we have going for us. The President keeps destroying, hurting, and gnawing at that character with amazing narcissism, with total ego, with bullying, and with misstatements of truth after truth. Our Republican friends—the only ones who can really stop him; we can’t—just shrug their shoulders. President Trump thinks he can keep testing the boundaries, and our Republican friends say: Go right ahead. We are not going to stop you. We are going to be quiet. We are going to be silent.

It seems that Republican Party leaders have made the ultimate Faustian bargain: forgoing their duty to the Constitution and the country in exchange for a corporate tax cut and stacking the courts. They are willing to ignore the corruption and lawbreaking so long as they have someone in the White House to sign their tax cuts, to gut healthcare, which they despise, and to nominate conservative ideologues to the bench.

The mantra of the Republican majority in the 115th Congress is “put your head in the sand.” The symbol of the Republican Party—the elephant—is being replaced with the ostrich, the bird that puts its head in the sand when trouble occurs. They must tell themselves: Put your head in the sand; we want to pass a corporate tax cut. Put your head in the sand; we want to eviscerate Obama’s healthcare law, even if it means raising costs on working Americans. Put your head in the sand like an ostrich; we want a conservative majority on the Supreme Court. If you ask me, the price of that Faustian bargain has already become too steep.

I have real admiration for the “Never Trumpers,” hard-right conservatives who hardly agree with me on anything, but they have had the courage to say that the character of America, which Donald Trump day by day is destroying, is more important than a tax cut or a nominee to the Supreme Court because if our character goes away, we won’t have much left.

We all know what Donald Trump did. When I saw the majority leader in the House talk on FOX News, I said to myself, he must believe that Trump did what it is alleged he did—paid dollars to someone to avoid her telling what happened between her and him. Everyone knows that is true. No one doubts it is true. The President knows it is true, I am sure. Yet, the Republican os-

trich puts his head in the sand and ignores the day-by-day erosion of the American character that Donald Trump creates.

The Faustian bargain has become too steep, my Republican friends. Consideration of country and Constitution aside, if my Republican colleagues remain silent, the party will become co-conspirator in the culture of corruption that surrounds this President.

Now is the time for the Republican leaders to do what is best for their party and for their country. Sometimes it is as simple as saying “enough” to this President. It would be far better, in addition to our Republican colleagues speaking out, to pass legislation to protect the special counsel from political interference, to hold hearings on the power of the President to pardon, to pass legislation to bolster election security and to hold Russia accountable, and to use Congress’s power to investigate the serious crimes that were committed by the President’s close associates during the election. But it has to start with our Republican colleagues recognizing the moment we are in and looking back at figures like Howard Baker, who rose to the occasion in a similar situation 45 years ago. Where are the Howard Bakers? Where are our Republican colleagues who—I know they love this country, but it is either fear or expediency or something else not admirable that is making them complicit with the President in their ostrich-like silence.

It is time, my Republican friends, to quote the Scriptures, to speak truth to power.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Madam President, the recent legal developments for Mr. Manafort and Mr. Cohen shed an entirely different light on Judge Kavanaugh’s nomination to the Supreme Court. It is conceivable that down the road the Supreme Court could be faced with a decision as to whether a sitting President can be subpoenaed or indicted—something the Court has not yet ruled on.

In my meeting with Judge Kavanaugh, he not only refused to answer crucial questions about whether Roe, Casey, or cases involving the ACA were correctly decided, he even refused to affirm that a President must comply with a duly issued subpoena, even in a criminal investigation that concerns vital national security.

Considering that Judge Kavanaugh has such a voluminous record on the issue of Executive authority, on which he seems to take an almost monarchical view, his refusal to say a President must comply with a subpoena should give everyone—everyone—great pause. Just as the President is implicated in criminal activity, the Senate is considering the nomination of someone to the Supreme Court who believes that sitting Presidents are virtually immune from legal jeopardy.

I understand that my Republican colleagues don’t want to delay hearings for Judge Kavanaugh despite this over-

whelmingly good reason to do so, made even more piquant by yesterday’s events with Mr. Cohen and Mr. Manafort. I still believe that Chairman GRASSLEY and Leader MCCONNELL should consider—given the President’s legal trouble, given the fact that the majority of the Senate has not yet had a chance to review or even access Judge Kavanaugh’s full records and what he might feel about Executive power, I feel that we should hit pause on the hearing. It makes logical sense.

Senators should be wary of the unknowns in Judge Kavanaugh’s hidden record. He has been a hard-right Republican warrior for much of his career before he got on the bench. When he got on the bench, he was still a hard-right warrior in the decisions he made. President Trump didn’t vet him any better than he vetted Scott Pruitt, Tom Price, or any of the other catastrophic appointments he made to the Cabinet. It will be a rude awakening for Senators to find out after a confirmation vote that the nominee had a number of issues in his past that the Senate did not properly consider.

I repeat my plea. We should delay Judge Kavanaugh’s hearing at the very minimum until the full record of everything he has said and done on Executive authority is made public.

GUNS FOR TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM

Finally, Madam President, in this administration, you can’t believe what goes on. It is so far away from what the American people believe and feel. It is so dominated by a small, powerful group on the hard right—in this case, the gun lobby.

What did Secretary DeVos say last night? The Times reported that Betsy DeVos and the Trump administration have a plan to allow States and school districts to use Federal funds that were intended to help high-poverty schools provide things like computer science, civics, and mental health treatment to instead buy guns for teachers. Is that amazing? Unbelievable.

Teachers don’t want guns. They know it will make them a target if, God forbid, a shooter comes into the school. And now DeVos wants to take Federal funds away from instruction so the school district can buy guns for teachers? What is that all about? What recklessness. What absurdity. Everyone knows arming teachers will not make our schools or children safer. The teachers themselves know it. That is why Congress, Democrats and Republicans, explicitly prohibited the use of DHS grants to purchase weapons or ammunition for schools. We just did that, Democrats and Republicans together. That is why, earlier this year, Congress explicitly prohibited the use of grants in the STOP School Violence Act for firearms purchases. Bringing more guns in our schools is not the answer at all.

I can’t believe that Ms. DeVos, the Secretary of Education, with the kinds of reckless views that she has exhibited, so antithetical to safety in