Court's landmark ruling in Brown v. Board of Education.

This decision wasn't written just for lawyers or students at law school; it was written for the American people, making the case for equal justice under law.

So here we are—Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS. Chief Justice Warren delivered the opinion of the Court, and I quote:

These cases come to us from the States of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. . . . In each of the cases, minors of the Negro race, through their legal representatives, seek the aid of courts in obtaining admissions to public schools of their communities on a nonsegregated basis. In each instance, they have been denied admission to schools attended by white children under laws requiring or permitting segregation according to race. This segregation was alleged to deprive the plaintiffs of equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment.

In each of the cases other than the Delaware case, a three-judge federal district court denied relief to the plaintiffs on the so-called ''separate but equal'' doctrine announced by this Court in Plessy v. Ferguson. . . . The plaintiffs contend that segregated public schools are not ''equal'' and cannot be made ''equal,'' and hence they are deprived of the equal protection of the laws. . . . Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education toward democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship.

Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other ''tangible'' factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does. . . . To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. . . . We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of ''separate but equal'' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. . . . It is so ordered.

It has been 65 years since the nine Justices of the Supreme Court unanimously gave those words the force of law. Today, for any nominee who would enforce or interpret our laws, it should be far beyond debate that Brown was right—the separate-but-equal doctrine has no place in American society.

Sixty-five years on, it is our duty as Americans to continue to fight for equality and justice in America. We owe this not just to ourselves but we who benefit from the blessings of this democracy, sewn by the hands of our ancestors, we who partake of that fruit from their labors. We must recognize those heroes in the generations who advocated, marched, and insisted that this Nation make good on the promise of equal justice under the law.

I stand here upon the shoulders of those who came before. We as a nation have progressed in every generation toward more inclusion, more equality. Our courts and our activists and our citizens who came before have made this a more perfect union. We still have work to do, but we cannot allow ourselves to see undone the progress of our ancestors. We cannot allow ourselves to call into question those sacrosanct ideas enshrined in our law. This is not the time to go back. We must continue to forge a pathway forward.

Sixty-five years ago, our courts acted in the name of justice and equality. It is our duty and obligation to preserve that progress.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise to express my objections in opposition to the Trump administration's constant attacks on women's healthcare, such as taking action to undermine the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and finalizing administrative rules that allow discriminatory practices to family planning providers and women seeking reproductive healthcare.

Women and their healthcare should not be under constant threat. As a country, the United States has made great efforts to promote equal rights for both women and men. Yet in the 21st century, the Trump administration and congressional Republicans continue to push the policies that set this country back.

The Trump administration's attacks on women's healthcare are unconscionable. Trump has taken several administrative actions that allow employers, insurance companies, and hospitals to refuse healthcare coverage and services based on their personal beliefs. For example, the recently finalized refusal rule allows virtually any individual or entity involved in a patient's care—from a hospital's board of directors to a receptionist who schedules procedures—to put their personal beliefs ahead of a patient's healthcare needs.

Letting hospitals, pharmacies, and a range of people involved in healthcare deny services means that women will lose critical care. Rape survivors could be denied emergency birth control. Same-sex couples could be denied fertility treatment. Women with an unintended pregnancy could be denied information and counseling on their options. The rule represents a radical departure from HHS's mission and long history of combating discrimination, protecting patients' access to care, and eliminating health disparities. It is outrageous that President Trump continually implements policies that discriminate against women in healthcare. We cannot allow women to be treated this way.

One of the most egregious acts of this administration is gutting title X, the Nation's only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services. The Trump administration finalized a rule that would bar providers from giving their patients complete medical information and block care at popular family planning providers like Planned Parenthood, even though Planned Parenthood serves approximately 40 percent of title X patients.

Last year, title X funding allowed nearly 4,000 health centers to provide over 4 million low-income women and men basic primary and preventive healthcare services such as pap tests, cervical cancer screenings, contraception, breast exams, and HIV testing. In Maryland there are 55 title X-funded health centers spanning my State. These include federally qualified health centers, local health departments, Planned Parenthood clinics, and school-based health centers. In fiscal year 2015, Maryland received over $3.8 million in title X funding and provided health services to over 64,000 patients. These are low-income, underinsured, and uninsured individuals who would otherwise lack access to healthcare.

In addition to attacks on women's healthcare, the Trump administration has proposed a title IX rule that weakens the existing protections for victims of campus sexual assault and allows universities to roll back their responsibilities to ensure students receive an education free of discrimination. Recently I was on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park, speaking to students from College Park and Bowie State University regarding issues related to higher education. At College Park students are guaranteed housing on campus only for their first 2 years of education. Under Secretary DeVos's title IX rule, the university would no longer be responsible for investigating any claims of sexual assault for incidents that take place off campus, even though it may involve two students. In fact, 9 out of 10 sexual assaults do take place off college campuses.

This rule and the administration's failure even to listen to the concerns of sexual assault survivors on campus show a callous disregard for victims. We should be working to ensure protection for victims, not minimizing their experiences. In order to do just that, I have fought for funding for the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights to have adequate staffing to investigate these claims and other

claims of violations of a student's civil rights. I have also cosponsored bipartisan legislation, such as the Campus Accountability and Safety Act, which seeks to find a commonsense solution to this difficult issue that holds colleges accountable without traumatizing victims when reporting an assault.

