

When he received the Officer of the Year Award in 2017, Detective Collins said that being a police officer was about extending a “life line to save others.” We will never know how many lives Kevin Collins saved, but we do know that his hometown is now safer and more peaceful because of his years of service.

Pine Bluff was blessed to have a guardian the likes of Kevin Collins. Now his watch on Earth is over. He is looking down on us from above. May he rest in peace.

NOMINATION OF AMY CONEY BARRETT

Mr. President, tomorrow the Senate will confirm Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court, filling the seat vacated by the late Justice Ginsburg with a very worthy successor.

When President Trump nominated Judge Barrett last month, some Americans questioned whether the Senate should confirm any nominee to the Supreme Court. But today, just weeks later, a clear majority of Americans support confirmation, including a majority of Independents.

What happened? It is very simple. Americans met Judge Barrett; they loved what they saw; and they decided she is the right woman for this job.

Consider her achievements. She graduated No. 1 in her class from Notre Dame Law School, where she also edited the law review and later clerked for two giants of our judiciary—Judge Silberman of the DC Circuit Court of Appeals and the late, great Justice Scalia.

Years later, Judge Barrett returned to her alma mater as a professor, where she won the esteem of her students and colleagues as a gifted teacher and an “absolutely brilliant legal scholar,” to quote the dean of Notre Dame Law.

Then, in 2017, the Senate confirmed Professor Barrett to be Judge Barrett on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. In the 3 years since then, she has established herself as one of America’s finest judges—unwaveringly committed to the rule of law and equality before the law.

A Scalia protege, beloved professor, respected jurist—those titles alone warrant Amy Coney Barrett’s confirmation to the Supreme Court, but they are not her only achievements or even the most important ones.

In addition to those things, she has a big and beautiful family, with a devoted husband and seven kids, including two adopted from Haiti. They are a family knitted together by love and faith.

Any parent knows how difficult it must be for Judge Barrett to juggle the demands of her work with her duties as a parent and a wife. But like millions of working moms, she manages to do both with incredible skill, grace, and poise.

I suspect I must confess that if Judge Barrett had been nominated by a President without an “R” behind his name, the media would laud her as a pioneer, an inspiration to young women all across the country. Today’s newspapers

would contain front page stories of gushing profiles, studded with words like “iconic” and “pathbreaking.” The media would practically carry her from the Judiciary Committee to this floor so we could vote to confirm her, and then they would carry her across the street to her Supreme Court chambers.

But, curiously, I have noticed that is not what the media is doing—not in the least. Instead, the liberal media has published lurid insinuations and exposés about everything from Judge Barrett’s character to her Christian faith and even her adopted children. It is the Brett Kavanaugh playbook all over again.

But, thankfully, the American people see through it, just as they did the last time. For the most part, Democrats on the Judiciary Committee avoided these kinds of low, personal attacks. Perhaps they have seen the polling so they know they are playing a very weak hand.

Instead, they focused on the supposed threat that Judge Barrett will overturn ObamaCare and take away your healthcare. In fact, they focused on ObamaCare so much during Judge Barrett’s confirmation hearing, when I turned on the TV, I thought I had I tuned in to the Health Committee, not the Judiciary Committee.

But Democrats’ attacks on this policy fall just as flat as the media’s shameful stories on Judge Barrett’s character for the simple reason that Judge Barrett, as a judge, does not make policy. She is not a Senator. She is not standing for elective office. I suspect she wouldn’t want to.

Her role as a judge is to interpret and apply the law fairly and faithfully, without regard to her own beliefs and convictions.

Now, that may be a novel concept for our Democratic friends who view the judiciary as simply another means to advance their leftwing agenda, irrespective of the law and facts, but it is central to Judge Barrett’s record on the court of appeals and her judicial philosophy. Her opinions bear that out, and she has applied the law consistently without fear or favor on the Federal Bench, and, I suspect, reached a few outcomes on a personal level that she would have preferred not to, which was always Justice Scalia’s gold standard for an impartial and fair judge.

That leaves the Democrats with one final argument—nothing more than a process argument.

They say that the Republicans are moving too quickly; that we are somehow ramming Judge Barrett through the Senate, possibly, to prevent an adequate examination of her record. But, of course, this argument fails too. It fails badly.

