

your drill sergeant tells you to do 20, you drop and you do 20. If you can't do 20, you practice until you can and you get it right. That is what we have to do in the military because you don't fight wars for people who say: I am not interested today; I am not going to fight. You have to know what we are doing and do it right.

We have to do the same thing and provide services to those veterans once they leave. We don't need to be casual about it. We need to be committed about it and make sure we are doing everything we can to see our veterans get the services they want, the services they need, and the information they need.

Veterans Day is coming up in about 4 weeks. Every Veterans Day we are usually here, but I don't think we are going to be here on Veterans Day this year, if I understand the calendar right. I will be making speeches back home. Every year I have been here, I have made a speech on this floor about our veterans and how important they are to us. I try to point out a few people I have known in my lifetime who are veterans of the U.S. military and made a difference in my life forever.

I talked about my friend Jack Cox, of the U.S. Marine Corps. He was killed by a sniper in Vietnam in 1968. He was my best friend. He volunteered. He came to the fraternity house. He was 2 years older than me. So I was still in school when he got out and graduated.

After graduating, he went from the University of Georgia into the Marine Corps recruiting office and signed up for OCS. He went to Parris Island. From there, he went to Vietnam. On the 12th month of his 13-month assignment, he was, unfortunately, killed by a sniper in Vietnam.

He went to Vietnam because he wanted to represent his country, fight for his country, pay his price, and do his due diligence. Jack was a great man.

I have a bracelet on—two, as a matter of fact. One is a bracelet for Matt Cooper, a law enforcement officer who was killed a couple of weeks ago. The other one is for John McCain—John McCain, a former Member of this body, who a few weeks ago was buried at the Naval Academy, and his funeral was at the National Cathedral. He was a pilot in the Vietnam war and was captured. He was held captive by the North Vietnamese for 6 years. When he got out, he was badly wounded, badly injured, badly hurt. He came back to the military, rehabilitated himself, and went into the VA healthcare, and they rehabilitated him from his broken arms, his broken back, and all the other problems he had. He ran for the U.S. Senate, came to the U.S. Senate, and was a star, as you know, in this Senate Chamber from the day he got in the Senate until the day he died. He had a pervasive commitment to his country. He was exactly for our country what I want all of us in the Senate to be for this body—committed to the job, committed to the task, always ready, al-

ways prepared. Marines are that way. The Army is that way. The Air Force is that way, and the Senate ought to be that way. We are committed that way to our veterans in what we do today.

We also have to hold them accountable in the military. Accountability is important. Veterans want us to hold the VA accountable. That is why we put in the accountability bill, which, among other things, allows us to fire senior executives in the VA for not doing their job. You can't do that in many government jobs. As a matter of fact, people were surprised that we were able to pass it, and we passed it bipartisan. It passed bipartisan because everybody knew if your job wasn't subject to your doing your job, you didn't have accountability.

The first person taken to court for violating the law by not doing their job was in Georgia. I saw to it we prosecuted that case and used our lawyers to be able to do it. I wanted people at the VA to know we are not going to take bad behavior—break-the-law behavior—or bad attitudes in the VA. We are only going to give the best to our veterans.

We have a number of title 38 veteran leaders who have been suspended, moved, or otherwise fired because they weren't accountable for their job. We have some openings now that need to be filled because we got rid of them. We got rid of people who weren't doing the job and put in people who did the job. In the military, your accountability is doing the job, and there are no excuses if you don't.

We have done a lot of other things to help our veterans and help our country. I commit that we will continue to do so and make sure this Congress is as helpful and beneficial as we can.

There are three quick things I want to talk about. I want to thank the private sector for its support of our veterans. Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, GA, is helping the Atlanta VA now with our doctor shortage in the VA. Yes, we have a doctor shortage. We need the doctors to do the jobs. Some of these waiting times you have heard about from a lot of our veterans are not because we are making them wait because we are slow. We are making them wait because we don't have enough doctors. We are working on joint ventures with medical schools to do so.

Seventy-two percent of the doctors in the United States did a residency or an internship at the Veterans Administration. It is the key training center of all our doctors, and we have to expand that and improve it.

On the appeals process for benefits, there are people who are having to wait 2 and 3 years. We have one veteran whose case has been on appeal for 25 years. You can keep it on appeal as long as you file new information every year. He has found a way to file new information for every year. For 25 years, he has been putting something new in his file. He is blocking other veterans

who need to get their attention to get their service because he is making the line longer than it should be.

