

been historically disenfranchised. That response is toxic to democracy and, indeed, is the very opposite of democracy.

Make no mistake, these despicable, discriminatory, anti-democratic proposals are on the move in State legislatures throughout America. They must be opposed by every American—Democrat, Republican, Independent; liberal, conservative, moderate—who cherishes our democracy.

This is just incredible what they are trying to do—incredible. We must do everything we can to stop it.

#### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 461 AND S.J. RES. 9

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I understand there are two measures at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The leader is correct.

The clerk will read the bills by title en bloc for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 461) to create a point of order against legislation modifying the number of Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States.

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 9) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to require that the Supreme Court of the United States be composed of nine justices.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection being heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### KENTUCKY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, once again, our communities across my home State of Kentucky are enduring the aftermath of severe—very severe—weather. From east to west, heavy rains have drenched the Commonwealth. Sadly, some of the hardest hit areas were still in the midst of trying to recover from last month's dangerous ice and snow. Emergency crews, first responders, and now the Kentucky National Guard are continuing to work around the clock to prevent this bad situation from becoming entirely tragic.

An entire nursing home in Magoffin County was evacuated as a safety precaution. Feet of water submerged vehicles and caused power outages in Calloway County.

Wolfe County firefighters followed the light of a cell phone and saved a

family of five who had been trapped in their car.

Once again, Kentucky's brave first responders are stepping up at a time of need. We are all grateful for their dedicated efforts and praying for their safety.

All Kentuckians can help the first responders by continuing to follow the recommendations of local emergency personnel. My team and I are closely monitoring the situation, and we will be ready to assist however we can.

#### AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. On another matter, at about 2 a.m. on Saturday morning, House Democrats rammed through the bonanza of partisan spending they are calling a pandemic rescue package. Only Democrats voted for it. Both Republicans and Democrats voted against it.

Last year, under a Republican Senate and a Republican administration, Congress passed five historic coronavirus relief bills—five of them. Not one of the five bills got fewer than 90 votes in the Senate or less than about 80 percent over in the House.

Ah, but alas, this time Democrats have chosen to go a completely partisan route. Even famous liberal economists and liberal editorial boards are saying their half-baked plan is poorly targeted to what families needed.

We have gone from passing public relief with 80 percent and 90 percent bipartisan supermajorities last year to the Speaker of the House ramming this through with just 50.7 percent of the House on Friday night. The bill contains all kinds of liberal spending on pet projects with no relationship whatsoever to pandemic relief.

Remember, we are almost to the 1-year anniversary of a leading House Democrat admitting they see this whole crisis as “a tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision.”

So, sorry to all the American families who have just been hoping to get their jobs back, their schools back, and their lives back. Democrats are more interested in some restructuring. That is why only 1 percent—1 percent—of this huge package goes directly to vaccinations—1 percent for vaccinations. That is why it proposes another 12-digit sum of Federal funding for K-12 schools, even though science shows those schools can be made safe right now. About 95 percent of that funding won't even go out this fiscal year. Ninety-five percent of the school funding in this bill won't go out this year. And this is an emergency package?

That is why they are pushing economic policies that would drag down our recovery—like the House's vote for a one-size-fits-all minimum wage policy that would kill 1.4 million jobs or continuing to pay laid-off workers a premium to stay home that would extend well into a recovery where job growth and rehiring will be pivotal.

Whenever their long-term liberal dreams came into conflict with what Americans actually need right now, Democrats decided their ideology should win out.

Well, it doesn't have to be this way. We could have built more practical policies to help the American people move forward. Some Senate Republicans literally went down to the White House and proposed that both sides work together, like we did five times last year. The administration declined. So this is where we are: a bad process, a bad bill, and a missed opportunity to do right by working families.

#### FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, on one final matter, last weekend brought disconcerting headlines for the supporters of freedom and democracy in Asia. In Burma the military junta's month-long coup turned bloody. Eighteen protesters have been murdered and at least a thousand civilian officials have been imprisoned on farcical grounds.

In Hong Kong, China's puppet regime arrested 47 democracy advocates, including some who helped draw millions to the streets in peaceful protests in 2019, and are now holding them without bail.

Unfortunately, in both places, this sort of repression has become a familiar part of life, and it could be a dark preview of developments elsewhere if the free world does not act.

Even as Burma's civilian government made history in 2015, the military made clear it would keep using cronyism and constitutional manipulation to obstruct real popular control. In last year's election, the people overwhelmingly demanded true democracy and economic transparency, but that also raised the risk for those working publicly to make permanent reforms.