Judge Barrett’s nomination has proceeded at a pace in line with other recent nominations.

Exactly 30 days ago she was nominated, and tomorrow she will be confirmed. That is 11 more days than the Senate deliberated on the nomination

of Justice John Paul Stevens, who was confirmed after just 19 days. It is only 12 fewer days than the Senate deliberated on the nomination of Justice Ginsburg herself. And I would note that we went through this with Judge Barrett barely 3 years ago. It had been 5 years for then-Judge Stevens. It had been 13 years for then-Judge Ginsburg.

There is not a lot of material for this Senate to have reviewed; less than 3 years of activities by Judge Barrett, fewer than 100 opinions—even a Senator can probably get through those in a couple days.

Yet the Democrats have repeatedly asked for delay after delay, though they haven’t identified any area in which they lacked adequate time to review her nomination. They haven’t identified any bit of information that they don’t already have. In fact, some of my Democratic colleagues announced their opposition to her nomination—or any nominee, for that matter—before she was even announced as the nominee.

So what do they want more time for, exactly, except to stall?

Indeed, far from being rushed, Judge Barrett’s nomination doesn’t come close to setting the record for speed. That distinction belongs to Justice James Byrnes, who was nominated to the Supreme Court in 1941 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and confirmed later that day. I guess we could have taken a page from the Democrats’ playbook by confirming Judge Barrett last month on the day she was nominated, but instead we took the same careful, consistent, deliberative approach that we took with Justice Kavanaugh and Justice Gorsuch—no shortcuts, no corners cut, no steps skipped.

So, finally, here we are on the cusp of Judge Barrett’s confirmation. As a result, the Democrats are threatening to pack the Court, but they were already threatening to pack the Court.

The Democrats are threatening, should we confirm Judge Barrett to the Supreme Court, to riot in the streets. Democrats have been rioting in the streets for months. But as the sun sets tomorrow, the Senate will gather, and all of that bluster will once again prove ineffective because Judge Barrett has earned the trust and confidence of the American people and the U.S. Senate. For that reason, Judge Barrett will be confirmed tomorrow night.

I congratulate Judge Barrett on this high honor, and I thank her family—her beloved husband Jesse and her seven beautiful children—for sharing her with America. For those seven kids especially: I know that she will always be mom to you, but I trust you won’t object if we know her as Justice.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MR. PORTMAN. Mr. President, we are in session here on a Sunday in Washington for a rare Sunday session in the U.S. Senate so that we can confirm a terrific woman to be the next Justice of the Supreme Court.

There is an open seat right now that needs to be filled, and Judge Barrett, who is currently a judge on the circuit court, one level below the Supreme Court, has really impressed me and the American people with her performance.

I had a chance to meet with her this past week, and I was already impressed but even more so, having had a chance to spend some time with her. I had been impressed with her performance at the hearing because I thought she showed great patience and calm in the face of some really tough questions. To me, that is judicial temperament, and I think that will serve her well in her new role as Justice of the Supreme Court.

I have also been impressed with her qualifications. I don't think anybody can say she is not highly qualified. In fact, the American Bar Association, which does not always look favorably at Republican appointees, was, in her last confirmation, convinced that she was highly qualified, and again, in this one, they gave her their highest qualification. That is impressive.

As has been talked about on the floor tonight, she actually has been through this process before—and pretty recently. I think less than 3 years ago she was confirmed by this same body, and it was a bipartisan vote, and it was an opportunity for people to get to know her. So this is not as though we have brought somebody forward who isn't already known, who isn't already deemed to be very well qualified. In fact, I don't know anybody in this Chamber who doesn't think that she is well qualified and that she has done a good job as a judge and a lawyer.

She graduated first in her class at Notre Dame Law School, and then she went back there and taught. She won the Teacher of the Year Award three times when she was at Notre Dame, and, most importantly to me, she is just widely respected by her colleagues. These are professors. She is also widely respected by her former students. These professors and students, by the way, are representing the entire political spectrum from very liberal to very conservative. All of them say the same thing about her, which is that she is a legal scholar, that she is highly qualified, and that she is a good person.

In our meeting I got to see some of that. I saw in our meeting that she is a great listener. People talk about active listening. She was really interested in what the topics were and had very thoughtful responses.

