

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

ABORTION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to start today by expressing my appreciation to all of my colleagues who will be out here today speaking out and to the women and men nationwide who are doing the same today in their own communities.

In the last few weeks, we have seen some of the most blatant and cruel efforts yet to deny women access to a safe, legal abortion. We have seen legislation so extreme, it would even block a 12-year-old survivor of rape from getting an abortion and sentence healthcare providers to prison for providing safe, medically sound care to their patients, which is their responsibility.

The extreme politicians behind these cruel abortion bans are not stopping in Alabama or Missouri or anywhere else; they want to take these bans all the way to the Supreme Court. They want to allow Brett Kavanaugh to do what President Trump and Republicans chose him to do—roll back the decision in *Roe v. Wade* that established a woman's constitutionally protected right to make her own decisions about her own body and her own healthcare.

They are pushing for this even though they know as well as we do that without the ability to exercise that right, women lose their lives; even though they know just as well as we do that without this right, doctors will be blocked from providing medically appropriate care. Let me be frank. Extreme conservatives will push these abortion bans all the way to the Supreme Court even though they know—or maybe even because they do know—that in a world where women cannot control what happens to their own bodies, they are less able to plan their family and stay financially secure and independent. That means they are less free and less equal.

I am not going to stand for that, and Senate Democrats are not going to stand for that either. I am proud to be on the floor today with a number of my colleagues who will be here standing for what our Constitution confirms is true: Women have the right to access safe, legal abortion, and this makes our country stronger because women are absolutely critical to our country's strength. I am proud to be making clear that even in the face of relentless attacks on women's health and rights, we are not going to back down one bit.

The truth is, there are certain extreme politicians around the country who want to take us backward to the

“Mad Men” era or, honestly, quite a bit before that. But they aren't speaking for our country—quite the opposite. In fact, the vast majority of women and men nationwide, including those from all different backgrounds, agree that abortion should be safe and it should be legal, just as our Constitution says. Those people are watching now. They are speaking up, and they are absolutely going to remember who stood up to protect women's health and rights and who pushed to take those rights away.

We have a number of Senators who will be speaking about this today, and I want to thank them for being here today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, while she is on the floor, I want to commend my northwest colleague and friend, Senator MURRAY, for all of her leadership, constantly coming to the floor and leading us on this enormous health challenge—a challenge that is really existential for so many women across the country.

Right now in State capitals across the land, Republican lawmakers are passing extreme bills that throw in the trash can 45 years of settled law on reproductive health. This is an open, coordinated attack on *Roe v. Wade* and a woman's right to choose the healthcare she needs. These Republican lawmakers are passing bills that are not only harmful, but they are overwhelmingly opposed by the public—bills with harsh criminal penalties for women and doctors, bills with no exceptions for cases of rape or incest, bills that explicitly compare women getting medical care to the Holocaust. Let me repeat that—bills that explicitly compare women getting medical care to the Holocaust.

I want to be clear on what this is all about. The party of Donald Trump is insisting on government control of women's bodies. That is what is on the table in Alabama, Georgia, Missouri, and elsewhere—government control of women's bodies.

Millions of women across the land are watching in anger and in fear as all of this is playing out. I have heard from many of them back home in Oregon. I heard it last weekend. I have four town meetings in the rural part of Oregon coming up; I am going to hear it again. Women are afraid for the future—their future and their family's future—because they know what is at stake with this coordinated attack on their rights.

First, it puts women's lives in danger.

The reality is, abortions will still happen in States that pass these laws, but those abortions will happen later, and they will be unsafe. Women are going to die. That is a fact. Women are going to die because of these restrictions. If you need proof, just look at the figures before and after the *Roe*

case. In the decades before *Roe*, thousands of women died due to unsafe abortions. And those are only the ones people know about. That doesn't even take into consideration the unnamed, the unknown victims of those misguided policies. After *Roe* was decided in 1973, women's healthcare got safer. Now, once again, there is an effort to undermine that safety of women.

Second, in key ways, the future these restrictive laws are creating is worse for women and healthcare professionals than before *Roe*.

What we are talking about now is jailing doctors for life. We are talking about treating women like hardened criminals after they get a medical procedure. Women in some places are facing the prospect that they may need to report miscarriages to the government or they could wind up in prison.

