

When I came here, I came here to fight Senator KENNEDY because I thought he was too liberal and that he was not a good Senator. I don't think he had passed really any legislation when I got here. I don't think he did until I became chairman of the committee, but he was a great legislator, and he did have an awful lot to say on his side. I think he would be the first, if he were alive today, to say we finally talked it out together, decided to work together, decided to accomplish things together, decided to stand together. When we were in battles, they were really hard-fought battles, but they were battles on principle, for the most part.

I have to say I am grateful for the experiences I have had in the Senate with virtually every Senator who has been in the Senate. In all of my years of being here, I have to say I have love for every one of the Senators who has served here. There are a couple I have less love for, but by and large I even have love for them.

These folks in this Senate are really good people. They care about the country. They care about trying to do what is right. They are willing to fight for their principles, and they can be worked with. I challenge my colleagues to work together with the best interests of this country. If you will, this country is going to go on and be a very, very happy, prosperous, and successful country.

I will end by saying I am so grateful for the privilege of being in this body for 42 years and knowing all of you, including our clerical workers, our stenographers, and, of course, the Parliamentarians, Secretaries, and all of the people affiliated with the U.S. Senate. No wonder it is the greatest deliberative body in the world.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 THOMAS FARR

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today on two matters. I wish to begin by expressing my opposition to the nomination of Thomas Farr to the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

As a Senator from a State with a tradition of high voter turnout—in fact, in the last Presidential election, with the highest voter turnout in the country—in the election a few weeks ago, nearly 64 percent of Minnesota voters cast their ballot. This isn't just registered voters; it is eligible voters. We are talking about an issue that, in my State and in so many places around the country, is fundamental to our democracy—access to the polls. It is the central pillar of our democracy. If people

can't vote, they can't have a say and we don't have a real democracy. It is that simple. That is why I am here to voice my opposition to Thomas Farr—because of his long record of defending discriminatory voting laws and redistricting plans.

In North Carolina, Mr. Farr defended one of the most restrictive voting laws that we have seen, which, in addition to establishing a discriminatory voter ID requirement, eliminated same-day voter registration.

By the way, I have spent a lot of time on this and have a bill to institute this across the country. Same-day voter registration is really the key. When you look at the top 10 States for voter turnout—some are red, some are blue, some are purple—what do they have in common? They have same-day registration. It makes it easier for people to vote. As long as they can prove where they live—with a neighbor, with a gas bill, you name it—they are able to register that day. That is the key when you look at all the numbers.

What did Mr. Farr do? He actually defended one of the most restrictive voting laws, eliminating same-day voter registration. He reduced early voting and did away with voter registration for 16- and 17-year-olds. How did he do it? He did it by defending those laws.

When the law was challenged in court, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals found that it was enacted with the intent to discriminate against minority voters. In its ruling, the court said that the law targeted minority voters. This is a quote from the circuit court, which is actually one of the more conservative circuits. They said that they did it with “almost surgical precision.”

Mr. Farr also defended North Carolina's redistricting plan against claims that it used race as the predominant consideration in drawing two congressional districts. A district court found that the plan constituted an unconstitutional racial gerrymander. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, which agreed with the district court's decision.

So you don't have just one incident of someone maybe getting on a legal brief or writing something or doing a law review article or writing a paper in college or in high school. This is a long, consistent, systematic record of defending discriminatory voting schemes. And I say “schemes” because that is what they are. They are done with the intention to discriminate against people of color.

We should be making it easier to vote in our elections, not harder. That is why I am introducing legislation to automatically register eligible voters when they turn 18. That would be so easy. We wouldn't have to have all these fights all the time. We have modern-day technology that lets my hometown company of Target find a pair of shoes with a SKU number in Hawaii. There is no reason we can't go through

the records and make sure we simply register people who are legal to vote when they turn 18.