The military's detention spree has hit Burma's civilian leaders, including people like Mya Aye, a longtime Muslim pro-democracy leader. It has also swept up some of the brightest economic reformers working to fight corruption and grow prosperity—brave men like Bo Bo Nge, who spent years locked away in Burma's Insein prison in the 1980s and 1990s, built a successful life abroad, and returned to help the civilian government craft economic reforms.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that this Washington Post article detailing Bo Bo Nge's story be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, March 1, 2021]

AN AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY IS LOST IN MYANMAR'S COUP

(By Shibani Mahtani)

HONG KONG.—Bo Bo Nge's path typified that of his generation's brightest and bravest: Jailed as a student for protesting Myanmar's military regime in 1988, he spent years learning English from dictionary pages

smuggled into his Yangon cell. After his release and continued persecution, he fled to the United States.

He made a new life, rising from dishwasher to an economist with a six-figure salary. But his heart never left Myanmar, and armed with a Ph.D., he returned home as a democratic transition took hold, leading to his appointment in 2017 as deputy governor of the central bank—where he served alongside others who fought for democracy three decades earlier.

Just after dawn on Feb. 1, five soldiers appeared at Bo Bo Nge's home in Myanmar's capital, Naypyidaw, and demanded he come with them, according to his wife. She and his friends have not heard from him since.

Bo Bo Nge's fate, along with that of other intellectuals, lawyers and young leaders detained in the military coup that deposed Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government, once again epitomizes dashed hopes for a better future in Myanmar. These reformers and technocrats, whose skills and experience helped salvage the country's antiquated financial system in recent years, are now silenced and subject to the whims of isolationist generals.

In Myanmar coup, grievance and ambition drove military chiefs power grab.

At the same time, Myanmar's security forces are cracking down on protesters, killing 18 on Sunday. More than 1,130 people, including Bo Bo Nge, have been arrested since the coup.

His predicament is made more urgent by his health issues and the fragile state of Myanmar's economy, already battered by the coronavirus pandemic. Banks have closed their doors as hundreds of thousands of people, including tellers, resist the coup by refusing to go to work, pushing the economic system closer to collapse. The few military-linked banks that remain open have restricted customer numbers, while the central bank is limiting withdrawals across financial institutions, raising fears of a cash shortage.

"When someone like Bo Bo arrived back in Myanmar, it was like a bottle of water to a person in the desert," said Ba Win, a former provost of Bard College at Simon's Rock, who helped Bo Bo Nge move to the United States. Bo Bo Nge, he added, "had the intellectual training and discipline to look at economic issues in a way that transcended parochial political interests."

In an interview with *Frontier* magazine, Win Thaw, the military's chosen replacement for Bo Bo Nge, accused protesters and those participating in the civil disobedience movement of "destroying their own country's economy."

"Policies differ from one government to another, but they should have a common goal, which is to develop the country and not trouble the people," he said. The military government, he added, is "doing their best."

Bo Bo Nge's first stint in detention was at Yangon's Insein prison, where he served more than four years for participating in the 1988 pro-democracy uprising, which the military regime brutally crushed. The sprawling complex is one of the city's most visible landmarks, where behind towering metal gates prisoners were subjected to torture and other inhumane treatment. There, Bo Bo Nge's health began to deteriorate, and his teeth rotted from neglect, friends and family say.

Locked up alongside academics and intellectuals, he was exposed to lofty conversations about history, economics and philosophy. He and his fellow prisoners would bury smuggled English dictionary pages under the muddy floors of their cells, studying them furiously when guards were not around. By the time he was released in 1993, Bo Bo Nge

was fluent, and after a stint exporting taro stems harvested from Myanmar's Inle Lake to South Korea, he moved to America's lush, mountainous Berkshires, where he attended community college.

"He was immediately helpful, kind and so good-natured," said Marion Lathrop, 84, who hosted Bo Bo Nge with her husband, Don, then a professor at Berkshire Community College. "It was kind of hard to grasp the fact that someone with that nature could have gone through that kind of ordeal."

Immediately, friends said, Bo Bo Nge got down to business, acquiring a driver's license and a car to drive between his odd jobs and college. In 2001, two years after his arrival, he won a scholarship to Bard College, and after graduation, he pursued a master's degree in economics at Johns Hopkins University.

Through those years, he maintained a long-distance love with his future wife, Hnin Wai Lwin, better known by her nickname Me Kyi, whom he met on Inle Lake at her shop where she sold trinkets under a famed pagoda. Their international calls were a source of entertainment for her village—where residents could listen in on a central broadcast as phones were scarce—before she joined him in Massachusetts seven years after his departure, according to several friends.

His first job was at a subsidiary of the American Institute of Economic Research, where he eventually earned six figures—epitomizing the American immigrant success story. Colleagues were "immediately struck by his brilliance," said Seth Hoffman, now vice president of that subsidiary, American Investment Services.

