

I think there is so much commonality, in the sense that we have a broken healthcare system. We sometimes, as conservatives, are slow to maneuver and may not be interested in doing things that need to be done, but I think there is a time and a place for that. I was pleased to see, I think, that 70 or 80 Senators weighed in on trying to fix healthcare. But what interrupted that progress was several months of an impeachment saga that proved to go nowhere, and then we have been confronted with the biggest health crisis, certainly, in a century—other issues.

But, in this case, I think, to me, trying to cut to the chase, this is clearly a sequence of maneuvers that is trying to interject in a process of getting one of the most qualified judges across the finish line to become a Supreme Court Justice.

I think the American people are watching, too. They see what goes on here. They see that, year after year, we seem not to deliver results. When it comes to stuff that should be simple—when it is clear, based upon the credentials, especially, of someone like Amy Coney Barrett, who comes from my State, who has done such an outstanding job as an appellate judge, has impeccable credentials, and to where now this is being litigated not on the merits of who she is and how she will handle herself as a Supreme Court Justice—it has gotten so partisan. I think that really does turn people off.

I think this is more a sequence that maybe we are both guilty of, to where we do not roll up our sleeves and get to the heart of the matter. I was happy to be the first Republican to come across and acknowledge that climate is an issue. I formed the Climate Caucus and got six other Republicans to do it. I think we have to be engaged in the key issues of the day. Again, as I said earlier, we sometimes are slow to come to the discussion, but in the time that I am going to spend here, I would hope that we do legislation in the time that is there to do it and not try to interject it into a process like this.

I am so happy that we have this in a situation where we are going to get her voted in on Monday, and, in the meantime, I think that any of the attempts that are made by the other side to belabor the point just shows the American public what is wrong with this institution.

So, that being said, I do think that she is a qualified nominee to the Supreme Court. It is of the utmost importance that we do not belabor the process, and I object to proceeding to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I will say to the Senator from Indiana, I recognize that he is new to this body, and what he has seen in the Senate is not the Senate that I was elected to.

There was a time—the Senator may find it hard to believe—when we actu-

ally brought bills to the floor. We allowed amendments. Before that, of course, the committee had done its work. We allowed amendments on the floor up or down, and we ended up deliberating and voting on measures. If they passed here, we then had a conference, and, miraculously, at some point, they became law. That has not happened here for a long, long time, and I don't think you have seen it. Maybe the Defense authorization bill is as close as it gets, though we don't have active amendments there.

In this circumstance, on this bill which I brought before the Senate Judiciary Committee 18 years ago—18 years ago—it has passed the House of Representatives and is sitting on Senator McCONNELL's desk for a year. It has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee, and I cochair the Immigration Subcommittee with your colleague, who is standing to your right, from Texas. We have met once in the last 2 years—once—and have never taken this up. So for the sake of the people affected by it, asking that it come to the floor is not an unreasonable request. Their lives are tied up in it.

So I would love to see regular order. We haven't seen it in so long. Most people wouldn't recognize it. But I understand your objection.

I have a series, but I am only going to make one more unanimous consent request because I see Members waiting to speak. This one is very relevant and very timely.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4617

Mr. President, we know that foreign election interference continues to be a real threat in America. Just this week we learned of a foreign influence campaign carried out by Iran in which fake, menacing emails were sent to Democratic voters who were told to vote for Trump or “we will come after you.” The origin, we are told by intelligence agencies, is Iran.

FBI Director Wray has said that Russia has been “very active in its efforts to influence the election” and seeks to “denigrate Democratic nominee Joe Biden”—two countries up to their elbows in trying to make a mess of our election campaign.

It is well past time to address this threat. We spend a time of lot talking about it. We could do it today by passing the House-passed SHIELD Act.

This is a bill passed in the House of Representatives that would establish a duty to report election interference from foreign entities so the FBI and the Federal Election Commission are aware when foreign powers are offering unlawful—unlawful—election assistance to campaigns and other political committees.

