

So let us not rest. For those colleagues across the aisle who have said that the Supreme Court shouldn't have acted this week, that it should be the legislature that acts, and yet come to the floor and don't argue—fail to argue—that we should, in fact, act, isn't that obstruction of the legislative process?

I would encourage my colleagues who say that there are important issues to be considered to go to their leadership and say "Let's get the committee that has this bill, the Equality Act, to start doing its job: Hold the hearings; hold the conversation" because to fail to argue that it should be done in committee while you lament on the floor that the committee hasn't acted is certainly an argument with no integrity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3957

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I rise today to discuss the Confederate monuments that are in our hallowed Halls of Congress. I would like to make a live UC request, but preceding that request, I want to make just a few very brief remarks.

The National Statuary Hall, where these Confederate statues are in the Capitol, is intended to honor the highest ideals of our Nation. It is intended to honor the spirit of our country and those who exhibited this spirit with heroism, with courage, and with distinction.

It is a rare honor that every State gets to pick two people, out of the entire history of the country, who so exemplify the values, the spirit, and the honor of America. There are only 100 statues—just 100 statues—two from every State.

Between 1901 and 1931, 12—12—Confederate statues were placed in the National Statuary Hall, that hallowed hall. During the vast majority of that same period, from 1901 through 1929, after a vicious period of voter suppression and violence against African-American voters and a stripping *de facto* of their rights, and often *de jure*, not a single African American served in either of the Congress. In fact, the exact same year the first Confederate statue was placed in the Capitol, 1901, was also the year that the last African-American person would serve in Congress for almost 30 years—almost 70 from just the South.

This is a period that we don't teach enough about in our country. It is a period of untold violence of domestic terrorism, of the rise of the Klan and other White supremacist organizations in which, from the late 1800s to about 1950, literally thousands of Americans—about 4,400 well-documented cases—were lynched in this country.

We cannot separate the Confederate statues from this history and legacy of White supremacy in this country. Indeed, in the vast history of our Nation, those Confederate statues represent 4 years—roughly 4 years—of the Confed-

eracy. The entire history of our country hails as heroes people who took up arms against their own Nation, people who sought to keep and sustain that vile institution of slavery, who led us into the bloodiest war of our country's history, who lost battle after battle until they were defeated soundly. The relics of that 4-plus year period, giving this sacred space to these traders upon our Nation, is not just an assault to the ideals of America as a whole, but they are a painful, insulting, difficult injury being compounded to so many American citizens who understand the very desire to put people who represented 4-plus years of treason, the very desire to put them there in an era of vast terrorism, was yet another attempt at the suppression of some of our citizens in this country.

The continued presence of these statues in the halls is an affront to African Americans and the ideals of our Nation. When we proclaim this not just to be a place of liberty and justice for all, but as we seek to be a more beloved nation, a kinder nation, a nation of equal respect and equal dignity, it is an assault on all of those ideals.

I would like to ask for unanimous consent, but before I do so, I would like to yield to the Democratic leader, CHUCK SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first I want to thank my dear friend, the Senator from New Jersey.

Our caucus and the American people are lucky to have him as such a champion, not only for this proposal but for all of his work in recent years on legislation related to police reform, racial justice, and so many other issues.

In a moment, my friend will ask to pass a bill that will do something very simple and, indeed, long overdue: It will remove the statues here in the Capitol of men who would rend this country apart by war in order to strengthen, perpetuate, and extend the vile institution of slavery.

There is a movement in America right now that demands we confront the poison of racism in our country. We must do this in many ways, both substantive and symbolic. This bill is just one of many steps we must take to acknowledge the painful history of America's original sin—slavery—and to clarify for all generations that the men who defended it shall hold no place of honor in our Nation's history books.

States and localities are removing Confederate statues in their public parks and municipal buildings. NASCAR has banned the Confederate flag at its events. We will soon debate renaming military installations after Confederate generals. Why should the Capitol, of all places—a symbol of the Union, a place where every American is supposed to have representation—continue to venerate such ignoble figures?

