

I urge my colleagues here in the Senate to take a long, hard look at the undisputable facts, which demonstrate that the crisis on the border is escalating. Our law enforcement personnel have provided us with a plan to work toward improving and solving that problem, so let's work together and get this done.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

NOMINATION OF JONATHAN A. KOBES

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I come to the floor today to oppose Jonathan Kobes' nomination to serve on the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. People across the country know how important it is that we fight back against extreme and extremely unqualified judicial nominees.

Earlier this year, during Judge Kavanaugh's confirmation, we saw just how far President Trump and Senate Republicans are willing to go to jam through extreme judges who will work to strip away women's rights.

But that wasn't all we saw. We saw millions of women and men across the country inspired to stand up and fight back against his nomination. We saw people speak out and share their own personal stories about what was at stake, about sexual assault, and how important it is that we believe survivors, and about the right to safe legal abortions, what it means for women and their families, and about what kind of country we want to live in.

We saw, without question, that people across the country want us to stop President Trump from swinging our courts far right by packing them with ideological judges—judges like Mr. Kobes, who will continue the Trump-Pence agenda of rolling back women's rights and access to healthcare.

Making sure families know exactly what Mr. Kobes would mean for women if he is seated is what I am here to do today. It means weaker rights and less access to healthcare.

He is like many of President Trump's nominees before him. Mr. Kobes lacks almost any real experience to qualify him for a seat on the Eighth Circuit Court. He has little trial experience, little appellate experience, and no record of legal scholarship to speak of.

I am not the only one concerned by that. The American Bar Association has rated him unqualified. That makes Mr. Kobes the sixth judicial nominee from President Trump who is opposed by his professional colleagues.

But the thin record he does have is disqualifying because it shows he will put extreme rightwing ideology ahead of women and science. Mr. Kobes is an outspoken advocate for fake women's healthcare centers, sometimes called crisis pregnancy centers, that seek out women looking for information about their healthcare needs and reproductive rights and then use misleading—

even blatantly false—propaganda to scare and pressure them. Mr. Kobes even went out of his way to represent some of these fake clinics free of charge.

He voluntarily defended a law requiring providers to give a lecture full of ideological propaganda and fearmongering to women seeking safe, legal abortions. The required lecture in this case actually went so far as to demand that providers lie to women and claim abortion increases their risk of suicide. It does not.

Think about that. He argued for a law that directly interfered with the relationship between a patient and her healthcare provider—a law that said women making their own decisions about their own bodies and seeking healthcare, which is their constitutional right, should be lied to, should be frightened out of a decision with fake information, including fake information about suicide. That is utterly wrong and disqualifying for any judicial nominee.

Mr. Kobes hasn't merely represented these fake clinics. He served on the board of an organization that aimed to deceive and frighten women out of getting abortions. It is clear he wasn't chosen for his bona fides in the legal field. He doesn't have them.

Women and men across the country are paying attention. They know what is at stake. Hours before the final vote on Kavanaugh, I came here to speak about how angry I was when the Senate failed Anita Hill in 1991 and confirmed Justice Thomas, how I decided to run for the Senate after that so I could fight to change things, and how I hoped everyone who was angry about Judge Kavanaugh would stay angry and keep fighting for change. I also promised right here that whatever happened, I was going to get up the next day and keep fighting, too, and I meant it.

I am going to keep standing up, speaking out, and making clear just how harmful the President's ideological nominees are.

I strongly oppose Mr. Kobes' nomination. I hope all of our colleagues will do the same.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Muzinich nomination?

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 257 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Barraso	Gardner	Nelson
Blumenthal	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Perdue
Boozman	Hatch	Portman
Burr	Heller	Risch
Capito	Hoeven	Roberts
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Inhofe	Rubio
Coons	Isakson	Sasse
Corker	Johnson	Scott
Cornyn	Jones	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	King	Thune
Cruz	Kyl	Toomey
Daines	Lankford	Wicker
Enzi	Lee	Young
Ernst	McConnell	
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Sanders
Booker	Heitkamp	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Udall
Donnelly	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Harris	Peters	

NOT VOTING—1

Tillis

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BLUNT. I further ask that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each; further, that at 2:15 the Senate vote on the Kobes nomination as under the previous order; finally, if the nomination is confirmed, that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXCELLENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH ACT

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I know that we have a number of things scheduled here, including some farewell speeches from some of our colleagues. I was scheduled to speak, and I do want to speak, and I will try not to take too much advantage of the time.

I wanted to speak today and this week about the importance of treating mental health and the importance of

the role that law enforcement plays in the way we treat mental health in this country. For too long, law enforcement and emergency room personnel have been, in effect, the de facto mental health delivery system for the country.

The National Institutes of Health says that one in five Americans has a mental health or behavioral health issue and that one in nine adult Americans has a behavioral health issue that impacts how they live every single day.

Two Congresses ago, in the 113th Congress, Senator STABENOW and I worked to pass legislation—the Excellence in Mental Health Act. What that did was to create eight State demonstration projects that would last for 2 years each to see what would happen if we treated mental health like all other health concerns—something that everybody knows I believe we should have been doing and something that in eight States we are doing.