We put an accountability on the Veterans' Administration, as well, to see that our benefits are handled quickly and expeditiously and that the appeals are fair, and veterans can get an answer. We are cutting the average time of wait, and we are going to get it down to below half a year pretty soon. Pretty soon, we will have it as instantaneous as you can make it. You shouldn't have to wait to have a benefit paid if you didn't wait to complete an order from the officer whom you worked for.

Lastly, I want to thank Shepherd Center in Atlanta, GA. That is my hometown and my home State. Shepherd takes the most seriously injured veterans in the United States who we no longer can help because we don't have the expertise. They take them and help them. More often than not, they turn their lives around and make it where they can communicate, they can work, and they can do their job. In other words, the veterans are getting the best of care and the best of attention because the Committee on Veterans' Affairs in the Senate is giving 100 percent of their attention to them.

I am proud of what we have done, proud of what the Senate has done, and I am proud of our military and proud of our country. I hope we continue doing in the Senate as we have always done: do our job, do it well, and support our country.

May God bless the United States of America.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

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

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

NO INTERNMENT CAMPS ACT

Mr. MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. President.

Today I rise to bring attention to the No Internment Camps Act. This is an important bill to make sure that America does not repeat the mistake of World War II and develop and expand internment camps here in the United States of America.

One may think that this is something that is farfetched, that of course the United States would not establish internment camps, but the fact is, we already have 3, and the House passed a bill to greatly expand those internment camps. We have 35 sponsors of a bill here in the Senate to expand internment camps. We have the President issuing an Executive order asking Congress to expand internment camps. Recently, the President put forward a draft regulation to expand internment

camps without the consent of Congress. So it is all very real.

Where did this story begin? It began, as far as public awareness, on May 7, when Attorney General Jeff Sessions gave a speech. He called this his zero-tolerance policy. I listened to the description of the zero-tolerance policy on arresting people at the border, and I said: You know, when you take away the fancy rhetoric, it sounds like he has criminalized families who are fleeing persecution from overseas. I thought, that is a pretty stunning situation because we in America often look to Lady Liberty and the words inscribed on the base or pedestal of Lady Liberty that say "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

The idea that our Attorney General is saying we are going to criminalize flight from persecution—and it was found, furthermore, that they were going to immediately throw adults into jail and rip away the children from their families. That is not possible. That is not possible here in the United States of America.

So I arranged to go down to the border. I went down on June 3 and visited the McAllen processing center. The McAllen processing center is a location that the press had never been allowed into, so they were stationed outside saying: What are you going to find inside? What are you going to see? What is in there?

I expressed surprise that the press here in America was excluded from this facility to see what was going on.

I went in. I was given a tour. What I found was pretty shocking—a room in which huddled masses of families were shoved into wire link cages with nothing but an aluminum foil Mylar blanket. Then in an adjoining larger space, a warehouse space, we saw larger cages, 30-by-30 foot cages where families were being separated into fathers in one cage, mothers in another, daughters in a third, and sons in a fourth.

I stood in front of one 30-by-30 foot chain link cage and said: These young boys, who are lining up by height to prepare for being fed; these young boys, with the smallest being just knee-high to a grasshopper, maybe 4 years old; these young boys have been separated from their parents?

The answer was this: Well, Senator, not all of them. Some of them arrived unaccompanied.

I said: But many of these boys in this cage were taken away from their parents?

They said: Yes.

I said: Well, where did that happen?

They said: Well, we brought the family in that door over there, and then, with some explanation, we said, "We need to take your son away. We need to take your daughter away. We need to take your spouse away."

And they were locked up in these various locations inside that warehouse.

So it turned out it was real. The administration was criminalizing a flight from persecution, a flight that our ancestors know all too well, fleeing from civil war, from religious persecution, from famine to come here to the United States of America and see that beautiful, welcoming Statue of Liberty—"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"—but instead of that welcoming embrace, prison for the parents and, quite frankly, prison for the children, separating them.

I went from there up to Brownsville. I had been told by immigration advocates that many of these young men were being stuffed into a single building up in Brownsville, a former Walmart run by a nonprofit called Southwest Key. I had asked permission to visit this location, and I had been told: No, no, no. You have to give 2 weeks' advance notice.

They had a waiver system, so I asked for a waiver to be able to see what was going on inside this former Walmart. The waiver was turned down. Clearly the administration did not want any Member of Congress to see what was going on inside that building.

Since I was there in Texas, I drove up the road to Brownsville and said: Well, I will just call them up when I get there and say, "Surely you have enough members on your staff that one of them could come out and talk to me, or maybe one of them could give me a tour of what is inside."

When I arrived and walked up to the door of this former Walmart, there was a phone number posted on the front of it. I proceeded to call that phone number and talk to the assistant to the supervisor of the facility. The assistant said: Yes, the supervisor would be happy to come out and talk to you.