It is not just Mr. Farr's work in the courts that is concerning; I am also troubled by his involvement in a political campaign that was accused of engaging in tactics to discourage, once again, African Americans from voting. The Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division filed a complaint alleging that the campaign Mr. Farr worked on sent tens of thousands of postcards to heavily African-American districts intended to intimidate voters. According to a former Department of Justice official who investigated the campaign's alleged voter-intimidation tactics, Mr. Farr's answers to the Judiciary Committee denying his involvement were “contrary to the facts.”

Finally, I would like to remind my colleagues about the history of this vacancy. The Eastern District of North Carolina is 27 percent African American; yet the district has never had an African-American Federal judge. Before Mr. Farr was nominated, two other nominees were submitted to the Senate during the previous administration. Both of those nominees were African-American women. Neither of those nominees received a vote.

Our courts must be dedicated to upholding the law, including safeguarding citizens' constitutional rights to vote. The future of our democracy depends on it.

I am opposing this nomination.

DEATH OF JAMAL KHASHOGGI

Mr. President, I now turn to another topic. I rise today to call for a forceful response to the murder of Jamal Khashoggi and to hold the Saudi Government accountable at the highest levels. Our country is stronger and safer when our core democratic values—values of freedom of the press and the protection of human rights—are at the heart of our foreign policy.

It has been almost 2 months since Jamal Khashoggi's heinous murder. He was a resident of the United States and a respected journalist with the Washington Post. People across our country have been rightfully appalled by his death. All he was doing was going inside the consulate in Turkey to try to get his marriage papers so that he could get married to his fiancée. That was what was happening, but it turns out he was actually lured there—lured to his death.

We were then treated to an incredible coverup by the Saudi Government, with shifting explanations, inadequate cooperation with investigations, and use of authoritarian tactics to silence critics. News reports have made it clear that the CIA believes with high confidence that the attack was called for at the highest level of the Saudi Government.

I look forward to hearing from Secretaries Pompeo and Mattis regarding how the administration plans to respond when we have the briefing that

has been scheduled for tomorrow. Unfortunately, the President has repeatedly dismissed his own intelligence community's assessment of these deeply troubling events. Of course, this is not the first time we have heard this. We heard this with Russia, when every single one of his intelligence heads clearly said that there had been interference in the last elections and that the Russians were emboldened to do it again. But the President again backed away from that, did not embrace that assessment, and then made policy decisions and statements when he was with Vladimir Putin that undermined that intelligence community. This appears to be what we are seeing again.

The President's response stands in stark contrast to the founding principles of our democracy. If the President refuses to defend the values of this country, then this Congress must.

First, we must hold anyone who ordered and participated—including the Crown Prince—in Mr. Khashoggi's death responsible. To do that, the administration must conduct a full, transparent, and credible investigation.

Second, while the sanctions that the administration has imposed on 17 Saudi officials are an important first step, more must be done. I support Senators CORKER and MENENDEZ in calling on the President to report to Congress on whether the Crown Prince is responsible for this murder. That is what they are supposed to do under the Global Magnitsky Act. If, as reports suggest that the CIA has assessed, the Crown Prince was involved, the sanctions must apply to him too. No one is above the law.

Third, I support suspending nuclear energy talks with Saudi Arabia. It has recently been revealed that the administration has been in extensive talks with Saudi Arabia about nuclear energy. I appreciate that five of my Republican colleagues have come out in favor of suspending these talks, and, of course, that is the right thing to do.

Fourth, I will work with a bipartisan group of my colleagues to limit the sale of weapons to the Saudi military. This is our leverage. This is our leverage to ensure that this investigation is completed; to ensure that these sanctions are implemented and followed; to ensure that this never happens again; and also to send a message to the rest of the world—all of the authoritarian regimes who are watching what happens here—that you don't do this to journalists for American newspapers, that you don't do this to American residents who are simply going back to get their marriage completed.

I previously voted against arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and I will continue to oppose the sale of certain weapons—particularly offensive weapons—to the Kingdom.

The Saudi Armed Forces are so reliant on U.S. military equipment that this argument that they are going to immediately shift to Russia and Chi-

nese suppliers—that would be extremely difficult. So we should exert the leverage that we have now.

