

based missile defense as negotiable items that could be traded away in exchange for Moscow's good will. Remember how he mocked Republicans—perhaps most notably our colleague Senator ROMNEY—who dared to suggest that we ought to take the threat of Russia seriously. Remember the cuts to defense spending. Remember the dithering over whether to provide meaningful capabilities to Ukraine when Putin first invaded and how useless our blankets and MREs were against Russian armor and Moscow-trained little green men.

This weakness didn't purchase a reset; it produced a more emboldened Russia, willing to engage in more repression at home and more aggression abroad.

And here we are today. Vladimir Putin is gearing up to escalate his violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. And if the free world doesn't object, there is no reason to assume he will stop there.

So, tomorrow, President Biden has both the opportunity and the responsibility to tell Russia and Ukraine and our allies in Europe that the United States cares about sovereign borders and will help its friends protect them. If the free world is serious, its leaders—first and foremost, the President of the United States—will leave Putin no room to doubt that Ukraine's sovereignty is inviolable. And, by extension, they will signal to Chairman Xi that similar prospecting in the Pacific will come with prohibitive costs.

If our leaders do not defend a fundamental tenet of international order, we cannot be surprised by the chaos that will follow. So if President Biden is serious, he will convince Germany's new government to abandon the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline and, instead, try to reduce its dependence on resources that enrich Putin and his cronies and give Moscow leverage over Europe.

If the President intends to learn from the past and actually help Ukraine defend itself, he should expeditiously provide weapon systems that will materially help Ukraine defend itself against air threats.

Finally, for the United States to lead the world's response to authoritarian aggression, I hope President Biden will call on our allies to do more to contribute to our collective security. In Europe, NATO member states must treat their own military modernization as a top priority. And in the Indo-Pacific, our friends in Taiwan and elsewhere must commit the resources, training, and reforms needed to help them face down their own looming threats.

Tomorrow's call must mark a turning point for the Biden administration's approach to major power competition from one where words are pinned on hopes to one where its words are literally backed by strength.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

REMEMBERING ROBERT J. DOLE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I learned this morning about the passing

of Senator Robert Dole. What an extraordinary person he was.

It was not my good fortune to serve with him in the U.S. Senate, but as a Member of the House of Representatives, I knew his work.

(Ms. DUCKWORTH assumed the Chair.)

I can remember when we enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act. Tom Harkin was our leader on the Democratic side. He had a member of his family who suffered a disability, and Tom was always sensitive to that. But Bob Dole's leadership on the other side, from the Republican side, made a remarkable difference because we knew that Bob Dole was not speaking about disability as some other person's experience but, frankly, his own.

I don't know what measure of courage Bob Dole showed before he served the United States in World War II, but we all knew that experience led him to a battleground injury, which he carried the rest of his life. It was amazing to me that he kept his public life so active despite the limitations that he faced. His loss of use of one arm put him in a position where he was compromised in many ways every single day. Yet he soldiered on, literally, to serve his Nation, not only in the Armed Forces but also in the U.S. Senate to pass legislation, major legislation like the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is remarkable that he lived as long as he did and faced the injuries that he did.

I would say, Madam President, you know better than most what we are speaking of with Senator Dole's contribution to his country and the battle he continued to wager the rest of his life.

I respect him so much and hope the Senate will just pause for a moment to not only reflect on him, Elizabeth Dole, and his family but also on the fact that his bipartisanship made the difference in the lives of ordinary Americans. He was willing to sit down with the party on the other side of the aisle, compromise, and be determined to get things done. Shouldn't we do the same in his honor? I think we should.

SCHOOL BOARD VIOLENCE

Madam President, it was about 2 months ago there was an uproar in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Hardly a day would pass, hardly a Republican Senator would take the committee dais and speak and not raise their mock horror and outrage over a decision by the Department of Justice under President Biden to notify school boards and school board members and teachers across the United States that we would not tolerate violence against them for their public duties.

Merrick Garland, as Attorney General, volunteered to work with State and local law enforcement to make certain that members of the school board, teachers, administrators—all of them—would be safe in the execution of their duties, and none of them should fear violence.

