

the ACA is overturned. Remember when simply being a woman was considered a preexisting condition by insurance companies, and we had to pay more? I do. Yet the threat of Justice Barrett goes far beyond insurance rates. The fundamental right for women to make basic choices about our own healthcare, our own health, our own lives would be at risk.

Since *Roe v. Wade* was decided in 1973, women in our country have had the right to make our own decisions about reproductive choices that are best for our own health and our own family. It is among the rights that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg spent her career defending, and it is not a right that Judge Barrett respects. She has long aligned herself with organizations devoted to eliminating a woman's right to choose. She signed her name to a letter calling for *Roe v. Wade* to be overturned.

During her nomination hearing, she refused to say whether *Roe v. Wade* is Federal law. At its most basic, *Roe v. Wade* is about undue government interference. Think about that—undue government interference, which we hear a lot about from our friends on the other side of the aisle. That is something that Republicans deeply oppose, at least when it is corporations that need defending from undue government interference.

Reproductive rights are only one freedom, as critical as they are, as that is, that are on the line right now. Over the past decade, we have made major progress in ensuring that our LGBTQ+ friends and neighbors aren't discriminated against simply for being themselves. Yet Judge Barrett has openly opposed this progress, including speaking out against the decision that made marriage equality the law of the land. She has even given numerous speeches on behalf of the Alliance Defending Freedom, a rightwing organization that thinks being gay should be a crime.

Workers, too, could see their rights evaporate under a Justice Barrett. Barrett would be just one more conservative Justice who will issue rulings that hurt the ability of workers to fight workplace mistreatment and discrimination, and to organize and collectively bargain for wages, benefits, and workplace protections. That is what she did in her decision *Wallace v. Grubhub Holdings* in which she ruled against workers who were denied overtime wages—against workers who were denied overtime wages that are protected by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

If a Justice Barrett sides with the powerful against people, I think we all know what that means for the future of our world.

During her confirmation hearing, Judge Barrett refused to say whether or not she believes that climate change exists, saying she is not a scientist. You don't need to be a scientist. Just ask people in Michigan about what is

happening in our State. The climate crisis is already affecting Michigan agriculture, our environment, our public health, our Great Lakes.

A number of crucial cases dealing with the environment are likely to end up at the Supreme Court in the next number of years, and the Court's decisions will have consequences that outlive any of us. Critically important to all American citizens is what Justice Barrett would mean for voting rights and the results of the 2020 election. Let me remind everyone that election day isn't November 3, it is every day up to November 3. People are voting right now. If you have not voted, I hope you do and that you do it safely and do it early, but voting ends on November 3. People are voting as we speak and whether or not those votes are counted could very well depend on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Judge Barrett refused to say whether she believes voter discrimination exists. Voter discrimination. Given that 23 States have passed restrictive voting laws since the Supreme Court's *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, it is pretty clear that voter discrimination exists.

Judge Barrett has also refused to recuse herself from rulings on cases related to the outcome of the 2020 election, even though President Trump is rushing to make sure that she is there. That is a clear conflict of interest if I ever heard one. There is no right more fundamental than the right to vote—no right more fundamental than the right to vote. Perhaps nobody knew that better than our beloved colleague, the late Congressman John Lewis. He once said this:

My dear friends, your vote is precious, almost sacred. It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have to create a more perfect union.

A more perfect union; that is what we want, isn't it? That is what we are working toward every day, I hope. That is what Americans have been marching for and speaking out for and bleeding for and dying for as long as we have been a nation.

We face a crucial choice. I am choosing to stand with the vast majority of the American people on the side of justice and equality. I urge a "no" vote on Judge Barrett. The American people deserve much, much better.

Mr. President, there is one other thing that I need to do before yielding the floor. I would yield my remaining postcloture time to the Democratic leader.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PORTMAN). The Senator has that right. The Senator from Oklahoma.

RECOGNIZING CRAIG JOHNSON AND AURASH ZARKESHAN

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I actually listened to the comments that were made by my good friend from Michigan, but I have to say this, that she is talking about someone who is considered by me and many others as arguably the most gifted jurist ever

nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court. I want to talk about that.

I have something else to talk about first because I think people know Judge Barrett by this time, but they may not know a couple of people they should know about.

Earlier this year, Aurash Zarkeshan or "Zark." Because of the complications of his name, he is called that by most of his close friends.

