

Since I began by quoting Lincoln, let me conclude by borrowing from Grant, who wrote during the Battle of Spotsylvania: "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer."

I will fight it out on this line if it takes a lot longer than that.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

NOMINATION OF CORY T. WILSON

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, later on this afternoon, the Senate will vote on cloture on the nomination of Judge Cory Wilson to fill a vacancy on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

I rise at this point in strong, enthusiastic support of confirmation for my friend, Judge Cory Wilson. This will be a historic moment for this body and for the administration. A vote to confirm Judge Wilson would make him the 200th judge to be confirmed under President Trump. This is the highest number of judges confirmed at this point in a Presidency since the Presidency of Jimmy Carter. Judge Wilson is an outstanding nominee to have this distinction.

The seat we are voting to fill is actually the last remaining circuit court vacancy at this time, reflecting the remarkable progress we have made in rebuilding the Federal judiciary. Judge Wilson is an outstanding nominee to mark this milestone. His credentials, intellect, and respect for the rule of law are well established.

The American Bar Association is considered by many to be the "gold standard" for assessing judicial nominees, and the American Bar Association has awarded Judge Wilson its highest rating of "well qualified" to serve on the Fifth Circuit. I certainly agree with this assessment by the ABA.

In recent weeks, Senators on both sides of the aisle have been able to question Judge Wilson about his judicial philosophy, and I believe he has shown a steadfast commitment to honoring the Constitution and enforcing the laws passed by the Congress as we have written them.

Judge Wilson is a native of South Mississippi and currently serves on the Mississippi Court of Appeals, where he decides appellate matters, including civil, commercial, domestic, and criminal appeals. He graduated from my alma mater, the University of Mississippi, with highest honors, and then he went on to Yale Law School, where he distinguished himself in many respects. He served on the Yale Law Journal, was a member of the Yale chapter of the Federalist Society, and was on the Barrister's Union, which is

the equivalent of the Yale moot court. He served as a law clerk for the Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, having been appointed and having served as a clerk for Judge Cox on the Eleventh Circuit. He was a White House fellow for the Department of Defense, and then he came back to Mississippi.

Before becoming a judge, Cory Wilson was an accomplished lawyer in his own right in private practice and served in senior roles in State government in the Mississippi Secretary of State's office and the office of the State Treasury. For 3 years, he also represented Mississippi's 73rd district in the State House of Representatives, where he was vice chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Judge Wilson is active in civic affairs and his church, Highlands Presbyterian Church. He and his wife Stephanie have one son.

He has garnered respect and admiration and endorsements from many of my constituents during the years of service, and in the last few weeks and days, I have been presented with letters of endorsement from people who know him—lawyers he practiced with and people he has been associated with. In particular, I want to draw the attention of Members of the Senate to a letter from retired Judge Robert L. Gibbs of Jackson, MS.

Who is Judge Gibbs to write a letter on behalf of Cory Wilson? For one thing, we should know that Judge Gibbs is a Democrat, and he practiced law in Mississippi for a time for Mississippi legal services. He spent 10 years in the office of the Mississippi attorney general, a statewide elected Democratic official, and then Robert Gibbs served as a circuit judge, an elected position in a Mississippi court of general jurisdiction. He served for some 7 years there as a circuit judge in Mississippi. That is who Judge Robert Gibbs is.

Here is what Judge Gibbs says about our nominee, the very Cory Wilson whom we will be voting cloture on around 5:30 this afternoon.

This is a letter dated June 10. It is to the chair and ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator GRAHAM and Senator FEINSTEIN.

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Feinstein:

I submit this letter in support of the nomination of Judge Cory T. Wilson for a seat on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

I am former Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit Court District in Mississippi and have known Cory as an attorney, who practiced before me and as a colleague as we worked on cases together. From these experiences, I can attest that no one works harder in this profession than Judge Wilson. When we were representing clients, Cory would normally prepare the first draft of pleadings and send it to me to review. Seldom were there any reasons to make changes because he utilized his legal abilities to navigate through the complexities of the legal issues which resulted in a well thought out, plausible argument.

During Judge Wilson's investiture as a Judge on the Mississippi Court of Appeals, I

had the pleasure of being one of the speakers.

