

Kavanaugh, they renewed their request, of course, to accelerate—to speed up—the confirmation process.

Chairman GRASSLEY has prohibited witnesses in tomorrow's hearing, other than Dr. Ford and Judge Kavanaugh, including the one and only alleged eyewitness to the events in question. Chairman GRASSLEY and several of his colleagues on the other side have already proposed a final committee vote on Friday. They proposed the vote before the hearing occurs. Isn't that pre-judgment? And they are acting, when they propose the vote before the hearing, as if the conclusion was fore-ordained and the hearing is just a nuisance to "plow through."

Most galling of all: Republican leadership and the White House have blocked the FBI from reopening an independent background check investigation into Judge Kavanaugh, a standard procedure for Federal nominees when new allegations arise. This isn't a new thing that Democrats are pulling out of a hat. This is something we do all the time—except in this case, no.

So this isn't a Democratic smear job, as the Leader so callously and disrespectfully suggested; this is a Republican rush job and, I might add, a rush job to avoid getting to the truth.

Here is the contradiction in Leader MCCONNELL's logic: Leader MCCONNELL keeps saying that the allegations by Dr. Ford and other women are "uncorroborated"—his word—while, at the same time, he is blockading the obvious avenues to corroborate them, and that would be an impartial FBI investigation calling on witnesses to testify. Senator MCCONNELL's assertion is wrong on its face because sworn statements corroborating Dr. Ford's account were submitted to the Judiciary Committee yesterday. If he doesn't believe those statements, it is simple: Have the FBI go interview those who submitted the statements, and then they would have to tell the truth under the penalty of perjury.

So right here and now, I challenge any Member of the Republican Senate to come to the floor and give one good reason why we shouldn't allow the FBI to follow up on its background investigation—one good reason. I haven't heard one. With all the rhetoric, all the screaming, all the name-calling, all the disrespecting of women who have come forward—something this Nation knows all too well these days—we haven't heard one actual reason why there shouldn't be an FBI investigation.

Will it slow it down? It will take only a few days.

I would remind Leader MCCONNELL that he slowed down a nomination to the Supreme Court for a year, and now a few days is too much? Give me a break.

Dr. Ford has asked for an FBI investigation. That shows the faith she has in her account. Editorial boards across the country have echoed her call for an FBI investigation. Anita Hill, treated

so unfairly in her day, said that an FBI investigation is essential. And I have to give some credit: A handful of fair-minded Republican Senators have said that an FBI investigation is warranted because they know it would get to the facts. They know it would keep politics out of it. They know it wouldn't cause much of a delay.

During Justice Thomas's confirmation process, an update to the FBI background check took 3 days—3 days. Leader MCCONNELL held a Supreme Court seat open for over 400 days. So why was that OK, and this is not OK?

Again, I say to my dear friend, Leader MCCONNELL: Give me one good reason—give the American people one good reason—why we shouldn't ask the FBI to investigate. If it is a smear job, as he claims, the FBI will find that out. But they also might find out that it is no smear job; it is the God's honest truth.

Now, another tactic: The Republican leader has just trotted out old quotes by Senator Biden pointing out that FBI investigations don't provide conclusions.

I would say to the leader: That is just the point. The purpose of the FBI investigation would not be to prove definitively who is right one way or the other. That is a judgment Senators are to make. The purpose of the FBI investigation is to provide the Senate with just the facts—that is what we want, just the facts—to make a more informed decision and one the American people could have some confidence in. Their confidence in Judge Kavanaugh and in the process is slipping daily, and with good reason. Isn't an impartial, fair, timely, and nondilatory FBI background check investigation fair to both Dr. Ford and Judge Kavanaugh, taking this out of the arena of politics and making it just about the facts? You bet it is.

Of course it is the right thing to do. But the Republican leaders and the White House have blocked it and scheduled a hearing for tomorrow anyway because, as Leader MCCONNELL promised last week, he is going to "plow right through" these allegations. And the motivation is clear: They want to put Judge Kavanaugh on the bench as quickly as possible because they know their nominee has a gigantic credibility problem, and every day that goes by, more and more Americans realize it.

Judge Kavanaugh has misled the Judiciary Committee on numerous occasions about his involvement in the ugliest Bush-era controversies, including on torture, on the confirmation of controversial judges William Pryor and Charles Pickering, on the sordid affair when Manny Miranda, a Republican operative, stole Democratic emails. Just today, Ranking Member FEINSTEIN said that Judge Kavanaugh misled the Judiciary Committee about an incident with a grand jury during his time working for Ken Starr.

Telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth does not

seem to be Judge Kavanaugh's way, but that is what we need on the Supreme Court.

Earlier this week, the Nation watched Judge Kavanaugh swear on national television that he never had so much to drink that he forgot events. That characterization doesn't track with several descriptions given by many of his high school and college classmates and when he says "I can't recall this, that, and the other thing" about his youth.

So the question of credibility looms. Is Judge Kavanaugh willing to say anything to get confirmed? And are Republican leaders willing to do anything to get him confirmed? Unfortunately, signs are pointing to yes.

Most importantly, when the credibility of the nominee is so questionable, is that the kind of person we want on the Supreme Court? I don't care if it is a liberal, a conservative, or a moderate. When the question of credibility is so much in doubt, as it is now with Judge Kavanaugh, that person should not be sitting on the highest Court in the land, the arbiter of our laws and often the determiner of right and wrong. It would be a new lower standard for the Court and for America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

URGING THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, TERRORIST ATTACKS UPON THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, shortly, I will move for unanimous consent to pass S. Res. 610, urging the release of information regarding the September 11 terrorist attacks upon the United States. It is a bipartisan resolution, and I thank the cosponsors who joined me in this historic effort: Senators CORNYN, SCHUMER, GILLIBRAND, MURPHY, MENENDEZ, GRASSLEY, MARKEY, BOOKER, RUBIO, and SANDERS. At a time of very deep division in our country and in this body, all of us are still able to come together to help the survivors and families of the horrific September 11 terrorist attack as they seek justice and fairness to deter additional and ongoing state sponsorship of terror.

