

The bill highlights the troubling fact that lack of childcare can dissuade parents from receiving essential healthcare services. It would make permanent a VA childcare pilot program—make it permanent.

It was first introduced in 2011, and it expands access to childcare assistance nationwide, allowing veterans to receive medical treatment with confidence that their children are receiving high-quality care—our veterans.

Whatever motions have been made in the past, this measure certainly needs to be considered. It was passed by a majority in the House on February 8 of 2019, more than a year ago, a bipartisan majority in the House—no action here.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

Can we just be a little more honest? This is not about childcare. What is going on here is not about childcare, for veterans, or for anybody else. This is another attempt to prevent us from talking about the outstanding qualifications of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to be on the Supreme Court of the United States.

I will stand here all day and object if that is what it takes for my other colleagues to get to the floor and talk about the merits of this outstanding judge. With that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 2722

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, as more important as that health for veterans is, equally so is assistance for our election system. We are going through an election right now. Even as we consider this nominee, tens of millions of Americans are voting. The threat to our election security is well-known. We face not only foreign interference but also domestic threats, as has been documented.

I have been through those absolutely chilling briefings in a classified setting; we are sworn to secrecy. But the malign foreign interference makes 2016, in my impression, look like child's play from Russia, Iran, the Chinese.

In order to proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2722, Securing American Federal Elections Act, a bill that would, in fact, make critical investments to upgrade our voting systems to protect against foreign interference in our elections and democracy by requiring all voting systems to produce a verifiable paper ballot and by authorizing funding for States to bolster election security—what could be more urgent and important at this moment in our history?

It was passed by the House of Representatives on June 27, 2019—again, more than a year ago. No action here.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The only interference going on here is by Senate Democrats trying to interfere in our discussion about an outstanding nominee to the Supreme Court of the United States, Judge Amy Coney Barrett. For that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4894

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, in order to proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4894, Congressional Budget Justification Transparency Act of 2020, a bill that requires Federal agencies to make budget justification materials available to the public—it is a transparency measure. It requires disclosure, and it requires the Office of Management and Budget to make certain details regarding the materials available to the public, including a list of agencies that submit budget justification.

It also forces disclosure of the dates that materials are submitted to Congress and posted online and links to the materials—a basic disclosure measure. It was passed, again, overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives on September 14 of this year, without any action so far in this body.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

It is really time to move on and hear from other colleagues about the incredible, outstanding qualifications of President Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court of the United States, Judge Amy Coney Barrett. These distractions cannot prevent us from doing that.

On this bill in particular, I think people should know that most of the documents that they are talking about are—in fact, almost all of them are on-line today.

For that reason and others, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. That measure was a basic disclosure step proposed to address secrecy in government. Nothing is more fundamental than transparency in a democracy. Sunlight is the best disinfectant.

The people of the United States deserve that information, and so, too, they deserve all of the information about Amy Coney Barrett. Even on the morning of her approval by the Senate Judiciary Committee, new documents were disclosed, new statements and speeches by her, adding to the ones that hadn't been disclosed properly previously.

This process is a sham. It is rushed. It is not normal. As I said during our hearings, my great fear is not only the damage and the harm that this nominee can do, but the damage and harm to the Court itself.

The President said the quiet part out loud. He wants this nominee rushed to the bench so she can decide the election, not the voters—so she can sit on the Supreme Court when the election goes to the courts.

Well, my Republican colleagues have the majority. They may have the votes, but they don't have the American people, and they don't have history on their side. Might does not make right. They can do it because they have the votes. They are doing it because they can.

Amy Coney Barrett could stonewall our questions because she could establish a new standard—call it the “Barrett rule”—of not answering. But the damage to the Court will be great.

The Court has power because of its legitimacy. The trust and confidence of the American people are in its independence. Our Republican colleagues are whittling away and eventually devastating not only the authority of the Supreme Court, but all of our Federal courts, by politicizing and polarizing it.

She would not even commit that she would recuse herself in the event an election case went to the Supreme Court. I have tremendous respect—even reverence—for the Court, having served there as a law clerk with Justice Harry Blackmun, having argued four cases before the Court, including three with Justice Ginsburg.

This imperils the legitimacy of the U.S. Supreme Court, is a grave, lasting, potentially devastating disservice to the American people. It is a dagger at the heart of the Court and of our democracy. Therefore, I will continue to oppose this nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Florida.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4797

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, General Secretary Xi is a dictator and human rights violator. He is yet another Communist leader trying to be the dominant world power.

The Chinese Communist Party is stripping the people of Hong Kong of their freedoms, cracking down on dissidents, militarizing the South China Sea, supporting Maduro's genocide in Venezuela, surveilling its citizens, and imprisoning more than 1 million Uighurs in internment camps simply because of their religion.

Communist China is committing genocide against the Uighurs. It doesn't end there. Recent reports indicate that the Communist Party of China is attempting the same thing in Tibet, forcing hundreds of thousands of people in Tibet into mass labor camps. We know the Chinese Communist Party and their puppets continue to silence and intimidate those standing up

for democracy and human rights. They detain and harass journalists to try and prevent the truth from getting out. Foreigners and journalists working and traveling in Communist China do so at their own risk.

Just last week, Communist China began threatening to take Americans as hostages. The national security threat of Communist China cannot be taken lightly. The censorship of these human rights abuses cannot be ignored.

