

ability to impose sanctions with our allies, with our NATO partners.

But at the same time, what gets lost sometimes in the discussion about Ukraine is the intelligence support we have provided—all kinds of offices throughout our intelligence community providing actionable intelligence or intelligence that the Ukrainians can use if they fight the battle, fight the war. That is probably incalculable in terms of the advantages given on the battlefield and beyond. So that bears emphasis as well.

I think one area of positive development in the last couple of months is the unity, not just the unity of NATO, which has never been stronger, probably never stronger since the 1960s or even more so, but the unity here at home—unity in the Senate, unity in the House, unity throughout the country to support the people of Ukraine—the people but also to support the military.

I have to say, though, as much as we have that unity with our NATO partners and here in the Congress, there are voices here in Washington and around the country that are not as unified. We know the voice of our former President and his continued approval of Putin's "genius."

Why would you ever say that about a murderous dictator? He is not a genius. He is, I believe, a war criminal, but that kind of language and that kind of support for Putin, at least by way of laudatory words, has tarnished that unity, has undermined that unity here at home and around the world. But it is not enough to break that unity.

I just hope that Republican Members of Congress, when someone in their party, especially a leader of their party or a Member of Congress or any other Republican official—I hope that when they say things about Vladimir Putin that are positive or in any way supportive that they would call it out and condemn it.

When you are supporting the people of Ukraine at a time of war, you have to use every tool in your toolbox: military assistance, diplomacy, sanctions, humanitarian support, but also your words as leaders. And we should be condemning any American leader who supports or says positive things about Mr. Putin.

I hope the Republican Members of Congress who have stood up and been very supportive of the Ukrainian people in this fight would also call out Members of their party and condemn such statements because that didn't happen in July of 2018, when the former President—in my judgment, this is my view of it—was genuflecting before Vladimir Putin on the world stage in Helsinki, Finland, in probably what I believe is maybe the worst day for an American President on the world stage ever when he took the side of Mr. Putin, a murderous dictator, over the determinations made by our intelligence community about the previous election. That was a low moment for

America, for our democracy, and for our country.

We now have, I think, very clearly a choice. It is not a choice of three or four options or five options. There are only two options here: You can choose Mr. Putin or choose Mr. Zelenskyy. You can choose a dictator who has no regard for human life and all of the enablers around him, or you can choose the President who is standing up for freedom, Mr. Zelenskyy, the President of Ukraine.

It is really a simple choice. It is a choice between the incarnation of evil and the personification of freedom. That is the choice. There is not a third option here. Every American has to make this choice, but especially Members of Congress, elected officials. That is part of our job. You have to make a choice, and it is very simple.

The good news is Republicans, Democrats, and Independents—House and Senate, the two branches of government—have made a choice, and the American people have made a choice. They made a choice for freedom to support that personification of freedom by supporting Mr. Zelenskyy and his government in this war, by supporting the Ukrainian people, who are literally putting their lives on the line for freedom itself.

I will conclude with these thoughts. Like our Constitution that we turn to for both—not just guidance and inspiration, but we turn to, to remind ourselves of our duty, so, too, are the people of Ukraine turning to their Constitution for that guidance and that inspiration and that call to action.

Here is what that Constitution says in pertinent part, and it sounds very familiar:

The people are the bearers of sovereignty and the only sources of power in Ukraine . . . To affirm and ensure human rights and freedoms is the main duty of the State.

That is what the Ukrainian Constitution says, a mandate that freedom must be the goal and the work of the State. Wow, are they doing that now. President Zelenskyy and his government and the people of Ukraine are standing up for freedom.

When we are at our best here at home, we do the same. We have a great anthem for our Nation: "O beautiful"—and you know the rest of that great anthem. One of the verses of that great anthem says:

O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years.

The dream of a patriot isn't just to stand up in the moment and fight, but that patriot is standing up for freedom, fighting and willing to put their lives on the line—or his or her life on the line—for freedom because they are seeing beyond the years. They are standing up for freedom, not just for themselves and their families and their nation, but for the future—for the future of that nation. That is what the people of Ukraine are doing right now, and that is why we have to continue to support them in that great fight.