Following our successful efforts in 2016 to enact the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, also known as JASTA, the families of 9/11 victims who perished earned the right to have their day in court. We thought that day would come quickly and they would receive justice. We believe they also earned a right to the necessary

Federal Government archive investigative files on the al-Qaida terrorists and foreign nationals who may have assisted. As much as we expected justice, the Federal Government denied them those records and documents that are vital to their cause.

So 17 years after this national tragedy, the appropriate declassification releasing these documents poses no threat to our national security, and there is no reason for the Federal Government to resist their requests. These files have been kept secret for too long. That secrecy contradicts the national interest. Their cause serves our national security, not only because it gives them justice individually, but it also deters terrorists in the future. Denying them access to this important evidence is unjust, unfair, and unwise.

The U.S. Government should make public any evidence of links between the Saudi Arabian Government officials and the support network inside the United States used to aid and abet the 9/11 hijackers. The legal and moral responsibility of our government is to provide its citizens with all available information regarding this horrific tragedy on September 11, 2001, particularly where there may be evidence that foreign nationals conspired within our borders to support terror with the assistance of foreign governments.

This resolution would never have been possible without the efforts of my constituent Brett Eagleson, of Middletown, CT. He was 15 years old when his father Bruce was lost to him in that massive, unspeakable destruction. He was on the 17th floor of Tower 2 of the World Trade Center. Brett was joined in his advocacy and efforts by members across the country of the 9/11 Families and Survivors United for Justice Against Terrorism. That group is a profile in courage, reliving the pain and anguish of those days in their efforts to seek justice for all Americans. They include a number of individuals whose names I wish to place in the RECORD: Mary Fetchet of New Cannan, who lost her son; Gordon Haberman of Wisconsin, who lost his daughter; Carol Ashley of Long Island, who lost her daughter; Tim Frolich, a survivor from New York City; Sharon Premoli, a survivor from Vermont; Loreen Sellitto from Florida, who lost her son; and Charles Wolf of New York City, who lost his wife. I thank each of them and the many others who supported this effort for their courage and strength.

There are so many we honor today by our passage of this sense-of-the-Senate resolution. This Senate resolution is itself succinct but significant. It resolves that it is the sense of the Senate that documents related to the events of September 11, 2001, should be declassified to the greatest extent possible; and, two, that the survivors, the families of the victims, and the people of the United States deserve answers about the events and circumstances surrounding the September 11 terrorist attack upon the United States.

Many years later, the pain and grief they endure on that horrific day is still with them. Each year in Connecticut we commemorate this day, and we will never forget. That is our resolve—never to forget, never to yield to hopelessness, never to allow our support for these families to diminish.

This sense-of-the-Senate resolution makes real the promise the Nation made to these 9/11 families. They deserve this evidence. Even if it is embarrassing to foreign governments or foreign nationals, they deserve justice.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 610 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 610) urging the release of information regarding the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks upon the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 610) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of August 21, 2018, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to speak about Judge Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court.

I urge my colleagues to actually listen to Dr. Blasey Ford and treat her with the respect that she deserves. She deserves better than the setup she is walking into tomorrow.

I want to take a step back for a second and look at the big picture of what is actually going on with this nomination. We have a nominee for a lifetime appointment to the highest Court in the land who has been accused,

credibly, of sexual assault. Dr. Blasey Ford reluctantly came forward out of civic duty and said that Brett Kavanaugh tried to rape her in high school. She is now facing death threats for her courage, and her worst fears of how she would be treated by this body have come to fruition.

Another woman, Deborah Ramirez, agreed to tell her story after being contacted by a reporter—again, risking her career and her safety—and said that Brett Kavanaugh exposed himself to her face in college while laughing, as part of a game.

These accusations are disturbing enough by themselves, but the response to these allegations by our colleagues are so disappointing. Take a look at how Dr. Blasey Ford is being bullied because she told her story. Listen to how she is being patronized and dismissed by some Members of the Judiciary Committee. Look at how our President belittled and demeaned Dr. Blasey Ford and Ms. Ramirez, reminding us once again that he has been credibly accused of committing sexual assault himself and denigrates not just women who accuse him but survivors everywhere.

That is not all. The chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee tweeted after Dr. Blasey Ford's sexual assault allegation: "Unfazed and determined. We will confirm Judge Kavanaugh."

According to Ms. Ramirez's lawyer, the Judiciary Committee isn't even interested in taking her claims seriously or getting information from her about her claims. Instead of getting the facts—instead of even wanting the facts—they try to dismiss this as a smear campaign and plow right ahead.

For anyone who has ever wondered why so many survivors of sexual assault don't come forward—obviously, there is trauma, but there is also the fear of this very kind of retaliation and scorn. The question I have, that I know you have: Do we value women in this country? Do we listen to women when they tell us about sexual trauma? Do we listen to their stories about how their lives have been forever scarred? Do we take their claims seriously or do we just disbelieve them as a matter of course?

I want to echo the words of my colleague from Alaska: "It is about whether or not a woman who has been a victim at some point of her life is to be believed."

I believe Dr. Blasey Ford. Here is why I believe her. She has risked everything—her own safety—to come out on the record to say Brett Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her. She told her therapist and her husband about it 5 years ago. She told a friend about it a year ago. She told a reporter about it before Kavanaugh was ever named. She has even taken a lie detector test.

Why are my colleagues moving so fast, as fast as they possibly can, to confirm this judge?