I waited 10 minutes. No supervisor appeared. I called again, and they said: Oh, no, the supervisor is on his way.

Well, what the supervisor was really doing was waiting for the police to arrive. They called the police to come and arrest me. Very interesting—you are arrested for knocking on the door and asking to have a supervisor talk to you? Well, they didn't arrest me. They hadn't actually formally asked me to leave the property, but they certainly weren't going to let me inside to see what was going on or even talk to me about what they were doing.

The immigration advocates have said: We have heard a rumor that possibly up to 1,000 young boys have been stuffed into that Walmart. I thought, that is not possible. As I was standing there and talking to the press, I repeated that. I thought, I shouldn't say this. I shouldn't say this because that is so outlandish. Surely no administration would try to stuff 1,000 boys into one building.

So I was refused entry. I brought attention to this scandalous child-separation strategy—this strategy of deliberately inflicting trauma on children in order to send a political message. No

one in the world can justify inflicting trauma on children to send a political message. It is not acceptable under any moral code. It is not acceptable under any religious tradition. But the dark heart of this administration had hatched this evil plan, and it was being implemented.

I went back 2 weeks later, on June 14, and I went back with reinforcements—other Members of Congress. We went to that facility, and this time they granted a waiver and said: Yes, you may see what is going on. They allowed the press in as well. So we went in for a tour.

I asked "How many boys are here?" thinking, at most a couple hundred.

They said: Well, we are now ready to put 1,500 boys in this facility, and we are one busload short of filling it.

I think they said there were 1,467 residents in this one building.

They took me out to the outside area, where they had set up a soccer field. They said: Isn't this wonderful? We have a soccer field.

Imagine how long it takes for nearly 1,500 young boys to circulate through a soccer field.

They took me to a game room, and there was a broken Foosball machine. I thought, how long does it take 1,500 boys to circulate through a single broken Foosball machine? Maybe there were a couple of them; I remember seeing one. They were very proud that they had this soccer field and this game room.

I said: You know, you expanded so fast. At the beginning of the year, how many boys did you have?

They said: Well, we planned for 300. We had 300 bedrooms and 300 boys.

They said that 2 months ago, they had increased to 500, and now they have 1,500 or almost 1,500.

I asked: This rapid expansion—did you plan carefully for this?

They said: Oh, yes.

I said: Was there anything that you needed that you fell short on?

The director of Southwest Key said: Yes. We don't have mental health counselors, or at least we are short.

I said: How many are you short?

They said: Ninety mental health counselors.

Ninety? Wow. That is a big shortfall. Realize that these boys were fleeing persecution from overseas. So they had experienced trauma in their lives abroad, they probably experienced trauma en route, and now they are experiencing the trauma of being ripped away from their families and shuttled off to this warehouse. Yet there was no plan to have the mental health counselors needed for this population. This is one feature of the incompetence and callousness of this administration in implementing this policy.

Public outcry was significant. I thank all Americans who participated in that public outcry, saying that this is not our America—criminalizing a flight from persecution, locking people up while they await asylum hearings—

that is not our America and you must stop. The courts said the same thing because it is actually illegal to lock up children for more than 20 days under the Flores consent agreement.

So President Trump sent a message. He sent an Executive order titled “Affording Congress an Opportunity to Address Family Separation.” Oh, how nice. The President is giving us an opportunity to address family separation. And what did the President ask for in that Executive order? He asked for us to pass a law to overrule the Flores consent agreement and allow the administration to establish family internment camps. Imagine—family internment camps here in the United States. That is what the President was asking for, that is exactly what the House of Representatives passed, and that is exactly what 35 Members of this body have signed on to cosponsor—family internment camps in the United States of America. That is absolutely wrong, it is absolutely unacceptable, and it is absolutely unneeded.

You may say: Wait. You are saying that the children shouldn’t be separated from their parents and that you shouldn’t lock up families together, so what do you propose, Senator MERKLEY? What do you propose that we do?

Well, the answer is, we had a very good program. It was called the Family Case Management Program. This Family Case Management Program said that when a family comes and is seeking asylum, they will be placed into the community and they will have intensive case management with somebody who speaks and writes their language, an individual who is in continuous contact with them, who makes sure they know exactly when their check-ins are and how to attend them and who knows exactly when the court hearing is and how to get to those court hearings.

