

or allegiance to our constitutional system and due process of law if we do otherwise.

As Michael Gerson, the columnist for the Washington Post, reminded us earlier this week, somewhere along the way this process devolved into one that is no longer about just winning arguments but about demonizing and destroying other people. It is not about winning arguments. It is not about winning elections. It is not about winning votes here in the Senate. This process has devolved into character assassination and destroying the reputation and lives of real people. It is not too late to change that.

This all calls to mind that famous line by Joseph Welch, a lawyer during the McCarthy hearings. He said: "Have [we] no sense of decency . . . at long last?"

Well, I think we still do, and I hope Republicans and Democrats will prove we have a sense of decency and fairness as we approach Thursday's hearing.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise today to urge the Senate to pass the Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act. This is a bill that not many Americans have heard about yet, but it is a critically important bill for the Senate to pass and very important for the country. This bill will preserve the Justice Department's independent investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 Presidential election.

Since this weekend, there have been reports that the President may fire Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein from his position at the Department of Justice. This would be a gross abuse of power—a line that we cannot allow to be crossed without consequence. Mr. Rosenstein has a long career in public service and law enforcement. He initially joined the Department of Justice nearly 30 years ago through the Attorney General's Honors Program and rose through the ranks, serving as a Trial Attorney, as a Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Tax Division, and as a U.S. Attorney in Maryland for over a decade—a critically important job in our justice system.

As Deputy Attorney General, Mr. Rosenstein has overseen the Russia investigation led by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, which has secured indictments or guilty pleas from 32 people

and 3 companies, including Russian individuals and companies, as well as former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort, deputy campaign manager Rick Gates, and other campaign advisers, including George Papadopoulos and Michael Flynn. Earlier this month, Mr. Manafort pleaded guilty to "conspiracy against the United States."

Mr. Rosenstein has played an integral role in ensuring that the Mueller investigation can continue without interference. Unfortunately, this work and Mr. Rosenstein's long and distinguished service at the Department of Justice could come to an end if he is fired by the President.

From day one, President Trump has systematically worked to obstruct Special Counsel Mueller's investigation into Russia's attack on our Nation. He has attempted to fire, to demand loyalty of, and to interfere with any official with oversight of this matter. By way of example, this is a President who fired the Director of the FBI and later admitted in a television interview that he had done so with the Russia investigation in mind. This is a President who has repeatedly attacked the very Attorney General he nominated, suggesting that the Department of Justice should do his political bidding. This is a President who has impugned the impartiality and the motives of judges who have ruled against his policies. This is a President who has continued to call the Mueller investigation a "witch-hunt" despite the fact that it has already produced dozens of indictments and guilty pleas.

In short, this is a President who believes the Department of Justice owes a duty of loyalty to him and him alone. Our Justice Department officials have a duty to serve the American people and only the American people. They swear to uphold the Constitution, not to genuflect to this President or any President.

Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein has upheld his duty to the country and our Constitution. If the President fires him, it will be yet another blatant attempt to derail the Mueller investigation, and it could very well be successful.

Rod Rosenstein supervises the Russia investigation, overseeing the work of Special Counsel Mueller and his team. He receives status reports, establishes the investigation's budget, and, according to special counsel regulations, has the power to "determine whether the investigation should continue." He therefore plays an integral role in ensuring that the independent investigation can continue to seek answers on Russia's interference in the 2016 election.

If Mr. Rosenstein were fired, it could compromise the Mueller investigation in ways the public can see and in ways we may never know through warrants that are never approved or resources that are diverted to other projects. This would be a decision by the President that would put us into uncharted

waters. It is therefore more important than ever that Congress step up and exercise the oversight that the American people expect from us and I would say especially here in the Senate.

Since President Trump entered office, the Republican majority has not discharged its duty to act as an independent check on the executive branch and on the President himself. The majority would not be able to abdicate its responsibility any longer if Rosenstein were to be fired.

Congress has a solemn obligation to act immediately—immediately—to protect Special Counsel Mueller's investigation and prevent any more interference from this administration. Senators in both parties have a duty to the American people to step up as a co-equal branch of government and ensure that the special counsel's independent investigation remains just that—*independent*.

For public officials and institutions with nothing to hide, an investigation which is independent is not a "witch-hunt"; it is an opportunity for vindication, a chance to prove that our institutions and the individuals who serve them are truly worthy of the public's trust.

At a time when the American people's confidence in our institution is low—very low—and when suspicion of wrongdoing is high, it is all the more important that the 2016 election activities of Russia, as well as the Trump campaign, be open for review. As the voice of the American people, we in the Senate must ensure that the investigation both continues and remains, in fact, independent.

The legislation to protect the Mueller investigation, the Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act, is ready for a vote by the full Senate at any time if the majority leader would permit us to do that. It is a bipartisan bill that has been approved by a bipartisan majority of the Judiciary Committee. There is no excuse not to pass this legislation immediately. Day by day, each time the President attacks Robert Mueller or Rod Rosenstein or the rule of law, we are presented with more evidence of why this legislation is needed. That is why I have again come to the floor to urge Leader MCCONNELL to bring up this bill for a vote. It is far past time to put country over party.

We must not forget that the special counsel is investigating an attack on our democracy by a foreign adversary. As a matter of national security, the American people deserve answers about what happened during the 2016 election. We cannot allow anyone, including the President, to interfere with the investigation and prevent the American people from getting those answers to very important questions.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Madam President, very briefly, I wanted to add a few comments with regard to the vote on Judge Kavanaugh

that is now before the Judiciary Committee. We are told that tomorrow there will be testimony from both the judge and Dr. Ford, but I think the evidence that is on the record so far and the new allegations that are just breaking news at this hour continue to reinforce my belief—and this was my belief a week ago, it was my belief a number of days ago, and it is still my belief today—that these allegations warrant an FBI investigation.