"Given his particular skill set, Bo Bo could have gone on, if he was reoriented in a different direction, to be on a bond desk in a major investment bank," Hoffman said. "He could have had a more comfortable life."

But Bo Bo Nge, heartened by a hopeful yet uncertain military-led transition to democracy that began in 2010, wanted to do "something more than make money," according to Ba Win. Inspired by a conversation the two had about a lack of skilled leaders in Myanmar—the military shuttered its best universities after the 1988 uprising and reopened them only in 2014—Bo Bo Nge pursued a doctorate at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, where Suu Kyi was a research student in the 1980s.

When he went back to join the government as deputy central bank governor in 2017, the military had ceded some control to a civilian leadership and the economy was making great strides. Poverty had been halved from a decade prior, growth was picking up, and reformists were driving policy changes, keeping down inflation and modernizing the central bank. In the recent coup, several of Suu Kyi's leading economic advisers were detained, including Australian economist Sean Turnell, and Min Ye Paing Hein, a former World Bank economist who was the deputy industry minister. None have been heard from since they were taken by authorities.

As the military tightens its hold on power and the prospect of reconciliation grows dim, the European Union and other Western countries are readying sanctions against Myanmar's generals and their economic interests, following moves by the United States.

A general strike on Feb. 22, meanwhile, added momentum to Myanmar's civil disobedience movement. Many taking part in the resistance say sacrificing the economy is their only way to bring down the junta and achieve democracy.

Zaw Zaw, a 41-year-old garment factory owner in Yangon, said he sold an apartment and his car to support those who are forgoing a paycheck to participate in acts of disobe-

dience against military rule. Soon he will run out of things to sell, he admits, but says he will do anything to keep the resistance afloat.

"The country's economy was already in danger" before the coup, he said. "Whether or not the generals hold an election in a year as promised, the economy will collapse anyway. So it is worthwhile to sacrifice everything to bring them down."

Since her husband was taken on Feb. 1, Hnin Wai Lwin has had trouble sleeping and has lost her appetite. Memories of basic facts—when they arrived in the United States, her husband's age—are fading or have become confused. She has moved back to Shan state up north, away from the military-run capital, Naypyidaw, for her safety and that of their 5-year old son, who she said is always asking for his father, unable to comprehend what has happened.

She cannot stop thinking about the health of her husband, who is in his 50s, and whether he has run out of the limited supply of medicines she packed in a bag before he left with the soldiers. In an interview, she said Bo Bo Nge was suffering from gastrointestinal disease and hypertension, for which he needs medical treatment.

"I am also not in good health, and we are not together," she said. "I am very sorry. We should be together, whatever the circumstance."

Kyaw Ye Lynn in Yangon contributed to this report.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, even foreign nationals have been subjected to unjustified detention. The world is closely watching the case of Sean Turnell, an Australian scholar who has spent years helping Burma's civilian leaders unlock its economic potential.

The administration has been right to condemn the junta and to consult with Congress on an appropriate response. But as Burma's protesters begin to pay the ultimate price for speaking out, the United States must make it clear that military and police officials will face crippling costs of their own. This should include the military-owned holding companies, which have deep roots in Burma's economy. It is time to lead an international effort to support the people of Burma.

It is also time to strengthen our calls for an international response to China's shameless human rights abuses, beginning with Hong Kong. Another round of arrests in the last several days has sent a new wave of student activists to prison with no due process. They join veteran pro-democracy performers like my friends Martin Lee and Jimmy Lai, who were already rounded up.

The United States cannot outsource our moral authority in championing democracy around the world. When we stay silent, the voice of the international community is channeled through forums where the most notorious human rights abusers preside over their own trials.

The ironically named U.N. Human Rights Council boasts a membership including such paragons of virtue as the Russian Federation, which has begun sending residents to prison for non-state-sanctioned religious beliefs; and Venezuela, whose rap sheet the

State Department spells out as “arbitrary detention,” “forced disappearances,” and “extrajudicial killings”; and Cuba, whose government exports repressive tools to countries like Venezuela; and, of course, the People’s Republic of China itself, where the hypocrisy stretches from repression in Hong Kong to internment and torture of the Uighur people in Xinjiang.

The Biden administration has advertised a foreign policy focused on human rights and democracy and quite publicly announced its intention to rejoin the U.N. Human Rights Council. Fine, let Burma and Hong Kong and Xinjiang and Belarus be tests of this administration’s approach to the council. But the White House must not put much trust into this corrupted institution. We should be uniting like-minded democracies around actions that the United Nations panels are either unwilling or unable to take. With respect to Hong Kong, the prior administration took several concrete steps, from closing PRC investment loopholes in Hong Kong to opposing targeted sanctions.