This is retired Judge Gibbs saying he had the pleasure of being one of the speakers.

I spoke about three traits of Judge Wilson—(1) Respect, (2) Character and (3) Legal Intelligence. To keep this letter to a respectful length, I will not repeat everything I said but the essence is, Cory respects everyone he comes into contact with, he does not change who he is because of race or political affiliations and his ability allow him to break through legal jargon and get to the point.

Judge Gibbs goes on to say this:

Judge Wilson and I are quite different—I am Black and he is White. I am older and he is younger. I am a Democrat and he was a Republican (before he became a judge). I live in the majority African American City of Jackson, Mississippi and he lives in a suburb of Jackson. Yet these differences have become our strengths. We often have lunch and discuss the pressing issues of the day as friends. He has sought my advice, based on my judicial experience, on how to be a better judge. And while we may disagree on some matters, in the end we realize that we are just two lawyers who want our communities to be better and we know that having a fair judiciary is one of the ways to make that happen.

These are the words of an older, retired circuit judge who happens to be an African-American Democrat in endorsement of a younger White Republican nominee whom we will have a chance to vote on in a few moments. We need more members of the younger generation of whatever race who are best friends with an older generation of professionals of another race. We need more people like Judge Robert Gibbs and Judge Cory Wilson who are friends, who sit down, who have lunch together and discuss the law and the ways we can make this country better.

I think this is a profound endorsement by someone of a different race, of a different political party, and of a different political philosophy, saying that Judge Cory Wilson is someone we will be proud to vote for.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD at this point.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

GIBBS TRAVIS PLLC,

June 10, 2020.

Re Nomination of Cory T. Wilson as Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Hon. LINDSEY GRAHAM,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. DIANNE FEINSTEIN,
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRAHAM AND RANKING MEMBER FEINSTEIN: I submit this letter in support of the nomination of Judge Cory T. Wilson for a seat on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

I am former Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit Court District in Mississippi and have known Cory as an attorney, who practiced before me and as a colleague as we worked on cases together. From these experiences, I can attest that no one works harder in this profession than Judge Wilson.

When we were representing clients, Cory would normally prepare the first draft of pleadings and send it to me to review. Seldom were there any reasons to make any changes because he utilized his legal abilities to navigate through the complexities of the legal issues which resulted in a well thought out, plausible argument.

During Judge Wilson's investiture as a Judge on the Mississippi Court of Appeals, I had the pleasure of being one the speakers. I spoke about three traits of Judge Wilson—(1) Respect, (2) Character and (3) Legal Intelligence. To keep this letter to a respectful length, I will not repeat everything I said but the essence is, Cory respects everyone he comes into contact with, he does not change who he is because of race or political affiliations and his ability allow him to break through legal jargon and get to the point.

Judge Wilson and I are quite different—I am Black and he is White. I am older and he is younger. I am a Democrat and was a Republican (before he became a judge). I live in the majority African American City of Jackson, Mississippi and he lives in a suburb of Jackson. Yet these differences have become our strengths. We often have lunch and discuss the pressing issues of the day as friends. He has sought my advice, based on my judicial experience, on how to be a better judge. And while we may disagree on some matters, in the end we realize that we are just two lawyers who want our communities to be better and we know that having a fair judiciary is one of the ways to make that happen.

If you need any additional information or have any question, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

ROBERT L. GIBBS.

Mr. WICKER. Again, let me just stress to my colleagues that Cory Wilson has gained a reputation as a fair and impartial judge and a good and decent man, and I am confident that this reputation will follow him as he serves on the Fifth Circuit. He will serve the circuit and our Nation well as a U.S. circuit judge.

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

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

THE JUSTICE ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as we have been working over these last several weeks to develop police reform legislation, I figured the best use of my time would be to spend that time listening, as much as anything else—listening, for example, to Black Americans about their experiences with law enforcement and the changes they would like to see in our country; listening to my colleagues in the Senate about the most effective ways to make these changes, especially under the leadership of Senator TIM SCOTT, who has personally experienced the injustices we are trying to address, and, particularly, this deficit of trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve; and listening to leaders in Texas who are working hard—in the

midst of this pandemic and widespread protesting—to keep every single Texan safe. You would think, before we decide on what reforms to take, it is important to hear from those who know best what is working, what isn't, and what we need to do more of.

