

That is simply not acceptable. It is not acceptable to me, it is not acceptable to Texans still in need, and it shouldn't be acceptable to the U.S. Congress.

I recently introduced a bill that would ensure that the Office of Management and Budget wouldn't stand between communities impacted by disaster and vital funding appropriated and approved by Congress. Once signed into law, it would establish a "shot clock" requiring the Office of Management and Budget to release funds appropriated by Congress within 90 days.

This change would apply not only to this particular block of funding but to any funds appropriated to the States which are being withheld by the Office of Management and Budget.

With hurricane season just about a week away, there could not be a more critical time to act.

It is important for us to come together in a bipartisan agreement that can pass the Senate and the House and get the President's signature. I hope that those who are negotiating this disaster relief bill, including this shot clock provision, will continue to negotiate in good faith so we can reach a compromise and reach a result soon.

Communities across our country need this money for disaster recovery and mitigation, and they are simply tired of waiting for Congress to act. I am hopeful that any agreement will include this shot clock provision so we can finally get the roughly \$4 billion in disaster mitigation funding untangled from Washington redtape and get it to the Texans who desperately need it.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut

MEMORIAL DAY

MR. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am very proud to be in this Chamber. I am always enormously grateful to be in this body, but especially so at the beginning of this Memorial Day weekend, when we celebrate the patriotism and dedication of our brave men and women in uniform—patriots who serve our country in so many different ways, as teachers and firefighters and police—and the values that bring us together always as Americans. What we share is a dedication to the rule of law, basic rights, which are the reason that our forbearers and this generation have fought in parts of the world whose names we can barely pronounce.

We celebrate those values and the rule of law in our Constitution on this day, as we do every day this weekend, as every weekend, because they guarantee the rights that enable us to march in parades when we wish, gather with our families, worship, and speak as we please.

They guarantee also the rights to privacy that are at the core of our Constitution—the right to be let alone from governmental interference; the rights that literally ignited the passion

and fight for freedom in this country; the right of people to control their destinies, their futures, their bodies.

Those rights are imperiled today as never before. We are in a dark and dangerous time in this country with the passage of laws in Alabama and Missouri, Kentucky and Ohio, and in other States around the country, where the rights of women are under assault.

But let me say to the men of America, those rights are as important to you, and that assault on rights is as critical to you as they are to the women of America. Women's healthcare is under attack. Women's reproductive rights are under assault, and that means that all rights and all healthcare are gravely threatened. All of our rights are under attack. That is the reason today I am introducing the Women's Health Protection Act with my great colleague and friend Senator BALDWIN of Wisconsin and, in the House of Representatives, CHU, FRANKEL, and FUDGE, who led this effort there. We have actually reintroduced it. It has been a longstanding effort of mine and theirs, and my own commitment to this cause dates from my law clerkship to Harry Blackmun on the U.S. Supreme Court, the year after he wrote the majority opinion in *Roe v. Wade*.

I am proud to be a man standing for women's healthcare because women's healthcare rights are human rights, and the men of America need to hear loud and clear that their stake in this fight is as big as anyone's, because this fight and this debate and this war on women's healthcare endanger and imperil all of our rights in America.

The Women's Health Protection Act protects a woman's constitutional right to access an abortion. It is a right that is absolutely central to her economic well-being, her mental and physical health, and her freedom—no matter where she lives, no matter what her ZIP code is, no matter what her income, race, or religion is. And it is true of men, as well, that regardless of where we live or who we think we are, those rights are critical to our lives too.

The Women's Health Protection Act is designed to protect the healthcare providers—some of the real heroes of women's healthcare, who are delivering the best care they can, the care their patients want and need—from absurd and medically unnecessary requirements. These so-called protections for women that States have enacted relating to the width of hallways in clinics or admitting privileges or waiting periods are a pretext. They are a disguise, a ruse to restrict women's rights to healthcare.

Under the Women's Health Protection Act, no State—none—can restrict women's healthcare by judging the width of hallways or doctors' privileges or any of those supposed protections, which are really pretexts. And those pushing unconstitutional restrictions will no longer be able to disguise their

morally repugnant efforts as protecting women's healthcare, when, really, they want to take it away.

The attack on women's rights that we saw last week in Alabama was only the most extreme and restrictive of a line of actions—demagogic and draconian actions—in our State legislatures around the country. But they have created fear, and they have created disparate effect, so that women are apprehensive and anxious. And they should be.

They are angry, and that is absolutely right. We all should be angry. We all have a responsibility to stand up and fight back, because these laws cannot stand in our country.

We will fight them in the courts. We will fight them in the statehouses, and we will fight them here in the Senate and in the House, as we are doing with the Women's Health Protection Act.

These radical and unconstitutional extreme measures, which simply tell a woman when she can become pregnant, involve the Government controlling her body, which is against the fundamental guarantee of our Constitution in the right to be let alone from unwarranted and illegal Government interference.

We have had enough of the dangerous and deadly attacks on women. We have had it with the meddling politicians who are getting between women and their own personal healthcare decisions, interfering with women's rights to consult their doctors, their families, their counselors, and their faith leaders. We have had it with contemptible assaults on women's freedom and futures.

When I worked for Justice Harry Blackmun, I remember we thought at the time: All done. All settled. No more issues with a woman's right to reproductive rights.

Roe v. Wade was the decisive opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court, the law of the land, then and thereafter.

Here we are, decades later, still fighting this needless and senseless battle for a woman's right to privacy and freedom, because there are groups and individuals in this country who want to defy the U.S. Constitution. *Roe v. Wade* was correctly decided. The U.S. Supreme Court has reaffirmed it in its progeny.

Nominees to the courts coming before the Judiciary Committee have refused to answer my question about whether it was correctly decided, but the fact of the matter is, it was, it will be, and it will remain. But the courage and strength of women still to assert their rights, of providers who give them the care they need, of clinic access escorts who every day put their well-being on the line, of the groups like the Center for Reproductive Rights and Planned Parenthood, which advocate tirelessly, and of the heroes who keep up the fight and the flame should inspire us in this Chamber to say: Enough is enough. Let's pass the Women's Health Protection Act so