

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

PROTESTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 1 week ago today, a White police officer in Minneapolis, MN, knelt on the neck of an African-American man named George Floyd, pinning him to the ground for over 8 minutes as he pled for his life. The officer callously refused to heed those calls, standing up only after Mr. Floyd was unresponsive. Mr. Floyd was pronounced dead shortly thereafter. It was 8 minutes—8 minutes—that he was pinned there.

Today, 8 days later, our Nation is reeling. It is reeling over the injustice and senselessness of George Floyd's death, reeling over the memory of Ahmaud Arbery, Michael Brown, Breonna Taylor, Eric Garner, and the unimaginable number of innocent lives that were taken in similar circumstances. Our Nation is reeling from centuries of racial injustice, a legacy as old as the Nation itself and one that haunts us to this day.

It took two and a half centuries and the Civil War to finally end slavery in America. It was 100 years more until the descendants of those newly freed men and women could fully enjoy the rights of citizenship. Even today, slavery is still with us. Its terrible legacy and evil effects are felt in real and discernible ways every single day.

When the French historian Alexis de Tocqueville visited America in the 1830s, with amazing prescience he predicted that the United States would become a great nation—the greatest in the world—even though at the time we were a fledgling country, compared to the great powers of Europe. But he also said that the one thing that could doom our Nation was racism and racial prejudice. His words ring true today.

The racial disparities in our criminal justice system have been on full display, but these disparities permeate not just the criminal justice system but all of society. There are glaring racial disparities in healthcare and housing, racial disparities in income and in wealth, in the board room and at the ballot box, on our streets and in our schools. These disparities have been with us a very long time, but COVID has placed a magnifying glass on them. Perhaps most evident and immediate, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to

infect and kill African Americans at a disproportionate rate. We are confronted by the all too often fatal consequences of those disparities on a daily basis.

George Floyd's killing touched off justified protests and demonstrations across the country, driven by Americans of every age, color, and creed who were distressed and upset, frightened and angry by the America they see and feel compelled to change. The overwhelmingly peaceful protests do honor to the generations of Americans who stood up and sat in and shouted at the top of their lungs in the urgent mission to make America a more perfect union. The small minority who exploit the moment for violence and mayhem are wrong and do not advance the cause of justice.

I would note that while over 4,000 protesters have been arrested in the last week, only 1 in 4 of the police officers involved in the killing of George Floyd has been arrested. While that statistic does not excuse the violence we have seen, it certainly helps to explain the frustration and anger right now.

There is accountability when everyday citizens and protesters violate the law, but that same accountability is far too often lacking when law enforcement violates the law, and we have to fix that. We must work to bring accountability to police departments so that bad actors are not shielded from culpability and those many officers who do the job the right way are incentivized and rewarded.

We must reform our laws and our police practices so that events like George Floyd's killing are far less likely in the first place. There are many examples of departments that have made strides at improving community relations, transparency, and accountability, while reducing unwarranted violence and racial bias. We need to build on those best practices and get all of our police agencies to adopt them.

We must invest in services and programs necessary to deal with issues unrelated to law enforcement, such as housing and mental health, rather than asking police officers to be responsible for addressing all of our society's challenges. There are many ways to address the broader disparities in our society, the systemic racism, and the injustice that follows America around like a shackle in our laws, in our customs, and in too many of our hearts. We have to make progress on these issues right now—not later, not next year, not after the next George Floyd but right now.

Senate Democrats will be confronting and addressing all of these issues this week, and many of my colleagues will prepare legislative plans of action. We will listen to experts on these issues and our constituents who face these challenges on a daily basis. Be sure of this: We will propose and push for bold action.

Leader MCCONNELL, however, will decide whether or not the Senate will

take any of that action. At the moment, he has reserved the floor of the Senate for the confirmation of several rightwing judges, many of whom will become part of the very problem we are now discussing: a justice system that doesn't work for everyone, a biased system.