A few weeks ago, I called two of my friends, who happen to be the mayor of Dallas and the mayor of Houston, Eric Johnson in Dallas and Sylvester Turner in Houston, and asked them to help me pull together a group of people in both of those major American cities for an open conversation about these issues. Less than a week later, I was in Dallas for an open and honest conversation with a group of law enforcement, faith, and community leaders. They provided very useful feedback and ideas that I brought back with me while the JUSTICE Act was in draft form. After the bill was introduced last week, I was eager to hear from more folks in Texas.

Last Friday, I traveled to Houston for another similar type of discussion at city hall. Like in Dallas, we were able to hear from a variety of points of view familiar with these challenges. I was glad to also be joined by Senator CRUZ and Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE. In a way, I thought it was a coincidence, but maybe not, that this conversation happened on Juneteenth—a day that allows us to reflect on the progress we have made in the fight for equality. This year—I would say more than normal—it was a reminder of how far we have to go.

At this point, I would like to say the good news is there is a lot of common ground and good will, and I think we have a unique opportunity to do what I told the Floyd family I would do when they told me they wanted Texas-size justice. I think some good can actually come out of this tragedy, their loss of their loved one.

I heard an inspiring message from Bishop James Dixon, who is the pastor at Community of Faith Church and first vice president of the Houston NAACP. He talked about the need for unity and action in response to the widespread protests we are seeing and encouraged everyone, as he put it, to “dignify the outcry.”

We need to affirm that, yes, there is a problem; yes, it has gone unaddressed for too long; and yes, we are going to do our best to do something about it. While there may be differences of opinion on the best route to take, the good news is we are all pulling in the same direction.

During our conversation, I was able to talk briefly about the JUSTICE Act, which was introduced, as I said, last week. Among other things, they seemed to be pleased the bill would strengthen deescalation training, as well as training on the duty to intervene in case there is something inappropriate occurring, the use of body cameras, incentivizing the States to restrict the use of choke holds, and make lynching a Federal crime.

I received some great feedback on how it will ensure that police departments nationwide are using proven best practices to keep our communities safe. As we prepare to debate this legislation this week, that conversation could not have been more timely.

Another common theme—and I have heard this before—is the growing strain on our law enforcement officers. I remember several years ago Chief David Brown saying: We ask our police to do too much. Basically, they are the ones who we know will go quickly to a crisis and intervene, no matter what it is, whether it is a domestic crisis, a mental health crisis, or somebody breaking the law. Mayor Turner, in particular, talked about how the list of responsibilities we are giving our law enforcement officers keeps growing longer and longer and longer. They are not just fighting crime; they are responding to calls about drug abuse, mental health, domestic violence, homelessness, and a range of other crises. Between COVID-19 and the ongoing protests, their jobs are not getting any easier.

As Police Chief Art Acevedo pointed out, police are performing these jobs not by design but because there is basically nobody else to do them—by default. There is no question we need more support services that can help alleviate some of this strain on our law enforcement officers. Over the years, we have tried to bolster services available for things like the First Step Act, which took prison reform from the State level to the national level. We put money into Project Safe Neighborhoods grants and Mental Health and Safe Communities Act grants. In particular, I remember when we debated the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act grants to help train law enforcement to deescalate conflicts between people undergoing a mental health crisis, during which an escalating level of crisis would be a threat not only to the individual who is undergoing that crisis but to the officer, him or herself. We actually found it to be very effective, this training.

As this list of responsibilities we are giving our law enforcement officers has grown, so has the need for additional training and additional funding for support services—ancillary services that can work in conjunction with our law enforcement officials so we can get the most efficient, most effective response to the person who needs it.

That is precisely why defunding the police is not the answer to the challenges we are facing. It is really an insult, if you think about it, and it is living in a fantasyland.

Chief Acevedo shared an analogy a fellow police chief and friend of his made about the effort to shift responsibility from police to other providers. He said: If you are building a new stadium, you wouldn't tear down or stop using the old one until the new one was complete.

If cities strip funding from their police departments without having other