If they are willing to do this to my State, they will do it to your State and every other State in the country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Democratic whip.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, they did it in a closed room. No one in the public was allowed to watch. They did it by a voice vote so that there would be no physical record of how individual Congressmen—how they voted. And they decided to remove a Member of the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives this morning in that fashion. These proud, courageous disciples of Donald Trump didn't want to be on the record publicly as to where they stood on the fate of Congresswoman CHENEY.

This is the same Congresswoman CHENEY who was reelected to leadership in the House just a few weeks ago. This is the same Congresswoman CHENEY who is one of the most ideologically conservative Members of the House. She voted with President Trump nearly 93 percent of the time while she was in office. With a name like CHENEY, it is hard to question her Republican credentials.

No, the decision, in private, in secret this morning by a voice vote, was not about a disagreement over policy but the issue as to whether or not LIZ CHENEY dares to tell the truth.

She refused to defend or ignore the big lie that the 2020 election was stolen from Donald Trump, and in today's Republican Party, it seems like that is all that is necessary for grounds for removal.

More than 6 months after the 2020 election was held, it is clear that the big lie has been spread in a big way. And that lie is not just a threat to the future of the Republican Party, it is a threat to our democracy.

Since the start of this year, Republican State legislatures, inspired by Donald Trump's big lie that the election was stolen, have introduced more than 360 bills with restrictive voting provisions in 47 States—one of the most notorious examples, the State of Georgia.

Remember, the State of Georgia—hotly contested in the 2020 election, and then the Trump troops came in and went to court over and over and over again, suggesting there was election fraud and dishonesty in the Georgia election. And the Georgia election officials, virtually all Republicans, stood up and said it was an honest election, a close one, but it was an honest election. They were challenged over and over again, to the point where the former President of the United States, while he was still in power, called an election official in Georgia and basically threatened him; that if he didn't change the votes and give President Trump what he thought he needed to win, he would pay a price for it. It went that far.

To his credit, this election official stood up and said: The results are accurate and I stand by them and I am not going to change it.

It went that far.

And there was a big turnout in Georgia. In fact, there was an amazing turnout in the runoff elections for the two Senate seats won by JON OSSOFF and RAPHAEL WARNOCK, our colleagues here in the U.S. Senate. So even with that big turnout and even with the certainty that that election was honest from start to finish, the Georgia Legislature decided to change the laws for voting in Georgia. It wasn't volume they were looking for; it was loyalty. They wanted to make sure that the voters in the future would be friendlier to the Republicans.

And so they changed the Georgia election law and made it harder for people, particularly people of color, young people, the elderly, and people of limited means, to vote. That law—that Georgia voting law—represents a blatantly political effort to subvert our democratic process.

Republicans of conscience know this, but it seems there is no future for those Republicans, if we reflect on the vote taken this morning in the House of Representatives Republican caucus. LIZ CHENEY's expulsion from her role in the Republican conference is just the latest example of what happens to Republican officials who dare to speak the truth about the 2020 election. They are not only silenced, they are purged from the party ranks.

Our own colleague Senator MITT ROMNEY, not long ago a Republican candidate for President of the United States, was just censured by a Republican county organization in his State because he refuses to support the big lie of Donald Trump. The unfortunate reality is that, today, the loudest voices within the Republican Party have joined Donald Trump in declaring war on the basics of our democracy.

That is why we in Congress need to do something. Immediately. This week, the Rules Committee held a markup on a measure that would combat voter suppression and protect our democratic process. It is known as the For the People Act.

This is a democracy defense plan. It will ensure that all eligible Americans can exercise their constitutional right to vote without facing burdensome barriers at the ballot box. The For the People Act invests in election infrastructure, provides State and local officials with resources to run safe, secure elections.

In addition to combating voter suppression, the bill also reforms a broken campaign finance system that gives wealthy donors and big corporations far too much influence over our electoral process. By passing it, we will say, loud and clear, that America's elections are not for sale to the highest bidder. Above all, this legislation will strengthen the integrity of our democratic process and put more power in the hands of the people.