Now is the time for the Biden administration to show its resolve as it confronts serious tests of its own.

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. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I rise today to speak on the Senate floor for the first time as a U.S. Senator from the great State of Alabama.

I want to share some thoughts on how we can work together as a team to improve the lives of our constituents and to provide more opportunity for the next generation of Americans, but before I begin, I want to take a moment to thank the people of Alabama.

For the last 2 years, I have traveled the State, from Mobile to Muscle Shoals, from the Wiregrass to Lake Guntersville, and many places in between. I talked to folks from all walks of life. Mostly, I listened, which is something we can all do better. I listened to people’s hopes, and I listened to their concerns. I heard what they thought was going right in our country and State and what they thought was going wrong, and even after being a football coach my entire career, working day and night, running for the Senate was still the hardest thing I have ever done, but I enjoyed every minute.

In the end, I asked the people of Alabama to trust me with the responsibility of representing them here in Washington, and they did. It is humbling. It is an opportunity to serve my country that I respect, cherish, and

will always honor. My staff and I will work hard every day to live up to that trust.

Like the Presiding Officer, my constituents sent me to Washington to represent them and to help make their lives better. I recognize we all have our differences, but we are all on the same team. We have got an offense and a defense, but at the end of the day, we are still on the same team. One of the things we can do together as a team is to create more opportunity for more people. In my view, that starts with education.

I have been an educator, a coach, and a mentor to young people for 40 years. I recruited 18- to 19-year-olds from all over the country and all walks of life. I saw how they lived. I was a father figure to hundreds of young men who had one or no parents. I coached young people from all backgrounds—rich, poor, and everybody in between. I mentored young people of all races, religions, and economic backgrounds.

As someone who has had a chance to travel across the country and this globe for my career, I have seen how other people live. One thing I have learned is that education is the key to freedom—the key to freedom—the freedom to live the life you want. I have seen firsthand how education can give you a leg up and a way out. It is a way to achieve the American dream. When we empower our young people with a quality education, we give them the gift of an opportunity, the greatest gift our country can give our citizens. And what I found out as a coach is that, when people are given an opportunity to better themselves, they usually take it.

I think I can safely say I have been in more public schools than any Senator ever. Too often, I have found that we are failing our young people by not providing the quality education they deserve. It is not about money; it is about people; it is about what we value and what we teach. Improving education in this country should be one of the, if not the top, priorities we have. That is why I am proud to be a new member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. On the HELP Committee, we need to work together as a team to do three things.

First, we need to recognize that parents and teachers know how to best educate our young people in their communities because we are all different. The Federal Government does not need to tell parents in Alabama how to teach their kids. We don’t need a one-size-fits-all education curriculum. What works in San Francisco will not necessarily work in Scottsboro, AL.

Second, we should recognize that education takes many forms. Not every student in America needs to go to a 4-year college or university. To ensure our country remains competitive in the 21st century, we need to promote STEM education to those students who have an interest in math and science,

but to remain strong, this country also needs welders, plumbers, nurses, equipment operators, electricians, and craftsmen. These are jobs that have excellent pay and great futures. If the Democrats want to pass a massive infrastructure bill, they need to first ask: Who is going to build it? That is why I will be looking for any opportunity to support career technical programs that prepare a skilled workforce. Our goal should be to restore America to a country that makes things again.

No. 3, we have got to start teaching our young people moral values again. That starts with putting God and prayer back in our schools. Our kids need structure, and they need to learn right from wrong. I have watched everything that has happened in education over the past few decades from a front-row seat on my sideline as a coach. It is embarrassing. As a person who chooses to spend their career in education, I now have the opportunity to say something as a U.S. Senator.

Our young people are our No. 1 hope for this country’s future. If we don’t recognize that, we are going to lose our country as we know it. As of 2018, the United States is 13th in the world for reading, 18th for science, and we are 36th in the world for math. That is unacceptable.

This country was built on hard work. It was built on competition, whether it is business or individual. Education and athletics teach you how to compete, how to have grit, determination, and to work together as a team. Now, you can learn everything you want from books, but if you don’t learn to persevere and compete, it is hard to succeed.

Some people in this country think that you are owed something simply because you live in the United States of America. This country doesn’t owe you a job or a paycheck. This country only owes you one thing, and that is an opportunity, but what is great about this country is that it also gives you the opportunity to fail. That might sound a little funny coming from a football coach who spent his entire career trying to win, but here, if you fail, this country will give you a chance to get back on your feet and try to succeed again and again. You don’t get that opportunity in most countries on God’s green Earth.

That being said, I appreciate the opportunity to serve with Chairwoman MURRAY and Ranking Member BURR, and I look forward to getting down to work and returning education to one of our top priorities.

I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.