

Board was correctly decided, saying instead that the decision was correct with the benefit of hindsight—whatever that means. In the same district, where 6-year-old Ruby Bridges became the first African-American child to attend an all-White elementary school in the South, the Senate will consider confirming someone who claims that hindsight was needed to understand why the decision that allowed Ruby to go to the same school as a White child wasn't correct. That is who we are putting on the bench.

These are not just conservatives. We understand that the President and Republicans will put in conservatives, but hard-right, narrow ideologues who show no understanding or sympathy for people who don't look like them or pray like them or marry like them—what is wrong here?

It is not hard. If you need the benefit of hindsight to understand that *Brown v. Board of Education*, which brought an end to school segregation and led to the end of American apartheid, was correctly decided, you shouldn't be a Federal judge. I urge my colleagues, in the spirit of the Brown anniversary and what it means, to oppose Ms. Vitter's nomination this afternoon.

PUERTO RICO

Mr. President, now on Puerto Rico, briefly, as negotiations on a final package of disaster aid continue, I want to stress to everyone that we must remain focused on reaching an agreement as swiftly as possible. Disaster-stricken Americans in the West, the South, the Midwest, and 3 million citizens of Puerto Rico are waiting on Congress to deliver relief, in some cases for disasters that occurred over a year ago.

Why is this held up?

We know why. Republicans are not willing to give aid to Puerto Rico. There was a bill that would never pass the House and something they didn't think originally, when President Trump said: Don't do it. And they just bowed down. They thought they could roll over the House and the Democratic minority in the Senate, who wouldn't stand up for certain Americans.

Well, we did. Now, thankfully, we are making progress. Republicans are realizing that Puerto Ricans cannot be left out of the package, but now we must avoid poison pills at all costs. President Trump, if he sticks his thumb into this again and asks for something unreasonable, will delay disaster aid once again, just as he did before.

To my Republican colleagues, let's do this together. Let's do it in the right way. Let's do it in the way that can pass the House.

President Trump will sign the bill. We have to make sure this legislation gets across the finish line. Every time the President intervenes and Republican colleagues go along, it gets held up even further.

ABORTION

Mr. President, on the Alabama abortion bill, last night the Republican Alabama Senate passed, perhaps, the

most draconian abortion law in the country. It bans abortion in every stage of pregnancy, imposes criminal penalties—criminal penalties—on any doctor who performs one, and includes no exception in the case of rape or incest, even if the victim is a child. If a child is raped, they have to have the baby.

The Alabama bill is as extreme as it gets. It is a clear attack on women's freedom. It contravenes a woman's constitutional right to make private medical decisions. It would deeply harm women, turn doctors into criminals, and deny the right of rape victims, even if they are children, to make personal medical decisions.

The Alabama abortion bill is plainly inhumane. It should never have passed. The Governor should not sign it. If she does, it ought to be swiftly struck down by the courts.

IRAN

Mr. President, on Iran, over of the past few days, it has come to light in public reporting that the Trump administration's national security team has reviewed a plan to deploy as many as 120,000—yes, you heard that right, 120,000—U.S. troops in the Mideast should tensions with Iran escalate. I was stunned to read this report in the *New York Times* yesterday.

The administration just started a maximum pressure campaign of sanctions against Iran, but is it simultaneously reviewing plans for war? That would make no sense.

Meanwhile, the President oddly denied the report while also saying he would "absolutely" send ground troops to the Middle East. But if he did, it would be a "heck"—and I am paraphrasing—"of a lot more troops [than 120,000]."

Did we learn the lessons of the last decade? Do we know that we have to spend our time focusing on building up this country here, not build roads and bridges in the Middle East but do them here?

There is an alarming lack of clarity here. There is a lack of strategy, and there is a lack of consultation. The President ought to come up with a strategy and make it clear to Congress. An adventure like this—120,000 troops or a large number of troops—should have to be approved by Congress. It certainly should be discussed with Congress ahead of time. There need to be open hearings and closed briefings with the committees of jurisdiction immediately.

Any potential increase in our military presence in the Middle East should require consultation with Congress, and anything beyond that would require this body to act.

President Trump, what is your strategy? Where are you headed? Why aren't you talking to Congress about it?