He was overjoyed. He had just graduated earlier this year from the Tulsa Police Academy and was sworn in as a police officer. That was his life's ambition. He was a guy who was so excited that he was taking that step. He was a shining example of everything that you want in a new officer. He was bright, engaged, committed to public service. He wanted to give back and make his community a better place. That was him.

At the end of June, only 6 weeks on patrol, he pulled over a car for a routine traffic stop. As we all know, there is no such thing as a routine law enforcement process. He and Sergeant Craig Johnson pulled over a car, and what happened next was horrifying and tragic. They were viciously shot in the head during that stop, despite many attempts to deescalate the situation.

Tragically, Sergeant Johnson succumbed to his injuries. While Zark remained in critical condition, Sergeant Johnson left behind his wife Kristi and sons, Connor and Clinton. That is him here on the left—dashing young man.

In that moment of sorrow, the Tulsa community united in prayer and hope for the recovery of Zark. Since the shooting, Zark has undergone several surgeries. He spent months recovering in rehab. Throughout these months, Zark provided us with updates of his recovery and the progress he has been making. He even called into a class of new Tulsa Police Department recruits. He also went in person to his squad meeting and met with them.

His progress is truly remarkable. As Tulsa Police Captain Kimberly Lee put it, "He really is an example for all of us." That is exactly right. Zark is a hero. He persevered through extraordinary pain and strife and is now making a speedy recovery.

Last week, on October 15, Zark returned home from 3 months of rehab, and he was met by friends and family and supporters who welcomed him with open arms. Our mayor, G.T. Bynum, declared October 15 Officer Aurash Zarkeshan Day in the city of Tulsa and proclaimed that Zark is "Tulsa's Hope." I couldn't agree more. Zark embodies everything that makes Oklahoma great.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that proclamation be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

Zark wanted to give back to his community, and he delivered. October 15 will hold a special place in the heart of the thousands of people who call Tulsa home.

In August, I spoke on the Senate floor regarding the riots and anarchy happening around the country, but I was specifically referring to Portland, OR, and how these events and hateful rhetoric aimed at law enforcement have endangered countless brave men and women who serve in law enforcement and how they have certainly depressed them. They talk about things like peaceful protests. Yet, in that case, they were throwing bricks at officers. They sprayed officers, nearly blinding all three of them. This was actually going on.

I highlight the contrast between the violence happening in Oregon with how we appreciate our officers in my State of Oklahoma—what a contrast. Oklahomans have great respect and admiration for our men and women in blue. We know that law enforcement officers are our neighbors, our friends, and our family. They have a dangerous job, and they go beyond that job. I was talking to some of them the other day, and different ones gave different messages. While they are on duty, defending rights, a lot of them teach young kids how to play baseball. They are really great citizens.

In the speech that I gave in August, I highlighted the attack on Zark and Sergeant Johnson. These attacks are a painful reminder of the sacrifices that law enforcement make every day. “Defunding the police” rhetoric may be politically appealing to some on the left, but we must remember that law enforcement is the first line of defense against threats like what we saw in Tulsa in June.

I had the opportunity to talk to Zark this morning. He told me what was going through his mind while they were being rushed to the hospital. He said he was thinking: “I hope our story reaches the Nation.”

Your story, Zark, has reached the Nation. It has reached the world. Right now, they know what happened.

Zark wanted people to understand what police and law enforcement risk every day—a sacrifice too many take for granted. He wanted people to know the stories of good, honorable police officers. While his tragedy in Tulsa is a reminder of the threats our communities face, it is also a story of hope, of Tulsa’s hope.

Jerad Lindsey, who is the chairman of Tulsa’s Fraternal Order of Police, said it best: “There’s not a lot of times you get to use the word ‘miracle.’” Zark’s recovery definitely fits that bill.

Perhaps, what is most telling and most inspiring is that Zark doesn’t lose sight of what was lost on June 29. On his return to Tulsa on a day that was proclaimed to recognize his heroism, he wore a shirt that honored Sergeant Johnson. It read: “Fallen but not forgotten.” Even this morning, he talked about Sergeant Craig Johnson and how he had wanted him to return to Tulsa with him as he himself did last week.

Now that Zark is back in Tulsa, he is going to keep up his recovery, but he is

also looking forward to enjoying these simple things: his own bed, his dogs, his Whataburger—he has already been there twice—and the love and support of all Tulsans.

While there are many challenges and hardships ahead for Tulsa and the Nation with this tragedy, this is a story of optimism and faith in our community and in our future. Both Zark and Sergeant Johnson are American heroes, and they will always be American heroes. So we say thanks to Zark.

