

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

schools, so antithetical to good public education—she is highly unpopular with the American people throughout the country, not just in the blue States. In some of the reddest States, public education is so important, that her kowtowing to private education hurts millions of rural American school children.

The Trump administration, once again, this time led again by Secretary DeVos, has concocted a plan to twist the law and cannibalize funding from high poverty schools to advance the NRA's dream policy. That is all it is. The Trump administration is giving the keys to the special interests, this time the NRA.

Until President Trump breaks the NRA's stranglehold on the Republican Party—he has occasionally talked about it, but then fearful, retreated from the things he said—meaningful gun safety reform in this country will continue to be subverted by radical and dangerous ideas from the NRA, like arming teachers.

This announcement occurs as we wrap up Labor-HHS, the appropriations bill. We have a bipartisan agreement to fund the title IV grant program at \$1.2 billion, the most since its inception. But this news about Secretary DeVos's plans chills our celebration.

I am calling on my colleagues to reaffirm that we do not believe more guns in schools will create safe, effective learning environments and that we certainly shouldn't use Federal dollars, take them away from instruction so we can arm teachers. Let's spike this hair-brained idea before it gets off the ground.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

HEALTHCARE RESEARCH

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, we will vote in a few minutes to move forward with the Defense, Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations bill.

That probably sounds like a pretty unusual combination, even though I think most voters, most taxpayers, understand that to get this work done in the timeframe we have to do it, we generally need to bring more than one topic together on the floor at the same time. But why Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education?

Well, first of all, that is 62 percent of all the spending. If we can get this bill passed today, get a conference with the House, get this single bill on the President's desk by the end of the fiscal year, we will have funded that much of the government in a timely way for the first time in a decade.

If we can add the other bills to it that the House and Senate have passed, we will have 90 percent of the spending on the President's desk and in place before the spending year starts.

It doesn't sound as if that would be a very big accomplishment, but by the standards of the last decade, it would be an incredible accomplishment to bring these bills to the floor, to allow

them to be debated, to allow them to be amended. We have a managers' package that would include a number of the 60 or so proposed amendments just on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education part of the bill. I don't know how that is exactly going to work out today, but I do know we can take that managers' package to the conference and say: This is what we agreed to as a managers' package. Whether we officially are able to add it or not, every bit of it is germane to the bill, germane, in my view, to what could happen in conference.

I would also point out that, for decades, the priority of my side of the aisle, of our side of the aisle, has been that defending the country first is the No. 1 priority.

One of the top priorities on the other side of the aisle has been: Well, let's take the biggest of the nondefense bills and be sure we are equally prioritizing it.

So in my view, for perhaps the first time this has ever happened, the leaders have decided to bring these two top priorities to the floor together and let voters, Democrats and Republicans, voters on the Senate floor, decide how they want to move forward with those bills.

Let me just talk for a few minutes about one of the items in our bill—the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee, which you and I serve on—and that would be healthcare research, specifically Alzheimer's and how it relates to that research.

First of all, for a dozen years, ending 4 years ago, there had not been a penny of increase in health research.

When I became chairman of this committee 4 years ago, Senator MURRAY and I began to work on reprioritizing healthcare research, with Democrats and Republicans getting together to figure out what we needed to do. For at least the first couple of years, what we needed to do was eliminate other programs and combine other programs and make tough choices to be sure that health research was a priority.

When we pass this bill today, we will have increased health research spending in a budget that for 2 years had no growth at all and has had some growth in the last 2, but by 30 percent—30 percent—from \$30 billion a year to \$39 billion a year at a time when we know more about the human genome, we know more about what makes each of us different from all the rest of us than we have before.

What are we beginning to see? We are seeing things in immunotherapy in cancer; we are seeing things in brain research. We are not seeing the kinds of results we want to see yet in Alzheimer's, but we are moving in that direction.

Every hour, Alzheimer's disease costs taxpayers at least \$21 million—every single hour. Someone in the United States is developing Alzheimer's every 65 seconds. We are spending somewhere

in the neighborhood of 277 billion tax dollars a year on Alzheimer's and dementia-related care.

I have just given three numbers. It is hard to talk about appropriating without giving numbers. Maybe numbers are not the most riveting thing, particularly when you start talking about millions or billions or even trillions. What does that really mean?

That means we are spending basically an amount equal to half of the defense budget on Alzheimer's and dementia-related care. That will have an overwhelming impact if we don't do something differently than we are doing right now, just because of the projected long life and demographics of the country. In 2050, which is 32 years from now, we will be spending, in today's dollars, \$1.1 trillion on Alzheimer's and dementia care—\$1.1 trillion. One point one anything—who knows? Let's go back to defense again. That is twice the defense budget of last year—twice the defense budget.

I don't really have a great grasp of what \$1.1 trillion is, but I do have a sense of what every military base everywhere in the world would be. Add to that every ship, every plane, every piece of equipment, and add to that every training dollar, and add to that every paycheck for every soldier, sailor, airman, marine, person in the National Guard, the Coast Guard, the Reserves, and you will begin to approach a pretty big number.

We would be spending more than twice that amount. If you add up all I have just talked about, taxpayer spending would be more than twice that just on Alzheimer's and dementia.

Obviously, there is a huge taxpayer need to find a solution here. There is an even bigger individual need. It is not only a devastating disease for people who have it, it is a devastating disease for the people who care about them. There is one generally used number out there that says for every tax dollar we are spending on Alzheimer's and dementia right now, we are spending two private dollars, almost never insured. These are caregivers. These are people who care about you, who give up part or all of their career and time to take care of you instead of doing what they otherwise would be doing. The person being taken care of may not have any real idea, at some point, as to what is going on, but the people taking care of them know. That is a big reason to find a solution.

If we could just delay the onset of Alzheimer's, if we could figure out how to come up with something that would slow down the onset of that disease, if we could delay the onset by an average of 5 years, we would cut that \$1.1 trillion by 42 percent—almost in half. If we could just have the average person who gets Alzheimer's get it 5 years later than they are getting Alzheimer's today, almost half, 42 percent, of that \$1.1 trillion would go away. So this is something we obviously need to prioritize.