PUBLIC HOUSING

Mr. President, finally, on public housing, it was reported last week that the Department of HUD has proposed a rule that would bar families with

mixed immigration status from receiving public housing assistance, even if everyone but one member of the family is a legal resident. So if it is a family of six—a mother who is an American citizen, four children who are American citizens, but a husband who is not and who is not here legally—they kick them all out. It risks displacing tens of thousands of legal residents and of American citizens, including 55,000 children. The administration has created crisis after crisis with the immigration community. Are they going to create another one and take 55,000 young American children, almost all of whom are citizens, and just kick them out on the streets when we know there is very little affordable housing? What a cruel and callous policy. It is another example of the Trump administration's desire to separate families and disrupt communities.

There is nothing to say about this proposed rule but that it is cruel, wrong-headed, and would lead to even more chaos than the administration has created already.

In an effort to appear even more punitive toward immigrants, the administration has conjured up a rule that could potentially force tens of thousands of children into homelessness or away from their families.

My message to President Trump and Secretary Carson is simple: Scrap this idea now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, it is an honor to rise today to speak in this Chamber on behalf of the people of Missouri. When I think of those who have served my State here before me, I am humbled. When I think of the true and strong Missourians who have sent me here, I am sobered, because to represent them will be a great responsibility indeed. I pledge to my fellow Missourians that I will work at this task with all the strength that God can give me, and I will serve without fear and without favor to any man.

We Missourians are known for our frankness, and today I will be frank because this is a moment of great need for my State and for our Nation. This Nation was born in a revolution by "We the People" and premised on a revolutionary faith that it is the people—the common man and woman who make democracy work—and it is the calling of every generation to renew that revolution for their day. In our time, our revolutionary faith is faltering, and in the heartland of this country, the great challenge of our age is unfolding.

I come from a town called Lexington, MO. It is a small place, but a proud one. It is a place where people wake early and work late to make a life for themselves and their children. It is a place where people value honesty and gumption and life's simple pleasures: a fine morning in a deer stand, reading

to the kids before bed, and Sunday dinner at Mom's. Although it is humble, it is a place that reflects the dignity and quiet greatness of the working men and women.

These are the people who explored a continent, who built the railroads, and who opened the West. These are the workers whose labor launched the Industrial Revolution and whose ingenuity made the American economy the marvel of the world. These are the families who have rallied to this country's flag at every hour of danger and who bear the burden of defending our Nation even now. These are the patriots who man the fire department and coach the Little League. These are the generous who give \$25 a month out of their gas money to assist people half-way around the globe whom they will never meet just because they believe in helping others. They don't ask for much, and they live by a simple creed: Give the best of yourself to your family, your community, and your fellow man. America is a place of promise, because in these hearts, honor lives.

These working men and women are confronting crises today, and, as they do, so does our democracy. After years of sacrifice, the great American middle is being pushed aside by a new arrogant aristocracy. The new aristocrats seek to remake society in their own image, to engineer an economy that works for the elite but few else, and to fashion a culture that is dominated by their own preferences. When they think of helping their fellow citizens, they think of making everyone else more like themselves.

And Washington has just gone along. This town has embraced the politics of elite values and elite ambition rather than building opportunities to thrive in the great and broad American middle. This has left middle America—the great American middle class—under siege, battling the loss of respect and work, the decline of home and family, and an epidemic of loneliness and despair. This is the crisis of our time.

I am afraid you wouldn't know it to listen to the talk of this town much of the time. As the crisis deepens, the political establishment looks the other way, rehearsing and rehashing the political debates of 30 or 40 years ago. There is no time for that any longer. The 21st century is upon us, and the great struggle of this century can no longer wait. The crisis that we face goes to the heart of our revolution.

The United States is unique in history as a republic governed not by a select elite but by the working man and woman, because we believe it is through the working man and woman that God chooses to change the world. That change comes not through spectacular feats of daring or glory but through everyday work and everyday sacrifice and everyday acts of courage and love. It has been the proud working people, our farmers and mechanics, and teachers and tradesmen who have defined the character of this country.

For too long now, neither our economy nor our culture has lent them much support. Instead, our policy-makers have entrenched the new elites and undermined the way of life that once bound this country together. It is time to face the facts.

Over the last 40 years, our economy has worked best for those at the top—the wealthy and the well-educated. If you have a job in Silicon Valley or an expensive and prestigious degree, this economy has worked for you, and Washington has focused on how to get more people to join this elite. But if you want a life built around the place where you grew up, if your ambition is not to start a tech business but to join the family business, to serve in the PTA or in your local church, well, you are told that you are not a success, and you are told that you are on your own.

This is no accident. The people who make the rules now, who run our large corporations, and who set the tone for our popular culture all belong to the same class. This economy has been their economy. They made it for themselves.