Thanks, Zark. You are great.

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

THE HONORABLE GT BYNUM

PROCLAMATION

Whereas, on June 29, 2020, Officer Aurash Zarkeshan placed himself in harms way to protect and serve the citizens of Tulsa and the men and women of the Tulsa Police Department.

Whereas, Officer Aurash Zarkeshan endured more than three months of rehabilitation and multiple surgeries. His bravery and positive outlook throughout his journey are admirable and have been an inspiration to the city.

Whereas, Officer Aurash Zarkeshan’s strength and perseverance have set an example to the Tulsa Police Department and he has been a beacon of light for law enforcement officers around the county.

Whereas, Officer Aurash Zarkeshan has been declared “Tulsa’s Hope” for his service, courage, and valor under fire.

Whereas, Tulsans are excited on this day to welcome Officer Aurash Zarkeshan home.

Now, therefore, I, Gt Bynum, Mayor of the City of Tulsa, do hereby proclaim October 15th as “Officer Aurash Zarkeshan Day” in the City of Tulsa.

NOMINATION OF AMY CONEY BARRETT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I have already talked a couple of times about this great nominee whom we have in Amy Coney Barrett, and I am really proud to speak in support of President Trump’s outstanding nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court.

To say that Judge Barrett is qualified to serve on the Supreme Court is an understatement. Judge Barrett is the definition of a leader. Her record of accomplishments is second to none. Everybody knows it.

After we had a chance to really evaluate and talk to her and know her and visit with her, we found that she was born in New Orleans. She went on to graduate from Rhodes College in Memphis and also from Notre Dame Law School. She graduated at the top of her class and always has been at the top of her class. That is worth pointing out because, when confirmed, she will be the only Justice on the bench who did not go to Harvard or Yale. Now, that is a good thing. She clerked for one of America’s finest Supreme Court Justices—the late Antonin Scalia. Since 2002, she has taught law at Notre Dame, where she has been selected “Distinguished Professor of the Year” three different times.

In 2017, after being attacked by the Democrats about her strong faith, she

was confirmed to the Seventh Circuit by this body—and with Democratic votes, I might add. Let me repeat that. She was confirmed on a bipartisan basis only 3 years ago. But, today, liberals are recycling their same stale tactics in an attempt to tarnish another exceptional nominee without having any basis in fact or truth. They are attacking her Catholic faith. Some operatives have even attacked her for adopting children from Haiti. I am not kidding. They are attacking her for that. It should go without saying that Judge Barrett should be commended for this loving, selfless act, not disparaged for it.

I personally know that adoption is one of God’s greatest gifts. I am the proud grandfather of Zegita Marie. I found her during a mission in Ethiopia, and my daughter and son-in-law adopted her as a baby. She is in college now and is one of my greatest blessings.

Yet, like clockwork, the Democrats use bogus propaganda to try to scare the American people into opposing a Republican President’s Supreme Court nominee. Over the years, they have made outrageous claims, like saying these nominees will take away America’s healthcare. They have done it time and again. They did it with Anthony Kennedy. They did it with David Souter. They did it with John Roberts and, recently, with Brett Kavanaugh. Now they are doing it with Judge Barrett. Most Americans can see through this far-left hoax, but it is important to set the record right. Judge Barrett is not and has never advocated in favor of taking away anyone’s healthcare—period.

Liberals have gone after Judge Barrett for her views on abortion. First of all, Judge Barrett has every right to enjoy her religious freedom. I think we all understand that. I am saddened to see the attacks that she has received due to her Catholic faith. Nevertheless, her record shows that she will thoughtfully apply the Constitution to all cases while honoring Supreme Court precedent. At the same time, she has proven that she impartially and faithfully exercises her duties as an appellate judge. There is no reason to believe that she would not continue to do so as a Justice.

Now I want to speak about the precedent for acting on today’s vacancy, which differs from the vacancy of 2016. The Democrats and liberal media have called Senate Republicans hypocrites for opposing the confirmation of President Obama’s Supreme Court nominee in 2016 but supporting the confirmation of the President’s nominee today. What they fail to recognize is that we followed Senate precedent. We followed it in 2016, and we are following it again right now.

In 2016, we had a divided government. What a divided government means is that we have different parties controlling the White House and the confirming body, the U.S. Senate. In 2016, we had that divided government, and