The good news was that 24 States applied, a number that exceeded every discussion that anybody had about how many States would step forward and say: We would like to be the States that try to do this first. Twenty-four States applied. I was certainly proud that Missouri was one of the eight States chosen to be in the demonstration project.

We are about halfway through the 2-year project, and in our State and in the seven other States, people have access to mental health services they didn't have before. Most Missourians are within a relatively short drive of a facility that will treat their mental health problem like it was any other health problem, and as we begin to do that, I think we are going to see the kind of impact on law enforcement and the kind of help that law enforcement needs as well.

Just a couple of years ago, I rode with both the crisis intervention teams in Kansas City and in my hometown in Springfield. In Springfield what I saw there were officers dealing with a 24/7 linkup to the Burrell mental health clinic, the local and regional mental health provider.

Sixteen officers, at that time, had, in effect, iPads that linked them up to a mental health professional. It didn't take too long—and I think this would be indicative of what most law enforcement officials see almost every day—before we came on someone huddled in the alcove of a building that was vacant who clearly had a behavioral health problem. It wasn't at that point a drug problem or an alcohol problem. They were where they were because they had a mental health problem.

The officer was able to Skype back immediately with a mental health professional. What I was really most interested in is that even with a well-trained officer who knew exactly what they were doing and how to do it—even with that officer there—as that officer linked the person up with someone—in effect, a telemedicine linkup with a mental health professional—you could

tell that that person was more comfortable talking to the iPad and communicating that way than he was with the officer that was right there with him, and it wasn't because the officer was in any way intimidating or unprofessional. It was just because of what it was—a linkup with someone at another site, but someone who clearly was well prepared to deal with those kinds of issues.

So we are going to see that this benefitted the kinds of things that the mental health community can do to provide more resources to the law enforcement community. The Excellence in Mental Health Act is providing a service and, I think, producing real results.

I would also say, as I conclude my remarks on this topic, that what we hope to see is a significant number of people. Remember, I said NIH said that one out of five adult Americans has a behavioral health issue. What happens when you deal with that behavioral health issue in terms of how you deal with all of the other health issues that that individual or that community will be dealing with? What happens if somebody is feeling better about themselves—taking their medicine, eating better, sleeping better, showing up for the doctor's appointments, showing up for the dialysis appointment, doing what they ought to be doing?

I believe what we are going to find and what has been found in earlier big county studies of this kind is that actually doing the right thing winds up saving money, not costing money. But also doing the right thing for police officers, for people in emergency rooms and providing the kinds of connections and alternatives needed make a big difference.

For all of the healthcare providers and the law enforcement individuals involved, I am grateful for what they do, and I think we are seeing some real results from the bill that this body passed, President Obama signed into law, and is producing great results.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for as much time as it takes me to finish this. I promise I will not keep you here until midnight.

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

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Ms. HEITKAMP. In 2003, I was diagnosed with stage III breast cancer. After treatment, my oncologist told me I had a 28-percent chance of living more than 10 years. Think about that.

I knew right away that I had a chance to use whatever time God gave me for good and noble purposes—to try and do the things I have always thought needed to be done in this country.

It is an important lesson for all of you. The greatest gift you have is not

your bank account. The greatest gift you have is the amount of time you have left on this Earth and what you do with that time. I chose, for good or bad, to come to the Senate.

I think when we have a world of options and we make this choice, it is so important that we come here with purpose—not just to be named a Senator, not just for the trappings of office, but with purpose.

The truth is, I am not supposed to be here. I am from Mantador, ND. It is a town of 90 people. When I was growing up, my family was one-tenth of the population. I just had to say that.

My dad was a World War II veteran who loved education. He read the paper every day. He believed in this country. But he was never given a chance to go to high school. My family struggled to get by, and when you look at it, you think about this; you think about a country where somebody from my background could actually become a U.S. Senator.

I am a Democrat from a very conservative State, but against all odds—in fact, the prediction was it was only 8 percent—I got elected to the Senate. The fact that I got to serve in the Senate for 6 years is an incredible American story. People always ask me: At what point did you think, wow, you came to the Senate?

I have said that I was so busy after I got elected because no one thought I would ever get elected, so people who never wanted to see me during my campaign wanted to see me. I was busy taking meetings and busy putting together the office.

I remember the day I came to that Chair and the pastor came and he gavled in, and then I turned around to say the Pledge of Allegiance. I thought: Here I am from Mantador, ND, a girl, middle-aged, a pudgy Democrat from North Dakota, and I am standing in the well of the Senate where not even 2,000 people have come before.

This is a great and good and noble country with great purpose, with great opportunity. I want every child out there to understand it doesn't matter. We represent a cross section of this great country, but we also aren't that special. We are not.

Sometimes I think the American public think if you took 100 random people and put them in the chairs, they could do better than we could do. But the truth is, you all came here with that same noble purpose. You all came here to change America, to do the right thing. I don't care if you sit across there; I don't care if you sit here. You all came here for the right purpose.

The fact that I got to serve in the Senate is part of a great American story, and that story happens only in this country. Don't ever forget that. If we lose that opportunity, we will become diminished as to who we are.

Today, I want to offer a few comments. I hope they are not too preachy, but I want everyone to understand, especially my colleagues, that this has