But in places like the one where I grew up in middle Missouri, good-paying jobs that you can raise a family on are going away. The jobs go overseas or south of the border or to cities on the coasts. Once vibrant towns decline, taking with them the network of schools and neighborhoods and churches that make up middle-class life.

Rural America has been particularly hard hit. Rural Americans' life expectancy has not just leveled off. It has actually dropped, and for women without a high school degree, that drop has been staggering. In some rural places, residents struggle with outright deprivation. My home State contains some of the poorest counties in America, all in rural places that once boasted thriving small towns. As those communities struggle, want sets in.

The crisis reaches well beyond economics. The message that Washington has sent our whole society is loud and clear: Our elites are the people who matter and those who aspire to join them. Everyone else is unimportant or backward.

Millions of Americans are left with a sense that the people who run this country view them with nothing but contempt and value them as nothing but consumers. These trends tear at our country's social fabric, and they undermine our common ethic of citizenship because being a free person and being an American isn't just about what you can buy. It is about the pride that comes in supporting a family. It is about contributing something of worth to your community. It is about being able to look a neighbor in the eye and know that you are his equal. It is about respect, and too many Americans haven't been getting it.

They are certainly not getting it from our cultural elite. The media, Hollywood, and academia relentlessly press their values and their priorities

on the rest of us. They advocate liberation from the duties of family and tradition. They look down on the plain virtues of patriotism, self-giving, and faith. They idealize fame and preach self-realization through consuming more stuff, and as they do, they assault the foundations of the great American middle.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, then, at the epidemic of loneliness and despair that is spreading across working communities. Fewer young people are getting married and starting families. Drug addiction is surging. The opioid menace has ravaged every sector, every age group, and every geography of working people.

It is not only pills. It is heroin, cocaine, fentanyl, meth, and, of course, marijuana that have flooded our streets and our homes. Everywhere, deaths of despair are mounting among farmers and among the young. Most shockingly, the young are the hope of our society, but in America today, they are taking their lives in numbers we have never seen in our history.

The well-off frequently note that our Nation has never been richer, but the tragedy of youth suicide betrays a profound poverty of hope. And is that really so surprising? Today's youth must make their way in a society increasingly defined not by the genuine and personal love of family and church but by the cold and judgmental world of social media.

A typical young person is bombarded by video games and violence and the relentless status-seeking imposed and modeled by our cultural elite. There is no more shocking illustration of our cultural poverty and no more damning indictment of our cultural leaders than these lost lives.

The sum of it all is that too many Americans are losing their standing as citizens. They are losing their voice in the life of this Nation, and with that, they are losing their liberty. To be free is to have a voice. It is to have a say, and it is to have the power of self-government.

The chattering class often tells us that all of this—the jobs, the despair, and the loss of standing—is a result of forces beyond anyone's control, as if that is an excuse to do nothing, but in fact, it is not true. Today's society benefits those who shaped it, and it has been shaped not by working men and women but by the new aristocratic elite. Big banks, big tech, and big multinational corporations, along with their allies in the academy and the media—these are the aristocrats of our age. They live in the United States, but they consider themselves citizens of the world. They operate businesses or run universities here, but their primary loyalty is to their own agenda for a more unified, progressive, and profitable global order.

These modern aristocrats often claim to be a meritocracy, and many of them truly believe they are. What they don't see or will not acknowledge is that the

society they have built works mainly for themselves. They have effectively run this country for decades, and their legacy is national division and national decline.

It is time to reclaim our revolutionary heritage and reassert the democracy of "We the People." To those who despair at the task ahead, I say the hour is not too late and the crisis is not too deep for the determined effort of a great people, and to those who feel forgotten and unheard, I say this is your time. Now we must stand together to renew the promise of our enduring revolution. We must put aside the tired orthodoxies of years past and forge a new politics of national renewal.

We must begin by acknowledging that GDP growth alone cannot be the measure of this Nation's greatness, and so it cannot be the only aim of this Nation's policy because our purpose is not to make a few people wealthy but to sustain a great democracy. We need not just a bigger economy but a better society. We need a society that offers rewarding work for every worker who wants it, wherever she is from, whatever degree he might have, whether their ambition is to start a business or to start a family. We need a society that will allow towns and neighborhoods to flourish across the great heartland of this country and not just in the megacities of the coasts. We need a society that puts American workers first, that prioritizes them over cheap goods from abroad and offers them the chance to better their station. All this we must fight for and more.

We need to repair the torn fabric of our common life. We need a politics that prioritizes strong marriages and encourages strong families, where children can know their parents and be nurtured by their love. We need strong schools and churches and co-ops because these are the things that make liberty possible, for liberty is more than selling or buying or the right to be left alone. Liberty is the ability to master our own fate and, as a free people, to set our own course. That is the promise of the American Revolution, and we will renew it for our day.