The other side in this debate paints a picture of women exercising their right to choose that is unfair and unrealistic. These are incredibly difficult choices. Many women exercising the right to choose have just been hit with the most devastating medical news that prospective parents can face. It is not up to State lawmakers and government bureaucrats to step in and interfere with this intensely private and personal choice, but that is exactly what is on offer with the laws being passed in statehouses across the land. These laws bind and punish women with a level of government control that did not exist before *Roe*. This is right out of nightmarish fiction. It is a coordinated attack on women's rights that is cruel and dangerous.

Abortion and other reproductive decisions are healthcare, and healthcare choices ought to be made by women with the help of doctors they trust, not by the Federal Government and not by State lawmakers—women and doctors. That is it. Full stop.

My Democratic colleagues and I want to thank Senator MURRAY and Senator SHAHEEN, who have been such advocates for women's healthcare for many years in public service. They are here.

We are all going to be part of this effort that I am proud to join in to fight at the Federal level with everything we have to stand up for women's right to make intensely personal choices, and we are going to be joining those women across the land who are standing up and fighting with everything they have.

The government should not have control of women's bodies—end of story.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am here to join my colleagues. I was going to say I am pleased, but I am not pleased. I am disappointed that we are here on the floor today talking about something that should be an issue that is decided by women with their families and their physicians. Yet we are here to sound the alarm about the relentless assault State legislatures and

this administration have leveled against constitutionally protected reproductive rights and a woman's right to choose the healthcare she needs.

I certainly applaud Senator MURRAY, who has done such a great job of leading the response to this assault, and my colleague from Oregon, Senator WYDEN, for his efforts.

This radical effort to limit women's freedom to a full range of reproductive care is part of a broader strategy by some in this country to take healthcare away from people who need it. Americans across the country, both women and men, are calling out these threats and fighting them head-on. Today, in hundreds of capitals across this country, in courthouses, at hundreds of rallies, a powerful message is being sent that we are not going back. As Members of Congress here in Washington, we need to join them and defend women's reproductive rights.

In just the past 2 weeks, Governors in Alabama and Georgia signed extreme and dangerous abortion restrictions into law. Yesterday, the Missouri Legislature passed another bill to place draconian restrictions on a woman's access to abortion. These actions are part of a concerted effort around the country to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and to deny women access to reproductive care.

What is so ironic about this is that this is coming at a time when last year this country saw fewer unintended pregnancies than at any time in our history because giving women access to family planning, to the range of reproductive healthcare that women need, means that there are fewer unintended pregnancies. What laws like this will mean is that there will be more abortions, more unintended pregnancies, more maternal health deaths. That is not the direction in which we should be going.

All of these State actions are concerning, especially the new Alabama law, which would outlaw abortion in virtually all instances with no exception for cases of rape or incest. The Alabama law also establishes prison sentences for providers who perform abortions in violation of the abortion ban. So think about that for a second. If a doctor performs an abortion for a rape victim, the Alabama law could put that doctor in prison for as long as or even longer than the rapist. That makes no sense. The Alabama abortion ban, and so many other State laws like it, will not only impede on a woman's freedom to make her own reproductive choices, but it will also push women into the shadows and increase the likelihood of unsafe abortions. We know that. We have data that shows that—not just in the United States but around the world.

Today, one in three women live in States where abortion would be outlawed if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned.

The Alabama law and other State abortion bans are designed as a direct challenge to the protections provided

by *Roe* in the hopes of forcing action from the Supreme Court and sowing chaos in those States where abortion would be outlawed. So rather than thinking about women and how they will be affected by this law, it is strictly designed to try to challenge the current *Roe v. Wade* law.

Unfortunately, even in the light of the extreme nature of these recent abortion bans, we have an administration that is compounding the issue through its own actions to interfere with access to reproductive health services. Now, whether it is creating new administrative obstacles to insurance coverage of abortion, preventing title X family planning clinics from informing their patients about reproductive care choices, or any of the many other recent Federal actions, the Trump administration's clear goal is to chip away at access to abortion.

Now, these recent actions by States and the administration pose grave threats to the freedoms and reproductive health protections that are relied on by women all across this country.

At this critical time, we need to say loud and clear that we are ready to fight these extreme actions with everything we have.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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.