General Secretary Xi doesn't want us to know about the oppression occurring under his regime. For years, the Communist Government in China has tried to push its propaganda in America through state-owned media outlets while refusing to treat American journalists in China fairly. We saw this firsthand earlier this year. Chinese-backed propaganda outlets peddled China's lies about the coronavirus and endangered the lives of Americans.

In March, the Chinese Communist Party expelled more than a dozen U.S. journalists and required other outlets to submit written reports of their staff, finances, operations, and real estate in China. We cannot allow this mistreatment to continue, and we have to take action.

I am proud to sponsor the Chinese-Backed Media Accountability Act to create accountability for Communist China's censorship of free speech and failure to treat American journalists fairly. My bill prevents new visas to Chinese-backed journalists until we know exactly how many Chinese propaganda journalists are operating in the United States, and it creates reciprocity by making sure the number of Chinese-backed journalists in the United States is equal to the amount of independent American journalists allowed in China.

We have to stand up and say that this behavior by Communist China is unacceptable, and I look forward to all of my colleagues' supporting this proposal.

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 4797 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and 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 Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, Senator SCOTT has sought unanimous consent for a bill that would restrict the issuance of nonimmigrant visas to Chinese journalists and a number of other steps that, frankly, are already within the President's power to do.

The bill, in many ways, is an attempt to codify authorities that the State Department already has. In that sense,

there is no reason to take legislative action. If the President wants to use this power, he can.

But I want to emphasize the point that we share the goals that are behind this measure. No. 1, the goal of increasing transparency around the pandemic has to be done so that the Chinese and other authorities around the world—states that suffer from the pandemic—make the facts known to this country and the world health authority.

We share the goal of condemning China's absolutely despicable human rights abuses, its deplorable record of subjugating human liberty, including the Uighurs, at least 1 million of whom are being held in Chinese Government-run detention centers that the President of the United States has completely ignored.

But this legislation would really do nothing to address these incredibly oppressing issues. It uses the pandemic and China's human rights abuses as a pretense for deflecting blame for the President's shameful mishandling of the COVID-19 crisis. The President's ineptitude and incompetence are widely known to the American people.

We share the goals of stopping Chinese human rights abuses, of making them more honest and accurate in what they disclose, and other goals, but to this measure, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I am disappointed my Democratic colleague doesn't want to focus on the global impact of General Secretary Xi's censorship. I clearly don't understand why my Democratic colleagues refuse to stand up to Communist China. They have stopped every attempt to protect Americans from this threat.

Again and again, the Democrats block efforts to hold Communist China accountable and never try to work with us to come up with solutions.

They blocked my resolution to move the 2022 Olympics out of Communist China. They blocked my bill to prevent Communist China from stealing or sabotaging American COVID-19 vaccine research, even as American lives depend on the rapid development of this vaccine.

Now they are turning a blind eye to the censorship of American journalists in China. Chinese state-backed journalists in America push the propaganda of the Chinese Communist Party. It is time to wake up and understand that the oppression at the hand of General Secretary Xi and the Chinese Government Party will not stop.

This is about the safety of Americans and about freedom around the world. This is about standing up for human rights.

We must act, and passing the Chinese-Backed Media Accountability Act takes real steps to hold Communist China accountable for their failure to treat American journalists fairly.

I am not going to stop working to make sure there is reciprocity between our nations and that we understand how many Chinese propaganda journalists are operating in the United States. We must, together, do everything in our power to fight for freedom and hold Communist China and General Secretary Xi accountable, and I hope, at some point, my Democratic colleagues will join me in this fight.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida).

The Senator from North Dakota.

NOMINATION OF AMY CONEY BARRETT

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, 2 years ago, I was a candidate running for this job, running against a Democratic incumbent. The top issues of the race throughout the summer were things like the sanctity of human life, and most important in the minds of the voters—at least based on our polls—were law and order. The idea that a sanctuary city, much less several of them, could exist to protect violent criminals as long as they were here illegally was an absurd notion to Dakotans. They were good issues for me as a candidate.

That all changed just a little over 2 years ago, when Senate Democrats waged an attack on President Trump's nominee to fill the vacancy that occurred by the retirement of Supreme Court Justice Kennedy. By "attack," I don't mean engage in a vigorous debate about Brett Kavanaugh's political and judicial philosophy or his background. Rather, they waged an attack on Brett Kavanaugh himself, on his character, his reputation, and his family—and not with facts but with fabrications.

My opponent, North Dakota's junior Senator, joined the smear campaign and changed the priorities of our campaign quickly from sanctuary cities to, suddenly, the Supreme Court of the United States. That happened just 2 years and a couple of weeks ago. As much as anything—as much as any reason, as much as any issue—the Supreme Court is why I am here today. I do not mean just today. I mean it is why I am a U.S. Senator.

So, when President Trump nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to fill the vacancy created by the death of Justice Bader Ginsburg, I knew there could be no amount of political harassment that would cause me to shrink from this obligation. The suggestion that I or my colleagues would squander this—the right and the responsibility under the Constitution—and consider waiting until after an election that may create an opportunity for someone with whom my constituents don't agree to be nominated to the Court would be a dereliction of my duty and would rightly enrage the people who sent me here for exactly this moment. I refuse to shrink.

So let's talk about the nominee, Judge Amy Coney Barrett. By all accounts, she is a brilliant jurist. I don't think anybody has really questioned