She is also a legal scholar who understands very clearly what the role of the Supreme Court should be in our separation of branches in our governmental

system here. I think that is really important. As I said to her in our meeting, I hope she will be an ambassador, and I think she will. In fact, I think she will be an extremely effective ambassador—as the youngest member of the Supreme Court and also as a former teacher—with regard to young people, to help them understand what it means to have a judicial branch and how it is different from the legislative branch or the executive branch for that matter. Judges are not supposed to be legislators. That is not what they are hired to do. Yet in some cases we have gotten the sense that judges ought to be deciding issues that are reserved for those who are elected by the people; that is, the legislators.

Judges have an important role, and that is to look at the laws and to look at the Constitution and to determine whether something is consistent with those. That is what she will do, and I think she will do it very fairly, with compassion and with a great understanding of the legal issues and precedent.

She explained before the committee that she was respectful of precedent. She also told me that in our meeting. I think she has the proper understanding of the role of the Court and her role as a Justice.

I am looking for the opportunity to finally vote. I guess we will do that tomorrow night, sometime in the evening, and I hope it will be a strong vote. I hope it can be even a bipartisan vote, as it was last time she was confirmed by this same body.

CORONAVIRUS

MR. PRESIDENT, while the Senate continues to work through this important process of the next Supreme Court nominee, I am also here on the floor today to remind all of us that we are still in the middle of an unprecedented healthcare and economic crisis caused by this ongoing coronavirus pandemic. I am here to express my frustration that the sense of urgency and compromise that we had for the first several months of this coronavirus seem to have disappeared as we have approached the election.

The Democratic leader today raised the seriousness of the pandemic. Something said on the other side of the aisle was that we shouldn't even be taking up a Supreme Court nominee because of the seriousness of the pandemic and the need to focus on that.

I don't understand why then, on Wednesday, the same Democratic leader and his colleagues blocked even taking action on the coronavirus or even having a debate on whether to take action because, once again, they blocked a legislative initiative to have a discussion about this issue.

By the way, it is a discussion about an issue that affects every single one of our States. Again, we are not out of the woods, so we should be not just discussing it but passing legislation on it.

The legislation that we have introduced might not be legislation that

every Democrat can support. In fact, I think there were some things that were in our bill that some Democrats might not love. But for the most part, there were bipartisan proposals that everybody can support, and all we asked for was to be able to get on the bill to have a debate. Yet we had to have 60 votes to be able to do that. That is the supermajority that is required around here, and those 60 votes could not be found, even though last Wednesday the \$500 billion package got a majority vote. There was a majority vote for this package but not the supermajority needed. It was blocked by the other side.

If we had gotten on the legislation and had the debate about what the PPP program ought to look like, how much money should be used for testing, what we should do with regard to liability protections, Democrats would have had the opportunity to put their own ideas forward, to offer their own amendments, and I would have strongly supported them in that process.

Also, some of us had some additional amendments we would like to have added and changes we would like to have seen. But, ultimately, if Democrats or Republicans found that they didn't like the final product that came out of that discussion, that debate, they would have had another chance because there would have been another 60-vote hurdle to get over before passage of the legislation.

I know this is sounding like a process issue, but it really is not. It is about doing our jobs as Senators. Both Republicans and Democrats care about this issue, yet we just can't seem to figure out how to get it unfrozen here and to be able to move forward. Having blocked, again, even having a debate on moving forward was very discouraging to me.

CORONAVIRUS

MR. PRESIDENT, the economy is still struggling. As I said, we are not out of the woods yet, particularly in the areas of hospitality, travel, and entertainment. We are not out of the woods on the virus yet, either, with many States seeing a third wave right now. That is what I would describe is happening in Ohio, my home State. I have watched the numbers every single day this week. Not only are the number of cases increasing, but the hospitalizations went up this week. The number of people in ICU went up and fatalities went up.

It is critical that this Congress provide additional relief to help the American people get through this healthcare crisis and economic fallout we have seen. We have done it before. Five times Republicans and Democrats on this floor and over in the House and working with the White House have passed coronavirus legislation—five times. In fact, most of the votes have been unanimous. It is unbelievable because here we are in this partisan atmosphere, but most of the votes have been unanimous.