You wouldn't have believed the reaction from the Republican side of the dais in the Judiciary Committee. They came in and said that this is just an effort by the Biden administration to suppress free speech, to stop people who show up at school board meetings from expressing themselves. Well, we repeated over and over again it wasn't expression of speech we were worried about, it was violence and every form of it that the Department of Justice was responding to, they wouldn't hear of it. They refused to acknowledge the very real reality across the United States, and even in our State of Illinois, when it comes to violence against school board members.

The Members of this Senate share something in common. At some point in our lives, we heard the call to public service. It may have come in the form of a law we wanted to change or a passion for serving our communities back home. But for some, the greatest call to public service is to help children, the desire to do what you can, inch by inch, day by day, to leave a better world for the kids.

That is one of the reasons that Carolyn Waibel, a mother from my home State of Illinois, decided to put her name on the ballot to run in a local school board election. She wanted to serve her community and advocate for the safety and well-being of every child in St. Charles, IL, a suburb near Chicago. Sadly, Carolyn Waibel's career as a public servant was cut short. And it is not because she had any change of heart. It was because she feared for her family's safety.

Trouble began last summer. Carolyn started receiving threatening emails because of her views on mask requirements and in-person learning. At first, she brushed them off and said she would ignore them. She figured harsh feedback was just part of being a public servant. But then she started receiving messages that read: "Your days are numbered."

This mother, school board member—a non-paying job—was having her life threatened.

Then she started to receive other messages, and other events occurred. Soon enough, her personal information was spread out online, and her home became a target. Carolyn started discovering dead rodents thrown in her driveway. At one point, a trespasser cut the wires on the air-conditioning unit to her home.

Then came the final straw: Carolyn actually heard someone sneak onto her property, cut the cord to her refrigerator, and open the door to her laundry room.

Following months of harassment, Carolyn resigned from her district's school board in October. In explaining her decision to one news outlet, she said: "I had to put the safety of myself and [my] family first."

She said: Even though I have resigned, I am still receiving threats.

Carolyn is far from the only school official who has feared for her safety in

recent months. I commend her situation to my Republican colleagues who were so critical of the Attorney General for even raising the possibility of violence against school board members.

All throughout the country, school board members, teachers, and other officials have reported harassment, intimidation, and even assaults.

In Pennsylvania, one school board president received a deluge of threatening emails, voice mails, and social media posts because of the district's COVID policies. Some of the messages threatened her life, while others threatened to share her personal information with the world.

Down in Florida, a school board member received death threats because she chaperoned a parent-approved field trip to an LGBTQ-friendly restaurant. She received threatening letters and phone calls from all over the United States.

In Ohio, a school board member received a letter that read: "We're coming after you."

After she shared the letter online, a public school official in a neighboring district said the members of his board had received similar threats.

The list goes on and on. Just type "school board violence" into your favorite search engine and look for yourself.

These threats against school officials are widespread and serious. A recent report from EdWeek Research Center found that 60 percent of the principals and district leaders they surveyed said "someone in their district had been verbally or physically threatened in the past year" because of the district's response to COVID-19. One in three of the officials surveyed said the school board members, even their nurses, had faced similar threats.

Now, I understand the pandemic has caused great concern and confusion for parents, especially parents of young kids. It is a new challenge for all of us, and there are no simple or straightforward answers in keeping our schools open and safe.

It is every parent's right to voice their disagreements with the members of their school board. And it is only natural that at times, emotions may run high, that is part of open debate in a free society. But there is a difference—a clear difference—which we should never overlook between free speech and threats of violence. We need to be unequivocal in drawing that line.

I salute the Attorney General for making it clear that he was willing to stand up and defend those school board members who were subjected to harassment, intimidation, and even violence. These people work for no pay. Many of them are parents themselves. They are not part of some shadowy organization or conspiracy. They are our neighbors. They deserve to be safe, just as we all do.