So I wondered, did this work? How well did this program work? It turns out that there is an inspector general report from Homeland Security that came out—I think the date was November 30, 2017. Here is what the inspector general found: “According to ICE, overall program compliance for all five regions is an average of 99 percent for ICE check-ins and appointments, as well as 100 percent attendance at court hearings.” So 100 percent—you can’t get better than that. The Family Case Management Program—the inspector general under this administration said that there was 100 percent attendance at court hearings. So if you hear a Member of the Senate say “Well, we are concerned about this catch-and-release because people don’t show up for their hearings,” that is a lie. That is inaccurate.

That is inaccurate. If you hear the President saying, well, we are going to lock families up if they don’t appear for their court hearings, that is inaccurate. That is a lie. The inspector general of this administration found 100 percent attendance at court hearings.

Fortunately, Members of this body have come to their senses and rejected the language from the House establishing internment camps, expanding them, authorizing them. Fortunately, Members of the Senate have come to their senses and abandoned their effort—for now, at least—to establish permission, authorization, and funding for internment camps, as well they should because it doesn’t fit the vision of America: a nation where most of us are the children of immigrants, if not immigrants ourselves; a nation where in our family tree we have individuals who fled persecution, religious persecution, who fled famine, who fled conflict to be welcomed by the vision of the Statue of Liberty.

The story, unfortunately, doesn’t end here. The President has now issued a draft regulation. That draft regulation says we in the executive branch are granting ourselves the authority to establish internment camps without permission or direction from Congress.

Are you kidding me? A lengthy regulation designed to authorize themselves, without Congress acting, to establish family internment camps is totally out of sync with the traditions of America, with the values of America, or the law as it exists under the Flores consent agreement.

Let me put this as simply as I can: Children belong in homes and playgrounds and schools. They don’t belong behind barbed wire. I will fight as fiercely as I possibly can any proposal to put children behind barbed wire as they wait their asylum hearing. It is wrong. It is morally wrong. It is, from a policy perspective, totally unjustified, as was child separation.

That is why I am introducing the No Internment Camps Act. Let us not repeat the mistakes of World War II. This act ensures that no Federal dollars will be used for the operation and construction of family internment camps. It creates a 1-year phaseout of three family detention centers currently in operation, and it saves money from the family detention centers and transfers it to the Alternatives to Detention Program in order to reestablish the Family Case Management Program—the program that had a 100-percent success rate in getting people to their hearings. Put money into programs that work, not into prisons that afflict children.

There are many groups that have said how important this is and have endorsed the no internment camps legislation: Japanese American Citizens League, Human Rights Watch, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Women’s Refugee Commission, the Anti-Defamation League, the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, the American Immigration Lawyers Association of Oregon, Human Rights First, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Karen Korematsu, the daughter of Fred Korematsu, the lead plaintiff in the Supreme Court case that challenged Japanese internment camps in World War II.

Let us put an end to the prospect of the administration expanding on its own, through Executive order, internment camps in the United States. Let’s do so by passing the No Internment Camps Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

REPUBLICAN AGENDA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, after the vote was called on the Kavanaugh nomination—I should say immediately before it—the minority leader, the Senator from New York, told America that the most important thing they could do in response to that vote is go to the polls in the midterm elections. It is true that on November 6, Americans will head to the polls and select their Members of Congress, including the Senate, and as Ronald Reagan’s famous speech said, it will be “a time for choosing.”

Many people are wondering how they should choose, how they should exercise that most fundamental privilege of American citizenship, and that is the right to vote. Should they choose to vote for mob rule or do they choose to vote for the rule of law? Do they choose to endorse threats, intimidation, and incitement or do they choose to treat everybody—no matter how much you disagree with them—with dignity and respect? I believe those are our choices.

I was very disappointed to hear the former Secretary of State Mrs. Clinton say that you cannot be civil with a political party that wants to destroy what you stand for and what you care about. She said civility is only possible if Democrats were to win back the House or the Senate. In other words, her commitment to civility in our political discourse is contingent upon political outcomes. Did you notice the verb she used? She used the word “destroy,” which I think is telling.

It is not that people may disagree with her or her party, it is that people who disagree with her want to destroy what you stand for and what you care about. In other words, this mindset, I think, is very disturbing and should be of concern to all of us who want to restore some civility, and decorum, and bipartisan cooperation.

We are going to have our differences, there is no doubt about it. I welcome the opportunity to debate those differences. That is what the Senate is all about, but there is a line we saw crossed last week during the confirmation hearing. We learned it is our Democratic colleagues, unfortunately, who have associated themselves with special interest groups that are willing to go to just about any length to achieve their desired ends. In other words, the ends justify the means. That includes climbing statues, disobeying Capitol Police, getting arrested, chasing Senators and their spouses from restaurants, screaming at Members in elevators, sending coat hangers to Senators at their offices, and offering what amounts to a bribe. That doesn’t sound very civil to me.