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

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

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to join my colleagues who have been speaking this morning about the access to healthcare for women in America. Today, as women take action across the Nation to bring focus to this issue, I would like to join my colleagues, particularly the senior Senator from Washington, and I thank her for her leadership on this important issue. She knows better than most how many times the Senate and the Congress in the last decade have fought over access to healthcare for women. It seems like every budget debate, every fiscal cliff, every budget negotiation, and every issue had to have a debate about whether we were going to defund Planned Parenthood. So it is not a surprise that we are out here today as States across the Nation try to roll back access to healthcare. I guarantee you, I believe and my State believes that access to healthcare should be and is protected under the Constitution as a right to privacy. We believe that and codified *Roe v. Wade* into statute by a vote of the people in the 1990s. So any time anybody is going to take on access to healthcare for women and erode what is a basic right in our State and,

I believe, a basic right protected in our Constitution, we are going to raise our

voices. You are going to hear from us. So it is amazing to me that every budget battle and every debate here in the Senate comes down to rolling back access to women's healthcare.

Now we see Supreme Court Justices who may or may not uphold those basic rights as were established in *Connecticut v. Griswold*, as did a Supreme Court Justice, who just happened to hail from the State of Washington, who understood that the privacy rights protected in the Constitution are in the penumbra of rights. So, yes, I believe that our Supreme Court Justices should also continue that well-established practice of observing those privacy rights. So it is hard to say what all of these State actions will lead to, whether they will make it to the Supreme Court and what this Supreme Court will have to say about it. But I can tell you that we here in the Senate—women who understand the access to healthcare—are so emphatic that we not erode these rights.

I had the very unfortunate situation of having to speak at a funeral this weekend for a 28-year-old former staff member who died of cancer. I know how much fight she had in her, but it was afterward where one of her relatives said to me: Senator, you cannot leave this unaddressed.

Young women at college campuses are not getting the breast exams to do early detection that they should. They should be out there. We should do more to evangelize that young women need to pay attention to their healthcare. Yet we are here across the Nation having this debate, and I guarantee you that the access to healthcare to do those early detections in a lot of communities comes with the access that organizations like Planned Parenthood and others deliver. So while they are not what is immediately under attack by these States, I guarantee you that it is all a part of a larger debate that needs to stop.

Healthcare should be the right of women to be discussed with their doctors and continue to be protected under our Constitution.

I thank the President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Washington for that personal story, and I am sorry for her loss of a former staff member. I think that story is a good place to start because this isn't just about an isolated bill passing in one State. This is actually part of a greater effort.

As you look at what this administration has been trying to do since day one, defunding Planned Parenthood—OK, well, that is where one out of five women in their lifetime will go to seek healthcare for things like cancer screenings and for things like contraception. You look at the fact that over the span of the last administration, we actually reduced abortions to the lowest level in recorded history. That is a

good thing. People who are personally opposed to abortion or people who are pro-choice can agree that that is a good thing. Why did that happen? Because contraception was available. Why did that happen? Because healthcare was available that allowed, with more ease, women to access contraception. So now what do we have? We have three things going on. These restrictive laws that literally put doctors in prison for 99 years is what I will talk about today. We have an effort to defund Planned Parenthood and to reduce access to contraception as a result. Then we have an effort—a major effort—to repeal the entire Affordable Care Act, which would allow women to be kicked off of their healthcare insurance if they have a preexisting condition. Before that act came into law, in eight States, being a victim of domestic abuse was considered a preexisting condition. So do not see these laws that were just passed in these States and are being considered in these States as isolated. Look at it as a complete package, and it is not a package that the women of this country want to get in the mail.

I have always believed that a woman's most personal and difficult medical decisions should be made with her doctor and her family and that those decisions should not be undermined or politicized by Government officials. But that is exactly what we are seeing today. In the last few months, an alarming number of States have passed laws to limit a woman's ability to seek reproductive healthcare services. Kentucky, Ohio, Mississippi, and Georgia have all recently passed measures that basically amount to a ban on abortion. Just last week, Alabama passed a bill that effectively and in writing banned abortion completely. The bill which passed the Alabama State Senate—by the way, without a vote of a single woman senator—would allow a doctor who performed an abortion to be sent to jail for 99 years. The Alabama law's only exception is if a woman's life is at risk. It does not even include an exception for incidents of rape or incest. So what does this mean? Well, if your kid is in college and gets brutally raped, it means that she would not have a choice about whether or not she would carry a baby. That is what that law says in Alabama. And if a doctor intervened, if a doctor wanted to help in that State, he would be sent to prison for 99 years—or up to 99 years. This is not something I am making up or exaggerating; this is what this bill that passed one of the States and is similar to bills in other States actually says.