These are judges who were preselected specifically because of their antipathy to voting rights and civil rights and criminal justice balance and fairness. Time and again, the Republican majority has confirmed judicial nominees who pledge loyalty to an ideological doctrine that would exacerbate the very inequalities that have been laid bare in recent weeks and months. Leader MCCONNELL is doing that this week, once again.

At this delicate time, the Senate should lead on these issues rather than aggravate the problem. Leader MCCONNELL should commit to put a law enforcement reform bill on the floor of the Senate before July 4. There shouldn't be hearings on President Trump's wild conspiracies about the 2016 election or a month of rightwing, anti-civil rights judicial nominees. As the COVID pandemic continues to rage and Americans are taking to the streets to express their anger at police violence and racial injustice, the Republican majority in the Senate must focus on the national crisis at our doorstep.

Today—just today—the CBO is expected to release an estimate of the damage to our economy caused by the pandemic. If the current trends continue, the CBO predicts a jaw-dropping \$16 trillion reduction in economic growth over the next decade—\$16 trillion.

There are 40 million Americans currently unemployed. Where is the urgency from Senate Republicans to address the economic catastrophe in our country, a catastrophe that, like police violence, will disproportionately affect African Americans and other Americans of color?

We should address both these issues—COVID and police violence—this month, not spend time on fringe conspiracy theories and not spend time on putting rightwing judges who have shown no sympathy to civil rights and racial justice and harmony on the floor of the Senate.

This is a moment that cries out for leadership, for compassion, for sympathy, for understanding, for action, and for our leaders to bring us together instead of letting events tear us apart. But the leader of our country, the President of the United States, struggles—struggles—to summon even an ounce of humanity in this time of turmoil.

The President has reacted to the pain and anger in the country by playing politics and encouraging police to be tougher on protesters by bragging about his reelection prospects and his personal safety inside the White House. A Presidential tweet invoked a Miami

police chief, who, in 1967 encouraged shooting Black people during riots. The President seems unable even to address the underlying issues that the protests are about. He is unwilling—unwilling—even to speak to the Nation about racial justice.

Unfortunately, none of this is remotely new with President Trump. A few years ago, President Trump told law enforcement officers not to worry about injuring suspects when arresting them. His administration stopped investigating State and local police departments for racial discrimination and repealed restrictions on police departments obtaining military-style weapons. The President's policies have worsened racial divisions in this country. His rhetoric has consistently inflamed them.

Either the President is too afraid to lead or is simply incapable, but all of us, right now, have to engage in the difficult work of pulling this country together and then forward. We are a nation exhausted and dispirited. In the midst of a once-in-a-generation challenge, we have been reminded of a generation's-long struggle for racial justice and equality. The only way—the only way—for us to move forward is to do it together.

It is time for the large majority of police officers who do a very difficult job the right way to be part of a reform effort, for our national leaders in the Senate and the House to take up thorny issues of prejudice and discrimination and begin changing the laws and institutions that perpetuate it, and, yes, for the President to finally start acting like the leader he is supposed to be and the Constitution calls for.

We are all engaged in this project to not only recover from a public health crisis and an economic disaster, but to build a society when none of our citizens fear the men and women who are supposed to protect them—a society where Americans of color can live and breathe and watch birds in a park and walk home with a bag of Skittles without fearing for their lives.

As millions of Americans take to the streets in peaceful and righteous protest, I hope that this moment—one of pain and sorrow and grief—can also be a watershed moment for action.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROTESTS

Mr. HAWLEY. Madam President, it was 1 week ago today that George Floyd died in the streets of Minneapolis at the hands of Minneapolis

police officers exercising and employing incredible, illegal, unconstitutional violence ending in the loss of Mr. Floyd's life.

This afternoon, we have a medical report from examiners hired by Mr. Floyd's family. The words are just shocking. The report concludes:

George Floyd was killed by asphyxia due to neck and back compression and died at the scene.