Opponents of the bill will say that removing these statues is akin to forgetting or trying to erase history. No, it is

not. Remembering history is a lot different than celebrating it.

We teach history in our schools and universities and museums. No doubt, the Civil War will continue to merit study, but statues and memorials are symbols of honor, and we need not reserve them for men who represent such a dishonorable cause.

Leader MCCONNELL has ducked this issue and has said that the States should continue to decide who to send to the Capitol. Candidly, I don't think it would be too imposing to ask our States not to send statues of people who actively fought against this country. You know, there is a reason that Connecticut doesn't send a statue of Benedict Arnold to the Capitol.

We have a lot of work to do to unwind centuries of racial injustice embedded in our laws and in our institutions. One of the simplest things we could do is to haul out the statues of a few old racists who represent the very antithesis of the building in which we now stand and the ideals we struggle to live up to. This, my friends, is the easy part.

Let us pass this bill today and send a message to the American people that we are serious about dismantling institutional racism piece by piece, brick by brick, statue by statue, starting with our own House—the people's House—the Nation's Capitol Building.

I yield again to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 3957 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, reserving the right to object, let me say that we just got this bill assigned to the Rules Committee. The bill would have the effect of abandoning agreements we have entered into with the States and the States have entered into with us.

I would certainly like to have some time to decide if we should have a hearing on this. I would like to get the opinion of people who are taking similar statues out of the building. I would also like to find out what other States have in mind as their part of the agreement.

The Democratic leader just said that States and localities are removing these statues. Each of these States would have the right to remove this statue, and some are.

This is an agreement with the States. It goes back to 1864. By 1933, Statuary Hall was full, and Congress, again, authorized this program by saying that

these statues could be placed in the Capitol. It took until about 2000 until there were 100 statues from the States. States are limited to two from each State. With 50 States, there were 100 statues by 2000.

At that point, the Congress passed another law providing a way that the States, for the first time, could take a statue out. Even in 2000, there was no suggestion then or before then that Congress would decide whether the statue that the State wanted to put in could be put into the building.

As a matter of fact, the Presiding Officer's State, Nebraska, just recently replaced Williams Jennings Bryan with Chief Standing Bear under the provisions made to do that.

Congress has been very prescriptive on how this happens. The State would have to pass legislation; the Governor would have to sign it to put a statue in the building; and Congress would determine only if the statue met the requirements that the other statues had been held to. Until now, that has been the congressional part of this agreement with the States to take a statue out of the collection and replace it with another one. My State, Missouri, is replacing Thomas Hart Benton with Harry Truman. The legislature had to agree what statue would go out, what statue would come in, and Congress would then accept that statue if it met the standards.

Again, we can do away with that program. We could do a lot of things. But we have entered into that agreement.

The forts, as an example—and, again, the minority leader mentioned the forts. The forts are named totally by the Congress. I expressed my belief this week and last week that it would be absolutely appropriate, in my view, to review the names that the forts have been named after, including the forts that are named after Confederate military leaders, and change those names. We can do that all on our own. We haven't told North Carolina that a fort has to be named after General Bragg. We haven't told Texas that a fort has to be named after Confederate General Hood. We can change those.

I am very open to looking at that and likely doing that. I just think, for my friend from New Jersey, that this is a more complicated arrangement than activity on the floor today would suggest.

I would also point out that in 2000, since Congress said that you can replace statues with another statue—you have to take a statue out to put a statue in, but you can replace statues, eight of those statues have already been replaced, and eight more are in the process of being replaced. I think four or five of the statues that have been replaced or would be replaced were in the standard of the Confederate statues.

I am encouraged that States are looking at their history, and they are looking at who has come since they put those statues in. Arkansas replaced

Uriah Milton Rose, a Confederate statue, with Daisy Gatson Bates, a civil rights leader. Florida replaced Edmund Kirby-Smith with Mary McLeod Bethune, an educator, a Presidential adviser, and civil rights leader. Arkansas is in the process of replacing one of these statues.