We should also take up and pass the reauthorization for the Violence Against Women's Act. Last month, the House passed this critical legislation, which would reauthorize funding of these programs and authorize new programs; amend and add definitions used in the VAWA programs; amend Federal criminal law relating to firearms, custodial rape, and stalking; and expand Tribal jurisdiction over certain crimes committed on Tribal lands.

The American people deserve better from their elected officials. I am committed to opposing President Trump's reckless and outrageous actions that would harm women and their families in Maryland and across our Nation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. JONES pertaining to the introduction of S. 1453 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. JONES. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). The Senator from Illinois.

IRAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 1 year ago, President Trump recklessly withdrew from the historic nuclear agreement reached between the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, China, and Iran to end Iran's nuclear weapons program.

President Trump decided to withdraw from that agreement. It is not clear to me why President Trump further undermined our country's international reputation by backing out of this agreement reached by key global powers.

To think that we had a consensus, including Russia and China and our traditional allies of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, and the President decided to walk away from it is beyond me.

As with so many issues, he seems motivated to reverse anything ever done by President Barack Obama, regardless of the facts or by his naive belief that he can always strike a better deal.

Sadly, I have yet to see any evidence of that dealmaking acumen. In fact, I have only seen alienated allies, giveaways to dictators, and a loss of American standing and influence in the world.

It is important to step back and recall where we were when President Obama took office. Our intelligence community assessed that until 2003, Iran was working toward a nuclear bomb. Among the many calamities of the disastrous war in Iraq was that it further empowered Iran. The country's hard-liners moved forward at great speed, building suspicious nuclear infrastructure. These efforts produced large and unsettling quantities of highly enriched uranium that could have been used for a nuclear weapon.

Such a weapon in the hands of the Iranian regime would have been an unacceptable risk to the region, to Israel, and to the world.

This is the mess that President Obama inherited when he came to office. He pledged that Iran would not be able to obtain a nuclear bomb on his watch, and he kept his word. You see, just as President Kennedy negotiated with the Soviets when they were threatening possible nuclear war with missiles in Cuba, just as President Nixon began to establish ties with China while it was supplying weapons to the North Koreans, who were fighting Americans, and just as President Reagan negotiated with the Soviet Union, even though it was occupying Eastern Europe and fomenting violent revolution, there are times when such agreements serve our national interest and make the world a safer place.

Similarly, President Obama negotiated a comprehensive deal that prevented Iran from being able to build a nuclear bomb and held it to stringent, invasive inspections to ensure that Iran kept its pledge.

Notably, this historic agreement was accomplished without drawing the United States into war in the Middle East. Let me be clear. The nuclear agreement was never about all the other genuinely troubling Iranian behavior in the world, but, instead, it was designed to ensure that Iran didn't pursue activities with a nuclear weapon. That is what it did.

The International Atomic Energy Agency continues to verify that on the ground in Iran the agreement still holds. For the last 4 years, this Agency has performed an average of four surprise inspections every month—8,000 inspection hours—and they have found no evidence of noncompliance on the Iranian side.

Now, today, President Trump is pursuing an incomprehensible policy of regime change, trying to flatter and meet with Iranian President Ruhani to negotiate a supposedly better deal and threatening Iran militarily and tightening sanctions. The end result of this dangerous incoherence is that our allies are united against us, sadly to say, and Iran may restart nuclear activities which had been frozen for the last 4 years because of the agreement that President Trump walked away from.

So the only thing our President's policies have done is to make a potential restart of Iran's nuclear program a reality. I fear that President Trump, with the goading of many around him, is trying to foment a pretext for another war in the Middle East—the last thing America or the world needs.

So let me be clear on something that I have said regardless of who is in the White House, a Republican President or a Democratic President. Article I, section 8 of our Constitution is clear that Congress has the authority—the only authority—to declare war. This President—any President—must first have the approval of the people's representatives in Congress before asking our sons and daughters to enter into battle.

It is not too late for an off-ramp.

I am concerned that this word isn't even close to the way I actually feel with the suggestion that Acting Defense Secretary Shanahan was called on to create a plan using 130,000 American military to be poised in some effort to intimidate Iran. One hundred thirty thousand—that is the number of troops we sent into Iraq.

I was happy to be one of the 23 members of the Senate who voted against that terrible decision, but we didn't prevail. We went into Iraq and thousands of Americans died. It can happen on any President's watch. This President is setting the stage for it to happen in Iran.

Sadly, the American people have not been dealt into the conversation. They have one thing to turn to, though, our Constitution, which says that, ultimately, the American people will make the decision when it comes to war through their elected representatives.

This administration should return to the only reasonable, smart, and effective option on the table for countering Iran: Rejoin the nuclear agreement immediately, repair our strained relationship with our own allies, and use that unity to push back on Iran's destabilizing actions across the region which exist outside the nuclear realm. Anything else is reckless.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The Senator from Texas.

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SANTA FE HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTING

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to give voice to a town in Texas. It is a small town of about 14,000 people. In that town there is a high school, a school of about 1,500 students. One year ago, on May 18, a deeply disturbed and deranged student committed an unspeakable act of evil which shook Santa Fe, shook Texas, and shook the entire country. It left our Nation weeping.

Just before 8 in the morning, the shooter began firing weapons into classrooms and through doors where his fellow students were taking shelter.

Within minutes, the attacker senselessly murdered 8 students and 2 teachers. Their names are the following: Jared Conard Black, Christian Riley Garcia, Shana Fisher, Aaron Kyle McLeod, Glenda Ann Perkins,