

lifetime of selfless service, John came to embody the very pinnacle of American virtue, courage, commitment, integrity, and sacrifice. These are the precepts he lived by and by which he will always be remembered.

No one is more worthy of the word "hero" than John McCain. The Senate—indeed, I should say, the Nation—will miss the steady, guiding presence of a singular statesman.

By now, the biographical details of Senator McCain's life have been covered at length. The son of a four-star Navy admiral, John knew great expectations from an early age. He was to forgo the comforts of civilian life and fight for freedom, which he did.

What is exceptional about John McCain is that he not only met the heavy expectations placed upon him, he far exceeded them. Few have ever risen to the positions of influence that John McCain did. Fewer still have done so and kept their character intact, but Senator John McCain did. Indeed, he never parted from it. As a prisoner of war in Vietnam, John was offered release on multiple occasions. Yet he refused each offer until the POWs incarcerated before him were also released.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his country, for his friends. John possessed such love, proving time and again his willingness to lay down his life for his brothers in uniform. As a captive, John McCain personified selfless sacrifice, offering himself as a bargaining chip to secure the freedom of his fellow countrymen.

Each day, for more than 2,000 days, he endured horrors that few of us could ever imagine: solitary confinement, forced starvation, repeated beatings, and the constant threat of death. Yet he stayed the course, finding strength in the love he felt for his fellow servicemen—and most of all, the love he felt for his beloved country.

When John was eventually released in the spring of 1973, he came home a living scar of Vietnam. The cartilage in his knees was all but gone, the bones in his body broken by endless beatings. He was a walking testament to the brutalities of torture and the depths of human depravity, but the hell of war was not enough to stop John McCain from being a happy warrior. Upon his return, he continued the same mission he started in Vietnam: looking out for the safety and welfare of his fellow sailors.

Few remember that the time before John was elected to Congress, he was the Navy's Senate liaison. It was in this capacity that he and I first became friends. Even then, John impressed me with his sense of mission, going to incredible lengths to ensure that our service men and women had the resources they needed to keep us safe. He would carry that same commitment with him when he was elected to the House of Representatives in 1982 and 5 years later when he joined us in the Senate.

The Pentagon had no closer ally than John McCain. They also had no fiercer critic. Like an admiral who demanded only the very best of his sailors, John wanted to ensure that our servicemen were living to their full potential, and so he held our Armed Forces to the highest standard, never hesitating to call out bureaucratic complacency and runaway spending in military ranks. Our men and women in uniform were stronger and our Nation more safe because of his efforts. No one commanded more respect than John McCain as the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

John constantly put others before himself as a prisoner of war, and he did the same as a Senator. He was the kind of a friend you could count on for help when you needed it most.

Nearly 20 years ago, Governor Mitt Romney—who at the time had been tasked with salvaging the Salt Lake Winter Olympic Games—came to me with a pressing problem: With only months to go before the opening ceremony, Utah lacked the Federal funding it desperately needed to pull off the Olympic Games.

In our moment of need, we turned to Senator McCain. I took Mitt over to see him. The two of us marched up to Senator McCain's office in the Russell Building. Even though we came unannounced, Senator McCain gladly received us. Together, Mitt and I made the case for emergency funding. Within days, we had secured the resources we needed to move forward with the games, all thanks to Senator John McCain. Were it not for John's quick action, I can honestly say the 2002 Winter Olympics would not have been a success. In fact, it would have been an embarrassment. He was not excited about putting up Federal funds either, but all I had to do was ask, and he said fine.

So esteemed was John by his Republican colleagues that we didn't hesitate to throw our support behind him in the 2008 Presidential election. Senator McCain mounted an admirable campaign, refusing to stoop to the political mudslinging that all too often defines Presidential contests. I agree with the assessment of the late Charles Krauthammer:

McCain ran a valiant race against impossible odds. He will be—he should be—remembered as the most worthy Presidential nominee ever to be denied the prize.

That was a wonderful quote.

We will remember John for many things—for his courage as a sailor, for his dedication as a Senator, and for his principle as a statesman. We will also remember how he embodied the best in us. John McCain was a man for all seasons—a voice of temperance in intemperate times and a model of civility and reason. The tragedy of his passing is that we need men like John McCain now more than ever before.