Now, I know some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are attacking the bill as a ''takeover'' of the Nation's election system. The truth is, American elections have already been taken over by special interests. This bill will start to restore our democracy and make it more accessible to every eligible American.

I would love to know what my Republican colleagues find so objectionable about the legislation's core provisions. Listen, it automatically registers American voters when they get a driver's license; it guarantees at least 15 days of early voting; ends partisan gerrymandering nationwide; and brings greater transparency to the campaign finance system. These are reforms that will make our democracy whole again, and they are desperately needed, particularly at this moment in our history because in the world's greatest democracy, people shouldn't have to wait in line for hours on end to have their voices heard. And yet that is the reality for voters in States just like Georgia. And it is not an accident; it is intentional. Look at the people standing in the lines, and you can understand why they are being discouraged from voting by waiting so long.

Let's be honest about these restrictive voting provisions being passed in State legislatures across the country, because they are grounded in one lie after another. The truth is that President Trump's own officials at the Department of Homeland Security declared that the 2020 election was the most secure election in American history.

The truth is, judges across the country, including many appointed by President Donald Trump, threw out more than 63 lawsuits that his followers filed, challenging the results of last year's elections. Why? There was no evidence, no basis in fact for the big lie.

But the truth is, the big lie won't just die with the 2020 election. It will sow distrust in our electoral system for years to come, unless my Republican colleagues act with courage. A few have done so. This morning, one paid a heavy price.

The question to all of us is: Are we prepared to either discredit democracy or defend it?

Rejecting the big lie is the defense of our democratic process. We have to join together in making certain that every American's right to vote is protected.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES WEEK

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, our Nation just concluded National Correctional Officers and Employees Week. Because the Senate was not in session last week, I want to take this opportunity to recognize these heroes and everything they do to protect our people and uphold the rule of law.

Every day, correctional officers go in to work to guard and operate our Federal prisons, State prisons, and local jails. They not only administer justice on behalf of innocent victims, but they also defend the guilty from unjust adversity.

They combat the drug trade so that addicts can recover. They fight back against vicious prison gangs so that inmates can have a chance to find redemption instead of recidivism. They confront the most violent offenders so that persons with short minimum-security prison sentences don't turn out to have what is a death sentence.

Without safety, security, and structure, our prisons and our jails would devolve into anarchy, into chaos, and crime. Correctional officers combat these forces of disorder so that these facilities can instead be centers of self-improvement and, indeed, correction. As a result, many inmates are able to pursue education, learn marketable skills, and find solace in God.

The profession of a correctional officer is both noble and very dangerous. Fewer than 450,000 correctional officers protect and police approximately 1.5 million inmates in a normal year, around the clock, every minute of every day.

Riots, jailbreak attempts, and targeted anti-police violence are common and result in particularly high-risk situations for correctional officers. In a 9-year period measured by the National Institutes of Health, correctional officers suffered over 125,000 work-related injuries and 113 tragically lost their lives.

Correctional officers willingly endure this danger, suffer these injuries, and sometimes give their lives so that our families, neighborhoods, and communities can be safe. The least we can do is to recognize their sacrifice and express our gratitude.

This year, our correctional officers did even more than usual. For the past 14 months, they have worked tirelessly to keep our inmates healthy in the middle of this global pandemic. They shifted normal confinement arrangements, and they maintained order among the population under enhanced stress due to coronavirus protocols.

Correctional officers have done an amazing job and saved so many lives during this crisis. Sadly, some even paid the ultimate price for their work. They should be proud of their work, and we ought to be proud of them. So from the floor of the U.S. Senate, I certainly can say I am proud of our correctional officers.

But our Nation should go beyond gratitude. We ought to give correctional officers the funding, the wages, the equipment, the facilities, and the support that they need.

