

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.

Then you have former Attorney General Eric Holder, who was captured on video saying things that I, frankly, am shocked about. You would think the former head law enforcement officer for the U.S. Government, the Attorney General, would understand the need to be careful with your words and not stoke the ambers of conflict and civil unrest, but apparently disregarding that, he intentionally poured gasoline on the fire. He said last week, it is time to ditch the old slogan “when they go low, we go high.”

He attributed that to Michelle Obama, and good for her.

He said instead: “When they go low, we kick them.”

That is what the new Democratic Party is all about. The Washington Post has said Holder is proposing “the party pursue a meaner, more combative approach,” and noted he was alluding to metaphorical violence. This is from the former Attorney General of the United States.

I believe former First Lady Michelle Obama rightfully condemned this ugly and shameful statement.

Meanwhile, one Democratic Member of the Senate has recommended activists get up in the face of your Congresspeople. Another one has justified mob rule as entirely appropriate to our current political situation.

We had members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, during the Kavanaugh hearings, say: I am violating the rules intentionally. I am releasing committee-confidential information in violation of the rules, and, apparently, they were proud of it.

I hope the voters are listening. I think they are. They are coming from some of the most powerful voices of the Democratic Party, voices that could represent you in the next Congress. That is the choice—between incitement, intimidation, mob rule, or civility and treating people you disagree with, with the respect all of us are entitled to in a democracy.

I don't think the voters will reward a party that is spitting out this sort of venom about what our politics should be about: sowing division, alluding to violence, rejecting civility. Is that what supposedly passes for leadership? Should the voters reward that in this midterm election? I think our forefathers would be shocked, but this election is about more than just the rhetoric.

I think the voters also have a choice when it comes to looking at who is interested in solving the problems that confront our country, who is willing to work on a bipartisan basis together with the administration to make the country a better place, more prosperous place, a safer place. All they need to do is look back at the last 22 months.

Yesterday, for example, we passed a major water infrastructure bill that will keep our communities safe by maintaining dams and levees and addressing drinking water and waste-

water systems across the country. It will also expedite, in my part of the world, an important coastal study and authorize flood mitigation projects back home.

Then the President signed, just 2 days before that—I am sure most of this was lost in the furor over the Kavanaugh nomination—but just 2 days before that, the President signed another bipartisan bill I cosponsored called the Justice Served Act that will provide funds to prosecute cold cases solved by DNA evidence obtained from rape kits.

Then, of course, there was the Supreme Court confirmation last Saturday.

In the last 6 days, we have accomplished three major things: water infrastructure, funding cold case prosecutions, and filling Justice Kennedy's seat on the U.S. Supreme Court.

I would say that is a pretty good week, but our record of success is much lengthier than that. Judge Kavanaugh was far from the only Federal judge we have confirmed. Last year, we confirmed another superb Justice, Neil Gorsuch. On top of that, we have confirmed 69 judges under President Trump. That includes three Texas judges on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and four that preside over Texas district courts.

Those numbers begin to show you that since President Trump took office in January of last year, we haven't taken our foot off the gas when it comes to doing the people's work. Under this Congress, we have confirmed the most appellate judges ever during a President's first 2 years. Of course, these nominees, once confirmed, have a lifetime tenure, so they will be there long beyond this President's term or maybe our term in the Congress.

Our work extends far beyond filling the courthouses of this country. What we have done, working together with the entrepreneurs and the investors and the small businesses of America, is we helped reenergize the state of the American economy.

This started with tax reform, which has been the biggest game changer. This is the first major overhaul of the Tax Code in 31 years. It lowered rates, doubled the child tax credit to help working families, and made American businesses more internationally competitive. I am sorry we had to do that all by ourselves without a single Democratic vote, but we thought it was so important to do that we stepped up, and we did it. I think the benefits are pretty manifest.

Ms. PELOSI likes to say the savings individual taxpayers got were merely “crumbs,” but I would like to tell her about some of my constituents and what they told me.