I consider myself incredibly lucky to have known John and even luckier to have called him friend. Here in the

Senate and across the Nation, we will miss him dearly.

John, thank you for blessing us with your service and your sacrifice.

Today, my prayers are with the people of Arizona and the McCain family. I differed with John from time to time, but we never had any acrimony between us. He was always open. He would come across and help me when I needed the help here in the Senate, as I would do for him. It was a privilege to serve with him. I feel very deeply about John McCain, and I am very pleased that I can stand here as one of his friends who knew him well and praise him—maybe not as good as I really feel but good enough.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. President, on another matter, I would like to take a moment to discuss the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to be an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Next Tuesday, the Judiciary Committee will convene a hearing to consider Judge Kavanaugh's nomination. The hearing will run 4 days. The American people will have an opportunity to hear from Judge Kavanaugh at length. They will also hear from a number of lawyers, former colleagues, and clerks who know Judge Kavanaugh well and can attest to his legal abilities and personal character.

Ever since the President nominated Judge Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, my Democratic colleagues have hurled all sorts of wild acquisitions against him. They have called him a reactionary. That is terrible. They have said his nomination threatens the destruction of the Constitution—even more terrible. They have said that those who support his nomination are complicit in evil—even more terrible.

Well, next week the American people will have an opportunity to see Judge Kavanaugh. They will find that he is not a reactionary. They will find that he doesn't, in fact, intend to destroy the Constitution. They will also find that those who, like me, support his nomination are not complicit in evil. Rather, the American people will see a whip-smart, incredibly accomplished, humble man. They will see a jurist who has authored more than 300 opinions and whose reasoning has won the day at the Supreme Court over a dozen times where the Court has copied his opinions. They will see a devoted husband and father who puts his family and community first. They will see a man who spends his spare time coaching youth basketball and feeding the homeless. They will see a beloved teacher who wins sterling reviews from students for his fairminded approach to teaching constitutional law. In other words, the American people will see what those of us who know Judge Kavanaugh see in him. It is those qualities that make me proud of the role I played in his confirmation as a circuit court judge in 2006 after years of partisan obstruction.

I have been on the Judiciary Committee for the last 14 Supreme Court

confirmation hearings. Judge Kavanaugh's will be my 15th and final. He is as qualified and ready to serve as any nominee I have seen to our Nation's highest Court.

I hope that next week, the over-the-top rhetoric and misrepresentations about Judge Kavanaugh will finally cease. Let's make this confirmation about Judge Kavanaugh. Let's make it about his judiciary record and his experience. Let's stop trying to gin up the base by pretending his nomination is a threat to the Republic.

Brett Kavanaugh is an excellent judge and a good man. He will make an outstanding Justice. Next week, the American people will see that for themselves. I think it will be an eye-opener for some people who have been listening to some of the rhetoric thrown his way. I know him well. He is a bright man. He is an honest man. He tells the truth. He writes very well. He will make an excellent addition to the U.S. Supreme Court. He is honest. He is faithful. He is a good family man. He is everything you would want in a Justice on the greatest court in the world. I know him. I support him—not just because he is a Republican or because he gives the Republicans somewhat of an advantage on the Court but because he is one heck of a good person, one heck of a good judge, and one heck of a good student of the law. He is a wonderful man, and I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will see it through in a way that will be an honor to this body, not a desecration.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my brief remarks.

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

REMEMBERING JOHN MCCAIN

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, before I speak on another topic I sadly have to come to the floor every week and speak on, I want to offer my heartfelt condolences to the McCain family and all of his friends and supporters.

I had the privilege of serving on the Senate Armed Services Committee with Senator McCain for 3 years. I learned a lot from him. During his entire time in Congress, he did a wonderful job of standing up for the men and women in uniform and standing up for veterans.

I also wanted to share this one story. I had a reporter ask me yesterday: What kinds of experiences have you had with him that were most memorable? It was a day I spent with him in North Carolina back in 2014. I think you can really judge a politician by how they behave when they are not in front of the camera or here at one of the desks in the Senate. When you saw him interacting with men and women in uniform and with veterans, you saw a man with a heart of gold and a commitment to those men and women in uniform.