The unprecedented rise in threats against school board members and pub-

lic school officials should not be taken lightly or politicized. There have already been too many instances of officials being assaulted. Law enforcement agencies have a responsibility to take these reports seriously, and that is exactly what the FBI is doing by tracking reports of violence and threats of violence against school officials. Keeping track of those incidents and those involved in them will save lives. It will enable State and local law enforcement to develop tailored strategies to keep communities safe.

As part of these efforts, Attorney General Garland issued a memo on October 4 encouraging Justice Department officials to reach out to members of law enforcement to see if we could assist. This outreach is an integral part of the Department of Justice's responsibility. I am thankful these conversations are underway.

Instead of condemning violence, some of our Republican colleagues have been railing against the Justice Department for even suggesting there is a possibility. Why? Do they believe these incidents of violence and threats are acceptable, that they shouldn't be taken seriously? I don't believe that.

During the pandemic, there has been a troubling and growing trend of violent behavior in all spheres of public life. Everyone from flight attendants to election workers and—yes—school board officials has been harassed and assaulted.

More than four in five flight attendants report they have had to deal with an unruly passenger during the first half of the year. As a frequent passenger on airlines, I have heard the announcements they make to try to let people know how serious this issue is and that it is going to be taken seriously.

In a moment of danger, these workers and public servants are vulnerable. That is why the Department of Justice has to do its job.

Here in the Senate, we should be united as well in saying violence and the threat of violence have no place in public life, whether in a Federal building, on an airplane, or in a school board meeting in St. Charles, IL. When parents like Carolyn Waibel are harassed to the point of fearing for their family's safety, we need to at least have the common sense and common courage to speak up. We need to support members of law enforcement who are doing everything they can to protect all of our families. Among our many freedoms as Americans is the freedom to live without fear. Let's defend that right together.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

REMEMBERING ROBERT J. DOLE

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, it is an honor to be here this afternoon to address my colleagues of the U.S. Senate, and it is an honor that you sit in the Chair as I do so, as I pay tribute to the Honorable Senator Bob Dole.

I was in church on Sunday. I got out of church—it is Advent; Christians are preparing for Christmas—only to learn that during that church service, Bob Dole had died. It has been the topic of conversation by Kansans ever since—not that kind of curiosity conversation that sometimes you have when someone passes away but that deep respect, that concern, that care, that appreciation for a life well-lived.

Senator Dole grew up down the road from where I grew up. I remember kind of the earliest conversation with my own dad about World War II experiences was that Bina Dole, Bob Dole's mother, as well as my grandmother were on party lines, and the conversation between my grandmother and Mrs. Dole was the terrible circumstance that her son Bob Dole had experienced in the battlefields of Italy.

My dad, who served in World War II and served in northern Africa, Italy, was in the neighborhood, and the request of one neighbor to another, one party line participant to another: Do you think there is any way that Ray could find out how Bob is doing?

So my earliest recollection, my earliest understanding of the life of Bob Dole was as a soldier, a member of the Army, a person who served in World War II and was horrifically injured. My view is—and I don't know this, but having known Bob Dole and having seen the consequences of his life, what I think is true is that that experience, the near-death experience, the expectation not to survive, and the long road to recovery created in Bob Dole, in his mind and heart, a different circumstance and a different result than if that never happened.

People talk about Bob Dole's life as a Member of Congress. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1960. I was asked over the weekend: When did you meet Bob Dole? And I can't remember the first instance, but he was my Congressman. I was engaged in Republican politics as a teenager, and Bob Dole was always there at every gathering. And so I grew up in politics around him, but never with the—other than the sense that this is somebody we really respect.

In 1968, Congressman Bob Dole became Senator Bob Dole and his life in this body and his life in the House of Representatives culminated in amazing achievements on the legislative battlefield.

But when people ask me, "What do you remember or what made Bob Dole Bob Dole?" my view is his service to America in World War II. I think it made him more aware of people who were struggling, people who had disabilities. I think he saw the challenges that people from across the country faced as a result of their service. He saw the challenges that people in foreign countries experienced in World War II.

And when we look at his legislative achievements, we often think—at least I think of three—Americans with Disabilities Act; food aid—what I call the