One of them, Kim Ewing from Mesquite, wrote me and talked about how tax reform was hugely helpful because she hadn't had a raise in 7 years. Now she enjoys a boost in her paycheck

each month. She called tax reform a no-brainer or what she referred to as merely “common sense.”

Then there is Claudia Smith, owner of the Aggieland Carpet One in College Station, who told me earlier this year that she has been able to reinvest the savings she received under the new tax law to buy new equipment for her small business, as well as provide healthcare coverage for her employees. She says she will also have enough left over to hire more people.

Claudia's story is the same one that is being told all across the country. More than 700 businesses have used the tax savings to benefit their employees and customers. They have announced pay raises, 401(k) match increases, cuts to utility rates, bonuses, and other benefits to American workers.

These developments are just part of the reason this economy is growing again and why people have renewed confidence and optimism in their future.

As the majority leader reported yesterday, unemployment in this country has now fallen to 3.7 percent, which is the lowest rate since 1969. People are going back to work; they are earning more; they are keeping more of what they earn; and they are investing. This is what it looks like when that sleeping giant of the American economy wakes up and is unleashed from the constraints of high taxation and overregulation.

It is not just the economy that deserves mention. One of our accomplishments has been repealing burdensome regulations—I have mentioned that overregulation—and we have done that through the Congressional Review Act.

Previously, it had only been used 1 time, but we have used this device 16 times to eliminate Agency rules which really had been the ropes that tied down that sleeping giant of the American economy. It allowed it to come roaring back.

We have repealed the Independent Payment Advisory Board under ObamaCare, which will allow seniors and their families to take greater control of their healthcare decisions without being subject to the whims of unelected bureaucrats. We have also eliminated the root of ObamaCare—the individual mandate. This was literally a coercion by the Federal Government, forcing people to buy something that, in many cases, they couldn't afford, and they didn't want.

We literally made ObamaCare voluntary now so people have choices, but this was essentially a tax on some of the most disadvantaged people in the country who were coerced into buying healthcare they didn't want or couldn't afford, and if they were unable to even do that, they were forced to pay a tax or a penalty.

Recently, we have been accomplishing a lot more for our men and women in uniform, our intelligence officers, and our veterans. We have helped restore America's defense with

the greatest investment in the military in decades, including the largest troop pay raise in nearly 10 years.

We have reauthorized important intelligence-gathering tools, like section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—a vital tool in tracking foreign terrorists abroad who try to hurt us at home.

For our veterans, we passed the VA MISSION Act, which will make significant reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs by strengthening healthcare and community care options that are available to those who have served our Nation in uniform.

Last, but not least, is our series of accomplishments. We have taken other important steps, like passing the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act just last week. It is legislation that modernizes our airports, improves service for travelers, enhances safety, and boosts industry innovation.

Then, almost without anybody paying any attention at all, we passed a huge bipartisan bill to address the opioid crisis. Senator ALEXANDER, the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, ushered this bill through the House and the Senate, along with Senator MURPHY and others. It has contributions from 70 Members of the Senate and 5 standing committees. That takes a lot of hard bipartisan effort, but it is important because it combats the nationwide epidemic that has led to the death of 49,000 Americans in just 2017 alone.

We have done important work in terms of improving public safety by enacting a bill I sponsored and that was supported by our colleagues here called Fix NICS; that is, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. We also passed a bill sponsored by Senator HATCH called the STOP School Violence Act.

The Fix NICS bill helped fix our broken background check system and ensures that criminals aren't able to purchase or possess firearms after they are convicted.

In the wake of the Texas shootings at Santa Fe and Sutherland Springs, we know there were a lot of people crying out for Congress to do something, and this was the one thing we could all agree to, on a bipartisan basis, across the ideological spectrum. These two bills—mine and Senator HATCH'S—are a part of the way we have answered that call.