I want to again tell the McCain family that our prayers are with them and our hearts are with them. We thank them for allowing him to share some of his life here with us in the Senate.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Mr. President, now I would like to turn to another sad topic. It is a floor speech that I have had to give over the past few months and sadly may have to give over the next several months. It has to do with someone who has been in detention now for 690 days in the country of Turkey.

In October 2016, this man was detained. He was held in a Turkish prison for almost 19 months, in a cell that was designed for 8 people—it had 21 people in it. This man's name is Andrew Brunson. He is from Black Mountain, NC. He is a Presbyterian minister, and he spent the better part of 20 years in Turkey in a Christian ministry. He opened a church just outside of Izmir several years ago. It is a very small church. They had an open-door policy. Anyone could come in. He had been living there peacefully for 20 years.

In 2016, there was a coup attempt that I still maintain was illegal. It was not the proper way to change government, whether in the United States or in Turkey. The people responsible for that coup should be held accountable to the law. Unfortunately, Pastor Brunson got swept up in the emergency actions that President Erdogan took after the coup attempt, and he was put in prison. He actually thought he was going down to finally get his permanent residency documents in Turkey, which he had been working on for a while, when he and his wife were arrested. His wife was held in prison for about 12 days. Pastor Brunson has been in prison and now detained under house arrest for what will be 2 years in October.

The issue actually came to me as constituent work about a year and a half ago. We were doing everything we could to go through diplomatic channels to try to get Pastor Brunson released. Earlier this year, they finally—after about 19 months in prison without charges, they issued an indictment and read the indictment. It was absurd. I am not an attorney, but I couldn't even understand how—the charges they had levied against Pastor Brunson and the evidence they used to substantiate the charges I don't believe would keep you in jail in the United States overnight. Yet this man had already been held in prison for 19 months. I also heard that he was really concerned. His mental state was down. He lost 50 pounds over about a year and a half. I also heard through diplomatic channels that he was afraid that the American people would read these indictments, believe them, and then turn their backs on him. That is when I requested a trip to Turkey to visit him in a prison and look at him eye-to-eye and let him know that as long as I am a U.S. Senator, he will not be forgotten.

About 6 weeks later, I went back, and I sat through 12 hours of his first hearing—12 hours in a Turkish courtroom. That convinced me that this man was being subjected to a kangaroo court. The legal system there is very different from our own. He has no jury. He is speaking before three judges and a prosecutor who sits up at the dais with the judges. They assume you are guilty unless you prove to them you are innocent. He testified for almost 6 hours that day. We heard from secret witnesses whose voices were scrambled—some of them are in prison—putting forth some of the most absurd charges or allegations you can imagine, but they are enough to keep him in prison.

About a month ago, the Turkish Government did agree—or I should say their judiciary did agree to release him on house arrest. So for about the last month, he has been confined to an apartment he has near Izmir. He has a tracking bracelet on his ankle. As far as I am concerned, he is still in prison.

For the past several months, I have been trying to do everything I could to show respect to the Turkish Government but make it clear that America will not stand for this kind of treatment of an American citizen, particularly from a country that is a NATO ally, a country that we have a treaty obligation to go and defend in a time of any sort of adversarial act. Let's say Russia or some other nation chooses to do something hostile to Turkey. We are obligated to send men and women onto Turkish soil to fight side by side for their freedom. Yet I have an American who has been charged with bogus charges in prison in a NATO ally country. This is the first time that has ever happened in the history of the alliance.

When we talk to the people—the Foreign Minister, President Erdogan, and others—about this, they say: Well, we just have to have our judicial process follow its course. I don't believe that is true. As a matter of fact, I believe we have a President who is inclined to try and do a hostage swap. The reason I believe that is that after they said we have to let the judicial process follow its course, President Erdogan made this statement publicly—that they have someone here who they believe was involved in the coup attempt. We said to them, if they are and can prove it and if we have an extradition treaty, we will extradite that person. They haven't proven it. What they have said to the press is, If you give us our pastor, we will give you your pastor.

Maybe it was just an offhanded comment that he regrets. Maybe he didn't really mean that he is willing to trade someone on U.S. soil for somebody on Turkish soil. Then why, just a few weeks ago, did the administration or administration officials say, "Well, OK, if we can't trade a pastor for a pastor, then if you agree to drop a lawsuit that is against a major banking institution in Turkey, we will give you Pastor Brunson"? If, after two different examples, they haven't proven that