There is no question that the United States and Saudi Arabia have common interests in the region and that for many, many years, Saudi Arabia has been our partner. But partnership doesn't require sacrificing our values in exchange for promises of arms sales, oil, or other financial gain. We must be able to cooperate with our partners in the region, while at the same time making clear that we will not overlook human rights abuses or the suppression of peaceful dissent.

The recent actions of the Crown Prince, who many hoped would be a forward-looking reformer, have raised serious questions about our relationship with our partner Saudi Arabia. From expelling the Canadian Ambassador because of a tweet, to the suppression and murder of political dissidents, to what happened with Mr. Khashoggi, to ruthlessly pursuing a war that has resulted in countless civilian casualties in Yemen—the brazen actions of the Saudi leadership must be confronted head-on.

The ongoing war in Yemen has created one of the world's worst humanitarian catastrophes that will impact the safety, security, and stability of the country for decades to come. All you have to do is look at the photos of those little children starving to know that this is wrong.

While I support the administration's recent decision to suspend U.S. aerial refueling for the Saudi coalition, I am concerned that the administration lacks a comprehensive strategy for ending the conflict, including effectively countering Iranian influence. I believe it is very important, by the way, that we put this suspension into law.

I supported a resolution that would have ended U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition military action in Yemen. I supported that when we voted on it last time and voted for the McCain National Defense Authorization Act, which included a provision that prevented the U.S. military from supporting the Saudi-led coalition's operations unless Saudi Arabia takes steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and end the war in Yemen.

I also support the comprehensive, bipartisan legislation introduced by my colleagues to ensure effective oversight of the U.S. policy on Yemen and demand meaningful accountability for the murder of Mr. Khashoggi. Provisions of this legislation, including the suspension of weapons sales to Saudi Arabia, imposition of mandatory sanctions on people involved in the death of Mr. Khashoggi, and a prohibition on U.S. refueling of the Saudi coalition aircraft engaged in the civil war, are very important.

Our response to this murder and the Saudi regime's ruthless suppression of dissent will serve as a lesson to other nations that would do the same.

I have really appreciated the Presiding Officer, Senator FLAKE, standing up for the freedom of the press. Mr. Khashoggi was a journalist. He was simply doing his job. He was doing it with grace. He did it all over the world. And he loved his home country, and look what happened to him.

We must demonstrate that it is unacceptable to suppress, to imprison, and to violently target peaceful opponents of any regime or reporters and that the United States will always defend human rights and hold anyone guilty of violating those rights accountable. Strong, bipartisan congressional leadership will help us demonstrate our resolve. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting our colleagues' resolution that will come before the Senate, I hope, later this week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from Arizona.

INF AND NEW START TREATIES

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, today, along with several other colleagues from the Senate, I wrote to the President on the subject of the possible extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or New START.

Several people have been encouraging the President to begin studying whether we should extend New START, which expires in 2021. That is a couple years from now, but obviously, if one is going to consider renewing something of this import, it is good to be thinking about it early. In this regard, we offered to the President suggestions of things that he should take into consideration in determining whether to extend New START with Russia and whether to begin negotiations with the Russians. We suggested three things that he should consider in deciding whether to proceed with these discussions. I am going to discuss one of them in great detail, but the first two are also important because they represented factors that were considered by the Senate at the time that it ratified the first START agreement.

The Senate declared in the New START resolution of ratification that "the United States is committed to proceeding with a robust stockpile stewardship program and to maintaining and modernizing the nuclear weapons production capabilities and capacities that will ensure the safety, reliability, and performance of the United States' nuclear arsenal at the New START treaty levels." That was our commitment. That is what we said in the resolution of ratification, and President Obama had written a letter to the Senate confirming that it was his intention, as long as he was President, to follow this program of work.

Regrettably, what we posited as an underpinning requirement for participation in New START has not been maintained as the years have gone by. The infrastructure and weapons capabilities that were pledged at the time that the Senate gave its consent to the treaty have been significantly delayed