Sustained pressure on the right side of Mr. Floyd's artery impeded blood flow to the brain, and weight on his back impeded his ability to breathe.

Then the report concludes:

The independent examiners found that weight on the back, handcuffs and positioning were contributory factors because they impaired Mr. Floyd's diaphragm to function. From all the evidence, the doctors said it now appears Mr. Floyd died at the scene.

Words cannot begin to describe the injustice that this report puts into plain text: the violation of police procedures, the abuse of the law, the appalling, illegal, homicidal misuse of government authority. Words cannot begin to describe the injustice that this has done to Mr. Floyd, to his family, to his community, and to millions of Americans who feel caught up, who feel judged by, endangered by, imperiled by these actions and too many others like them over too many years for too long in this country.

I just want to say as the former attorney general of my State—a role in which I had the great privilege to work day in and day out with law enforcement across the State of Missouri, law enforcement who go to work every day to prevent this kind of illegal violence, to prevent this kind of illicit use of power—that the actions by the police officer and officers here in this case cast an incredible aspersion on those valiant and courageous and law-abiding police officers, Black and White and of every color across our country, who go to do their job every day to protect and uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States and to protect men and women like George Floyd. The actions of these officers in this case are an incredible betrayal of those standards of those officers and of justice itself.

I understand why so many Americans have assembled peacefully to witness to this abuse of power and to protest it and to demand that justice be done. They are right to do so, and they are right to demand that this pattern of violence exercised against African-Americans be acknowledged and it be confronted and it be stopped.

This is urgent work for us as a nation and for this Congress as we go forward.

I also believe that those who would turn this occasion into an opportunity for rioting and for looting and for more violence and for further attacks and for civil unrest do a great disservice to the memory of Mr. Floyd, to his family, and to this cause of justice that we Americans share together, for this is a cause that is ours together as a nation.

This is a cause given to us by our common Constitution. This is a cause that should link us together, American with American, and we must resist the efforts of those—all of those—who would set us against ourselves as we seek to pursue that more perfect union, as we seek to pursue justice in this case and in other cases and in the future to come.

So I add my voice to those who call for an end now to the rioting and to the looting, to those who would defame and dishonor and disfigure the memory of Mr. Floyd and his cause. I hope all lawful steps will be taken to protect innocent and law-abiding citizens in our cities and in our communities so that the peaceful assembly and its righteous cause can go forward.

I just want to say one more thing on this subject. We cannot ignore that these peaceful protests are taking place amid a backdrop of the 20-percent unemployment in this Nation—perhaps higher in the urban centers of our Nation. I think of a line by a former Senator, who once said that “to be unemployed is to have nothing to do, and that means having nothing to do with the rest of us.”

I hope that as we as a nation and we as a body in the U.S. Senate turn our attention to what we can do to seek that more perfect union, what we can do to better secure the promise of our Constitution, what we can better do to secure that dream we hold together as Americans, I hope one thing we will discuss is the vitality, the necessity of work—work that is meaningful and that is rewarding and that is available for all Americans, from our urban core to our small towns.

I hope we will have a discussion about the policies that for too long in this country, for too many decades, have sent too much work out of our country, away from our cities—away from our small towns, for that matter. I hope we can discuss what we will do to bring work back so that those who grow up in our cities—young men who grow up in our cities—will have a sense of a future, will have a sense of possibility, will think that “there is something for me here. I could build a family here. I could start something here. And yes, I could have a say and a share in our society here.” For that, they have to have work. They have to have meaningful work.

This is a task to which we must set ourselves. It is urgent now in this present pandemic crisis that has seen these unemployment numbers rocket to historic, unimaginable levels. It is vital we address the crisis of work, but it is also vital for our future. It is vital for our urban core. It is vital for the young men and women who struggle there. It is vital for our rural towns and our small areas like the one I am from. It is vital for every part of this country, for every member of this Nation, and it is work I hope we will take up urgently together to provide good-