Washington has ignored the need for this renewal for too long. It has rested easy with the priorities of an earlier age. Now it must wake up and face the facts of this day. Now we must ask new questions, force new debates, articulate new priorities, and find new solutions to make the great American middle thrive again.

This is not the work of a day or a season. It is the work of a generation. We will make it the work of this generation and so do our part to see the success of liberty in our time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WELCOMING SENATOR HAWLEY OF MISSOURI

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I am glad to be joined by my good colleague Senator HAWLEY. He brings incredible depth to the issues we talked about. He grew up in Lexington, MO, I understand, in smalltown America. He was educated in some of the best schools in our country and had the great good fortune to be assigned as a John Roberts law clerk in the office of another John Roberts law clerk and the good judgment to convince her to marry him. He and Erin are a valuable asset to our State. They have two wonderful little boys. I have enjoyed the time we have had together and look forward to more time with JOSH and his family. He clearly thinks deeply about the issues that affect the country. He is focused on not only the present but the future. Those are all good things.

We have jointly had the opportunity to represent a State that is as diverse as any State in the country. I think a week, a month, a year in Missouri is probably the closest thing to that same period of time if you could somehow condense the entire United States into one place, where sometimes St. Louis is seen as the westernmost eastern city and Kansas City may be more like Denver than St. Louis. Northern Missouri is more like Iowa.

I would state to Senator GRASSLEY that when crossing the border there, you certainly can't tell when you cross from Missouri farmland into Iowa farmland and the small cities and small towns. The Bootheel, Delta South in character where JOSH and I live in Springfield has that northwest Arkansas-Oklahoma vitality that is different from anywhere else in our State. As we travel actively around our State, as we both do, I think we have a great sense of so much of what happens in the country. It is still the population center of America, if not the exact geographic center. Missouri is where the country comes together.

JOSH had an opportunity last year to talk to tens of thousands of Missourians about that and to communicate in other ways with millions of Missourians about that. I am glad he is here and glad to welcome him to the work we will be doing together. We won't agree every single day because if we did, I guess we could have just one Senator and give him two votes. But it gives us a chance to talk about the issues we face and what that means for our State but also what it means to the country.

I am delighted he has committed himself to public service. Missourians have now elected him to two statewide offices in less than 3 years, and they have expressed that confidence in him.

With great frequency, I run into students both JOSH and Erin had when they were both teaching at the Law School at the University of Missouri, and they always tell me Erin was the best teacher they ever had and often

tell me JOSHUA was the best teacher they ever had. They must not have had a class with Erin yet. But I am delighted that they are both part of the discussion that will lead America forward. I look forward to engaging in that discussion with them and partnering in the things we can find to do together and getting a chance to represent our strong, unique State that I think is ready to merge into a greater future, whether that is with all the healthcare and ag research we see happening, the GEOINT focus that is coming into our State because of the new NGA, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency facility being built there.

This is a time of great opportunity. I am glad to have the chance to share part of that opportunity and look at that future with my colleague JOSH HAWLEY and certainly want to join others in welcoming him officially to the Senate today as he makes his maiden speech to the Senate.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I want to join with my colleague, the senior Senator from Missouri, and congratulate the junior Senator from Missouri on some wonderful remarks.

I came into the Congress with Senator BLUNT from the House of Representatives over 20 years ago, which I guess makes us the old guys around here, but it warms my heart and gives me great hope for the future to see the caliber and the quality of people who are entering public life in the form of people like Senator HAWLEY.

He is somebody who not only brings great intellect, great passion, and great conviction, but he is a principled leader who is here for the right reasons and profoundly wants to make a difference for the future of this country. In his remarks, he touched upon the genius of our Founders, and that is that average Americans—working men and women in this country—have an opportunity to make a difference with their voices and with their votes by entering the public arena and being a part of our democracy. That is really what this is all about. That is what our work should be about every day, is empowering them to do a better job in raising their families and serving their communities.

I certainly look forward to continuing our work with the new Senator from Missouri and with the rest of our colleagues here as we embark upon that task. I hope we can be successful in restoring that vision our Founders had for what this country should be and in each day waking up and thinking about the fact that it is not about us; it is about what we do to secure a better and brighter future consistent with that brilliant past we have been so blessed by because of those who have come before and have been willing to enter public life and make a difference.

So thank you and congratulations to Senator HAWLEY. It is a great honor to