This would not be a new endeavor for the FBI. They do this routinely for nominees from the Supreme Court all the way down. They, of course, did an investigation into the judge's background for the purposes of this confirmation. An investigation of these new allegations would simply be an update to the background check. It would be the completion of the background check. That is why this is not a month-long or even weeks-long investigation that could transpire. I would hope—and there is still time to do this either today or even while the Judiciary Committee is hearing testimony tomorrow—that there would, in fact, be an investigation that might last a few days. We can certainly take the time to do that. When you are talking about the confirmation of a Justice on the most important Court in the country and probably the most powerful Court in the world, I am sure we could take a few more days to complete a background check investigation.

There are inscriptions on the Finance Building in Harrisburg—a building I worked in for a decade—that talk about issues like public service and what our government should be about. I think one of them applies to this circumstance, about whether there should be an investigation that would simply complete the background check on Judge Kavanaugh, which I think is necessary and reasonable and appropriate. Here is what was inscribed in the 1930s on this government building in our State capital: "Open to every inspection; secure from every suspicion." I think those few words encapsulate what we are talking about here.

I would hope that anyone—including Judge Kavanaugh but anyone who supports his nomination and confirmation to the Supreme Court—would want to have these allegations fully reviewed. I know the Senate Judiciary Committee has staff on both sides who do investigations. That is appropriate as well, but I think we have reached a point where there is such a divide here that it is hard to be confident about the fact that staffs on both sides could do a thorough investigation and cooperate to such a degree that it would be the equivalent of an FBI background check.

I think it is important that there be an independent investigation or, as I said before, and I will say it again, the completion of a background check—not a new investigation but really an update of the existing background check. I would think that anyone would want

that to be completed either prior to or even during the testimony tomorrow—it may provide a foundation for additional testimony by additional witnesses—to make sure we have reviewed every part of these allegations. I think that is fair to the judge. It is also fair to the confirmation process and, of course, fair to those who are making very troubling allegations.

If the Senate Judiciary Committee, in its review of his nomination, would be open to an investigation, I think that would reduce the likelihood, as the saying goes, that there would be suspicion. If that happened, I think the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate itself would be secure from every suspicion because there was a background check completed and a full investigation.

Madam 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.

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

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

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, moments ago, another serious allegation of sexual misconduct against Judge Kavanaugh was made public in a sworn affidavit. There are now multiple, credible, serious, and corroborated allegations against Judge Kavanaugh made under the penalty of perjury.

The new affidavit by Mrs. Swetnick calls out for a thorough, impartial, detailed investigation done by our FBI professionals, as do the allegations made by other women. Yet, currently, there is only a single hearing—tomorrow, with no witnesses other than Dr. Ford and Judge Kavanaugh—before a scheduled committee vote and a potential final Senate floor vote soon thereafter. That is not right. There is no need for such a rush. These women deserve to be heard in a fair way, and their claims must be properly investigated. Republicans need to immediately suspend the proceedings related to Judge Kavanaugh's nomination, and the President must order the FBI to reopen the background check investigation.

I strongly believe Judge Kavanaugh should withdraw from consideration, and the President should withdraw his nomination if Kavanaugh will not do it voluntarily. If he will not, at the very least, the hearing and vote should be postponed while the FBI investigates all of these serious and very troubling allegations.

If our Republican colleagues rush to proceed without an investigation, it would be a travesty for the honor of the Supreme Court and the honor of our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Nevada.

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, while it has been nearly a year since a madman's actions devastated Las Vegas, the shock and pain related to October 1 still remains today.

Fifty-eight innocent people lost their lives. Over 800 people were injured, and many of them continue to face a long road to physical and emotional recovery. Know that you are not alone on that road—we support you and we are praying for you.

Our community is still grieving, and it will never be the same, but hatred and fear will not win that night. That is because even though one man's horrific actions exposed humanity at its worst, what followed were countless stories of true heroism and humanity at its very best.

Las Vegas showed the world what it meant to be Vegas Strong, and I had the honor of experiencing it firsthand in the eyes and voices of those who survived and those who were eager to help others. On that tragic night, so many ordinary Nevadans made the choice to be extraordinary. Let me give you a couple examples.

They stayed on the field to help the wounded as shots continued to rain down. They took their shirts off their backs, used their belts as tourniquets, applied pressure to help stop a stranger from bleeding to death. Some made stretchers on the spot using the festival barriers. Some used their trucks and vehicles to transport the wounded to the hospital. For example, Taylor Winston, a marine and Iraq war veteran, managed to escape the gunfire. He helped several people over the fence when they took cover. Then he found an abandoned vehicle, turned it into a makeshift ambulance. After rushing multiple people to the hospital, he turned around and went back. He ultimately drove around 30 injured people to the hospital.

That night, police officers also covered concertgoers, shielded them from gunfire, and directed them to safety. Firefighters, paramedics, ambulance drivers, who had never encountered anything as horrific as that carnage of October 1, plunged into danger to save lives without hesitation, even though they were defenseless, because that is what they do.

That week I had the privilege of meeting a Las Vegas police officer, Sergeant Jonathan Riddle. He was stationed a block from the shooting scene doing traffic control. After shots were fired from Mandalay Bay, he took off sprinting toward the hotel, even though everyone else was running away from it.

Dozens of Metro police officers, including Officer Tyler Peterson, who was on his second day of the job, did the exact same thing. They rushed toward the firestorm to help in any way they could and of course to save lives.

When I visited the local hospitals, I was struck by the stories doctors and nurses shared about concertgoers who