We have tried to protect our young people—especially women—in another important way as well. We enacted what is known as SESTA, the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act. This legislation by the junior Senator from Ohio helps to stop online trafficking and adds to a bill I sponsored called the Abolish Human Trafficking Act. It strengthens programs and supports survivors of human trafficking and provides resources to law enforcement officials on the frontlines of the fight against modern-day slavery.

I understand why most Americans have not heard of all or many of these accomplishments, but I think it is important to note what we have been able to do while we have fought mightily over some things, like judicial nominations.

We have also worked in a bipartisan way to get the people's work done. I believe we have done so mainly by treating each other respectfully and by demonstrating civility, not by yelling at each other, by making threats, or inciting people to violence. That is not the American way.

I am hopeful that after the scenes we saw here last week during the confirmation proceedings for the Supreme Court, that the American people will reject that sort of conduct and demand that their elected officials act in a way they can be proud of.

Yes, we put money back into America's pockets. We have rolled back regulations to make their lives a little bit easier. We have strengthened our military, given our veterans access to better healthcare, and protected our communities from harm.

As the minority leader, the Senator from New York, said right before the confirmation vote on Judge Kavanaugh, the people need to vote. They will, I hope, exercise that franchise—that right of every American citizen to determine the direction of our country and who will represent them in the Halls of Congress.

It is my sincere hope that they will remember some of these accomplishments we have made together during this administration and know we can continue to do more for them in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning the front page of the Washington Post tells the story about our intelligence agencies intercepting some communications among the Saudi Government officials. It appeared they were exchanging information about how to lure a man named Khashoggi back into Saudi Arabia. Khashoggi is a person who has been openly critical of the Saudi Arabian leadership. He has published articles around the world, including in the Washington Post.

We have a video that shows Mr. Khashoggi entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. We have no video that shows him exiting that same building. He has disappeared.

This intelligence data, as well as other information, leads us to believe he has been assassinated—assassinated because he was critical of the leadership of the Saudi Arabian kingdom. That is what happens in a country of authoritarian rule that does not protect the right of dissent.

We see it over and over in history—strong authoritarian rulers can't stand dissenters. Many of them are killed, imprisoned, tortured, or run out of the

country. It still happens in China. It still happens in Russia. It happens, obviously, when it comes to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and other countries.

We are different. I hope we are. The reason we are different is because of 45 words—45 words—that were written over 200 years ago. They are worth repeating. These are 45 words that have guided our country and still should guide us today.

I am going to take a minute to read them. It is the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the First Amendment to our Bill of Rights, credited to James Madison. Here is what it says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

These are 45 words that distinguish us from virtually every other country in the world, where we expressly guarantee to ourselves and our posterity freedoms that are fundamental to being an American.

I have heard my friend the senior Senator from Texas come to the floor repeatedly now to talk about what happened last week during the Kavanaugh nomination and in the weeks before, during the committee hearing, and there were people who came to this Capitol because of their intense personal and political feelings about that nomination and what it meant to them personally and what they believed it meant to the country. They brought their emotions to this place, and they did it because they are guaranteed the right to do it in this Constitution.

Each of us is guaranteed the right to peaceably assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. The Senator from Texas has referred to this as "mob rule." I will tell you, if you believe these 45 words and what the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights instructs us in terms of this democracy, then it gives these people—all people in this country—the right to speak, the right to express their opinion, and the right to petition their government for a redress of grievances.

Now, of course, that should never—never—condone violence nor the incitement to violence. That is where we must draw the line.

If you are going to stand and defend this article of the Constitution, which we have all taken an oath to defend, then you are going to defend the right of individuals to speak in this country and say things that are unpopular and maybe even unacceptable to you personally.

I have found myself in that position, gritting my teeth and thinking I wish to heck that person wasn't saying what they were saying, but they have a constitutional right to do so. They don't have a constitutional right to be violent or to incite to violence.

I might add, I think they cross the line when they go after politicians'