This bill would restrict the exchange of campaign information with foreign entities by making it illegal to offer nonpublic campaign material to foreign governments and those linked with foreign governments.

The bill would improve transparency by applying existing campaign adver-

tising requirements to online advertisements, and it would close critical loopholes in the law to further limit political spending by foreign nationals and foreign governments to try to influence the outcome of a U.S. election.

Finally, the bill would prohibit deceptive practices about voting procedures to stop individuals from providing false information about voting rules and qualifications for voting.

In light of these ongoing threats to both Presidential candidates, President Trump as well as Vice President Biden—this is a bipartisan attack. They are not just going after Democrats or Republicans; they are going after all of us. Isn't it about time we said that we are fed up with it, and it has to stop? That is all this bill does. It is bipartisan.

In order to proceed to the consideration of this bill in time for it to affect the outcome of this election, perhaps, H.R. 4617, the SHIELD Act, I ask that we proceed to consideration of it to prevent foreign interference in elections. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, reserving the right object, as I said earlier, the Senate is currently considering the nomination of a highly qualified nominee to be an Associate of the Supreme Court. This request is another procedural move just to belabor the process.

They voted to adjourn until after the election four times this week, so, obviously, this bill, even though it may have merits that we need to discuss, should not be done in this format.

Continuing to consider this highly qualified nominee to the Supreme Court is the utmost, most important thing that we should do here. Therefore, I object to proceeding to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4995, H.R. 4996, AND H.R. 1585

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, H.R. 4995 is one that passed the House from Representative ENGEL to help address maternal health gaps and disparities in rural communities. The bill would provide grants at HHS to networks of healthcare providers and academic partners to expand obstetric capacity and improve trainings in underserved rural areas.

The trainings would help to address implicit bias, which—more so than economic status, health status, or education level—can contribute to health negative outcomes for moms and their babies.

Due to lack of specialists and geographic gaps, maternal health outcomes in rural Illinois are worse than in urban areas. So when it comes to responding to and tackling the urgent health challenges of the moment,

alongside addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, these bills can help close the disparities and gaps that exist in health care in America.

H.R. 4996, sponsored by Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY from Illinois, passed the House in September. It closely mirrors a provision in legislation I have introduced in the Senate, the MOMMA Act. This critical legislation addresses our Nation's unconscionable disparities in maternal and infant mortality by ensuring mothers can maintain access to care and prevent pregnancy-related complications.

The U.S. is 1 of only 13 countries in the world where the maternal mortality rate is worse now than it was 25 years ago. Nationwide more than 700 women die every year as a result of their pregnancy, and more than 70,000 others suffer severe, near-fatal complications. Across the country, women of color are four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than white women. The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified these racial and ethnic health disparities that already existed. These gaps in our health system are unacceptable.

Medicaid covers half of the births in Illinois. This policy would help thousands of mothers in Illinois and nationwide by enabling Medicaid to provide coverage for low-income mothers for up to 1 year, compared to the current limit of 60 days. It is time we turn the page on this unacceptable inequity in our healthcare system and address a real need across America.

H.R. 1585, the Violence Against Women Act was signed into law 26 years ago, and it must be reauthorized. This law has been a lifeline for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in my State of Illinois and across the country. Over a year ago, the House voted to reauthorize and strengthen VAWA. But the Republican-controlled Senate has refused to bring this bill to the floor for a vote.

For many Americans, home is not always a safe place, and the COVID-19 pandemic has presented particular challenges for people facing abusive situations and domestic violence. It is shameful that Leader MCCONNELL has refused to call this critical reauthorization to the Senate floor for a vote.

It is long past time for the Senate to renew and strengthen VAWA.

In order to proceed to the consideration H.R. 4995, the Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act of 2020; H.R. 4996, the Helping MOMS Act of 2020; and H.R. 1585, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, I object to proceeding to everything en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

NOMINATION OF AMY CONEY BARRETT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee advanced the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett unanimously. It was unanimous because our Democratic colleagues sought to boycott the meeting. But what they basically did was expedite consideration of her nomination.