To start, Congress can finally crack down on contraband cell phones. Inmates use them to maintain their criminal enterprises from behind bars and to terrorize those who put them there. They also use them to victimize other inmates and to prey upon random victims outside prison walls. In other words, prisoners use these cell phones to undermine the life's work of correctional officers.

Contraband cell phones are even used as tools of retribution against the officers themselves. In 2010, a gang member imprisoned in South Carolina used a contraband cell phone to order the murder of Captain Robert Johnson. Captain Johnson was then mercilessly shot six times in the chest and stomach in his own house. Remarkably, he survived the attack, and he is now a leading advocate for taking action against contraband cell phones.

Regrettably, the use of contraband cell phones shows no sign of slowing. On the contrary, they are becoming ubiquitous weapons inside of our prisons. While available technologies can be helpful, it is also increasingly clear they are not capable of solving the problem alone. So that is why I will soon be reintroducing my Cell Phone Jamming Reform Act. This bill would empower State prisons to install jamming technology and turn contraband cell phones into nothing but useless paper weights. This easy and commonsense step will honor the hard work of correctional officers to clean up our streets and to keep our Nation safe.

The men and women of this country—law-abiding citizens and those who serve their time alike—owe a debt to our Nation's correctional officers. So I, once again, want to thank them for their courageous and diligent service. And I hope they took time last week to celebrate National Correctional Officers and Employees Week because they certainly deserved it.

ABORTION

Mr. President, a few years ago, mainstream news articles trumpeted, supposedly, stunning news out of Scandinavia: Iceland was close to eliminating Down syndrome. Eureka. Fantastic.

How is it possible? Have these Icelandic scientists discovered some amazing and miraculous new gene therapy? No, they hadn't because Iceland wasn't eliminating Down syndrome. Iceland was eliminating babies with Down syndrome using prenatal testing to identify genetic anomalies and then aborting the babies that had those anomalies.

According to one Icelandic genetic counselor—and this is a direct quote. I am not making it up. You might think I am.

We don't look at abortion as murder. We look at it as a thing that we ended.

Imagine, how ghoulish that is. That is what this counselor and some like him believe, that a baby is just a ''thing.'' But if they are honest with themselves, I think if they look into their hearts, they know the truth: Babies with Down syndrome aren't just ''things.'' They are living human beings of inestimable value who are loved by their Creator, even if they aren't protected by the law or valued by too many in society.

Sadly, Iceland is no exception. In many parts of the world, a Down syndrome diagnosis is tantamount to a death sentence. And while in America, thankfully, we are more welcoming, sadly, we still terminate roughly two-thirds of babies diagnosed with this genetic condition. That needs to change.

A civilized nation has a responsibility to protect our most vulnerable people, and that means we have an obligation, especially, to protect unborn babies with Down syndrome.

My home State of Arkansas passed a law to do just that—to make it illegal for an abortionist to perform an abortion if they know it is motivated solely by a Down syndrome diagnosis. You would think this law would be uncontroversial. You would think a country that cares about ending discrimination against people with disabilities would leap at the chance to outlaw a particularly evil and final form of discrimination. After all, this Congress has taken many steps in recent years to protect those with disabilities. But, no, you would be wrong. That is not what happened. The abortion lobby kicked into high gear and got a liberal judge to block Arkansas' pro-life law from going into effect.

The pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute denounced laws to protect babies with Down syndrome as ''dangerous and coercive.'' Now, this should not be surprising coming from the Guttmacher Institute. After all, it is named after a former leader of the American Eugenics Society, as so many abortion advocates can also trace their lineage to the dark, so-called science of eugenics of early last century.

These modern-day eugenicists and a few liberal activist judges are putting babies with Down syndrome at grave risk every day. These babies can find no refuge under the laws of many of our States and our Nation.

But, thankfully, that may be changing. The State of Arkansas is fighting to save its pro-life law in court, and tomorrow, I and Representative ASHLEY HINSON, along with many of my colleagues in Congress, will submit an amicus brief urging the court to protect these most innocent and vulnerable young babies. Time will only tell if the courts will hear these pleas.