What we are seeing, of course, is wrong and unconstitutional. These bills directly infringe on a woman's right to make her own medical decisions and the precedent that the Supreme Court set in *Roe v. Wade*, which has been affirmed many times over the last 46 years.

You wonder where the public is on this? Seventy-three percent of Ameri-

cans do not believe that *Roe v. Wade* should be reversed. In my State, I have people who are pro-choice, and I have people who are pro-life. I have people who personally believe they do not want to have an abortion; however, they don't think that their views should dictate what happens to their neighbors. That is the problem. That is the nub of the problem with what is going on in these States.

The precedent in *Roe* is clear, but these lawmakers have decided that they want to take away a woman's basic right to make a personal healthcare decision. In fact, they are passing these bills with the hope that it goes to the Supreme Court where this administration has placed judges on that Court where there is a lot of hope, with the people who are passing these restrictive laws, that they are going to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

After signing the new abortion ban into law, the Governor of Alabama released a statement in which he said the sponsors of this bill believe it is time, once again, for the U.S. Supreme Court to revisit this important matter, and they believe this act may bring about "the best opportunity for this to occur."

So don't tell me this is just one legislature deciding they are going to do something other people in this Chamber on the other side of the aisle don't agree with. No. No. No. This has been an effort that has been going on for years. This is an effort that is going on during an administration with a President that, in a townhall meeting in March of 2016, said that he thought women should be punished for making that decision. A few hours later, his campaign tries to dial it back with the statement: No, he meant that doctors should be punished.

This is not just an isolated incident, which is why so many of my colleagues have taken to the floor today. We can have individual disagreements, and we can have our own personal beliefs, but as elected officials, we must follow the Constitution of the United States. Overturning *Roe* isn't just unconstitutional. As I said, it is against the wishes of the vast majority of the people in this country.

In the last few years, as I have noted, we have seen an assault on women's access to care. We have seen it with the attempt to defund Planned Parenthood, even though, during the Obama administration, we saw a historic decrease in abortions. According to a CDC study conducted between 2006 and 2015, abortion rates fell to historic lows near the end of the Obama administration.

What should we be doing? Well, we should be providing more access to healthcare services, comprehensive health education, and contraception, not less. We should ensure that women are equipped with the knowledge and resources they need to make informed healthcare decisions.

In the Senate, I have fought back against efforts to undermine the abil-

ity of a woman to make choices about her own health. I have cosponsored the Women's Health Protection Act, important legislation led by Senator BLUMENTHAL, to prohibit laws intended to restrict women's access to reproductive health services, and I look forward to cosponsoring this bill again when it is reintroduced.

I thank Senator MURRAY for her leadership over her many, many years in this area. It is our responsibility to treat women in every State in this Union with respect and dignity, instead of using them as political pawns.

I join my colleagues in condemning these recent efforts to restrict women's access to healthcare services, and I will continue working to protect the health and lives of women across the country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is difficult to believe that it is happening, but I have seen it. It was about 5 weeks ago that I was in El Paso, TX. I went down to see what has been happening on the border. You can't escape all the stories that have been written about the number of people who are coming to our border and what is happening to them, so I wanted to see it for myself.

I saw what was a detention facility for people who had been stopped at the border. There was a cell with a plate glass window, so that you could see everything inside. Above the door of the cell, it said, "capacity 35." I looked inside and counted—took the time to slowly count—and I counted 150 men in that cell, standing shoulder to shoulder. Few of them could sit on the benches on the side of the walls—150.

There was one toilet in that cell. They were fed their meals to eat standing up. They slept taking turns lying down on the floor. Some of them would be there for 3 days and some as long as 6 weeks.

Next to that cell was another one with a plate glass window; you could see inside. Above the door, it read, "capacity 16." This was a cell for women. I counted 75 women in that cell—"capacity 16." There were four or five of them with nursing babies.

I have since learned, in the few weeks since I saw this and witnessed it firsthand, things have gotten dramatically worse. The cell with 150 now has almost 200 men jammed into it. The cell with the women is even worse than what I saw when I visited.

If I described these conditions in a prison in some foreign country, you would say: For goodness' sakes, the United States of America should speak up for human rights. We cannot allow human beings to be treated that way.