It was really kind of puzzling to see the chairs that were set aside for our Democratic colleagues filled with large, blown-up pictures, and I will sort of get to that in a moment, the false narrative that we have seen here because our colleagues cannot successfully attack the character or the qualifications of this incredible nominee to this seat on the Supreme Court.

Judge Barrett discussed everything from the separation of powers to the free expression clause of the First Amendment. Many of us marveled at her knowledge and her ability to recall facts and legal decisions without so much as even a note in front of her.

It is no surprise that the American Bar Association, which the minority leader has called the gold standard, gave her their highest rating.

The chair of the Standing Committee on the Judiciary said: "[I]n interviews with individuals in the legal profession and community who know Judge Barrett, whether for a few years or decades, not one person uttered a negative word about her character."

That assessment is in line with the glowing letters of support we have seen from her former colleagues and students whose political philosophies and beliefs fall across the entire political spectrum.

What we have repeatedly heard is about Judge Barrett's brilliance, her strong character, her great temperament, and her impressive humility. Judge Barrett, I am convinced, will serve our Nation well in the Supreme Court.

It is clear that the mountains of evidence stand in sharp contrast to the portrait our colleagues across the aisle have attempted to paint of this nominee. Democrats have tried to claim that she is somehow "too radical," despite the fact that in her 3 years on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, she has agreed with her colleagues 95 percent of the time in the 600 cases they have decided.

Back in 2017, when she was nominated to the Seventh Circuit, she was attacked explicitly because of her Catholic faith, even though our colleagues know that under the Constitution, no religious test is permissible, really suggesting that because of her faith, she couldn't follow her oath to decide cases on the facts and the law that come before her—truly insulting and completely out of character with the person we saw in Judge Barrett in front of the Judiciary Committee.

Our colleagues even went so far as to hold up a chart with more than 100 cases listed and claimed that Judge

Barrett would overturn every single one of those precedents. There is certainly no evidence of that. Nothing in the record would suggest it. With her fidelity to the law, do you think she would be so reckless? Well, of course not. There is just no evidence to support it.

But we know that because they couldn't attack her on the merits, they decided to use fearmongering instead. Through innuendo, misinformation, and intellectually dishonest arguments, they have been trying to stoke fears about how she may rule on a case she has not even heard yet. This is sort of a sky-is-falling argument, a Chicken Little argument.

It really has more to do with the way our Democratic colleagues view the judicial branch. They view it as another political branch, as opposed to an apolitical branch that is supposed to interpret the law and the facts and decide cases on their own merits.

Instead of addressing her judicial philosophy, our Democratic colleagues eagerly shared their plan, should she be confirmed, to pack the Supreme Court with additional Justices to give them the political results they cannot achieve with the current composition of the Court.

This is something that Ruth Bader Ginsburg explicitly condemned, saying that this would turn the Supreme Court into just another political body. You can imagine if Democrats, when they are in power, decide to add additional judges who may decide cases in the way they would like to see them decided, the temptation would be great for the other side of the aisle to add judges to the Supreme Court. It would completely destroy what has been rightly called the crown jewels of our Constitution, and that is our independent judiciary.

For many Americans, the idea of mutating our only apolitical branch of government is absolutely terrifying. So, not surprisingly, our colleagues across the aisle have tried to rebrand and call this rebalancing the Court. Back home, this is what we call putting lipstick on a pig.

Using words like "rebalance" is a way to obscure, really, what their goal is. They want to seize what they view as an unaccountable body and use it to secure wins they can't win in the rough and tumble of the legislative process. If you can't win an election, if you can't win a vote in Congress, well, get the Supreme Court, get the judiciary to bail you out. That is not the appropriate role of judges or the judiciary under our Constitution.

Our Democratic colleagues seem absolutely fearful about judges who will actually apply the law as written. They want somebody to impose a result that they wish were required.

They want judges to evaluate cases not by the letter of the law but through the same lens of personal and political biases. In short, they don't really want a fair and impartial judge