I think that today's action would violate our agreement with the States. I frankly thank my friend from New Jersey for encouraging the Governors, encouraging the speakers of the house to do what they have every right—and the Congress, in fact, in 2000, gave them the right—to do.

The minority leader was the chairman of the committee that determines all of this just a handful of years ago and took no actions to do what the Senate is talking about doing today.

So with that in mind, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, if I could just respond—I know how busy my colleague is. He has a well-earned reputation on both sides of this body for his sincerity, for his decency, and for his honor. I take to heart his words that this is often not a good forum in which to try to push a piece of legislation that might have controversy on both sides. I understand his sincere concerns with that.

I guess he also understands the sincerity with which I bring this up: the hurt and the pain that these statues represent in a place where millions of Americans come to the Capitol and see this as their body.

I say to the Senator, because there are complications in this and there are issues we would have to work through as a Senate, I guess the one last appeal to your more senior status and maybe your friendship is this: Will you join me, at least, on a letter to the appropriate committee, asking them to at least have a hearing on this issue so that we could have a full vetting of all of the complexities and have a real discussion on something that is a pressing concern? I note that you know it is a pressing concern because some States are already taking action.

You see this action being taken across various parts of our country. You see this issue being pushed into the national consciousness. You see Republicans and Democrats, from Nikki Haley to my dear friend, the former mayor of New Orleans, Mayor Landrieu—I think it would be just and right that, perhaps, you and I, in a show of bipartisan concern and sincere awareness of the complexity of this issue, could just join—the two of us—in a letter asking the committee to take up this issue in due time so that we can have an appropriate discussion from all perspectives on this issue.

Mr. BLUNT. If I could have the chance to respond here—

Mr. BOOKER. Of course.

Mr. BLUNT. This bill was just assigned to our committee. This is a discussion that, I guess appropriately, we

might have had before I was asked to come to the floor to assert the rights of the committee, to have the opportunity to think about that. I don't know that I want to negotiate that right here. But as I said, and my friend heard just a moment ago, I would like to hear from the States that are replacing statues and I would like to hear from the States that are thinking about replacing statues if this is a problem in the process of, under the current structure, solving itself.

I am glad to have continued discussions about this. I certainly don't impugn my friend's motives. You know, you can question somebody's decision to maybe bring a bill this quickly to the floor without giving us a chance to talk about it, but I have no interest, then, in impugning my friend's motives and understand some of the concerns my friend would have on this topic.

Mr. BOOKER. Thank you, sir.

If I may, I will make a personal appeal for a hearing on these matters. I hope that we can do that in due time. I know the pace at which the Senate often works, but I am grateful for this open dialogue and I know you had to adjust your schedule so I am grateful for your time and generosity.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

DACA

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, 8 years ago almost to the day, President Obama announced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival, otherwise known as DACA. At the time, I remember the conversations a number of us had with President Obama, saying please give us a chance to work this out by passing appropriate legislation in the Congress. He heard those pleas, but in spite of the fact of saying numerous times he did not have the authority to do so, he proceeded to issue a memorandum that gave rise to the DACA program.

Rather than rolling up our sleeves and working together to create lasting immigration policy, President Obama chose to do this through an Executive memorandum. It is that Executive memorandum that has made its way through the courts over the last 8 years and finally to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Unfortunately, this is the bitter fruit of what President Obama did when he attempted to usurp Congress in a way to provide certainty and comfort to hundreds of thousands of young people—a goal that we all share—but to do so in a way that ultimately created more harm. It sent them on a years' long tumultuous journey, which is not over with the Supreme Court decision today. Basically, what the Supreme Court said was, under the Administrative Procedure Act, he didn't do it the right way, so go back and try it again and get it right this time.

Well, I think these young people deserve better. The debate over President