I think most Americans have already made the choice. We just have to back them up and stand for freedom—not to stand for the incarnation of evil, Mr. Putin and his government right now, but to stand for the personification of freedom. We saw that this morning with President Zelenskyy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The Senator from Washington.

TRANSGENDER YOUTH

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak out against the recent wave of hate attacks on transgender youth happening across our country.

Over the last few months, we have seen extreme Republican lawmakers take unprecedented steps to go after trans children and their families. Not only are they spewing hateful rhetoric around gender identity—making something personal and something a lot of Americans probably don't think about every day into a cruel political cudgel—but they are also using their political power and legal authority to target trans people, and trans kids, in particular.

Last month, Texas Governor Greg Abbott made the decision to actively investigate and target parents of transgender kids and providers, making the totally false claim that gender-affirming care is child abuse. In Idaho, just across the border from my home State of Washington, lawmakers got dangerously close to passing legislation that would criminalize providers for giving kids the gender-affirming care they need. In Florida, there is a bill headed to the Governor's desk which aims to erase gay and trans kids, parents, and teachers from our schools by banning any discussion about gender identity or sexual orientation.

While Democrats have been focused on getting our schools back open and helping students catch up after 2 really tough years, Republicans are targeting trans kids and gay students and taking incredibly important and personal decisions away from parents and families.

Right now, it feels like far-right lawmakers are in a race to legislate the most extreme, most hateful bill they can think of, at the expense of trans kids. We all have a responsibility to stand up and make clear this is not right. Trans people are our friends; they are our neighbors; they are our families. Trans kids deserve to be just kids—to play sports, to go to school, to see a doctor, or to get healthcare. They should be able to get the same opportunities as any other child, to learn and grow and play and thrive free from fear and discrimination. And parents deserve to be able to make their own parenting decisions with their medical providers to do what is best for their kids' health. They should not have to worry about what a rightwing politician thinks is best for their kids. And they definitely shouldn't live in fear

that a State legislature is going to intervene in their parenting decisions and hurt their child.

So we have to push back against these attacks on trans kids in every way that we can—in the courts, with legislation, through Executive action, and by speaking out and speaking up because I can tell you, having just talked to my constituents in Washington State, the hurt and fear the Governor of Texas has caused is not staying in Texas. What Greg Abbott said about trans kids has an effect on many States. I wish it didn't, but the truth is: All of those measures are not only really scary for trans families across the country, but they also embolden more hateful rhetoric and even violence against trans people; and it is harming trans kids' mental health no matter where they live.

We have to be louder than Greg Abbott or whoever is taking aim at trans kids. We have to push for legislation like the Equality Act that would send a powerful message of support and fairness for trans and gay Americans. And we have to stand up for a future without this hateful hate, harm, and division that we are seeing and with a lot more compassion for each other. It is not too much to ask.

NOMINATION OF JOHN H. CHUN

Mr. President, I also rise today to urge my colleagues to join me this evening in voting to confirm Judge John Chun for a Federal district court judgeship in the Western District of Washington State.

Judge Chun is a Pacific Northwest native. He is a father. He is the son of South Korean immigrants. He would be the first Asian-American man to serve on Washington State's Federal bench.

He is patient and thoughtful, someone the people of Washington State can really count on to faithfully uphold the rule of law and treat litigants and all parties before him with grace and respect. Judge Chun's qualifications are superb, having served for 7 years now as a State court judge. His temperament and record of service demonstrate a real commitment to fairness and impartiality, whether through his service as a board member for the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance or his many pro bono commitments over the course of a very long career as both an attorney and a judge.

For all these reasons and more, Judge Chun's service as Federal district court judge in my home State of Washington would surely help rebuild faith in our judicial system. I respectfully am here today to urge my colleagues to confirm Judge Chun.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 493

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I come today to the floor with a very simple unanimous consent request.

This is a resolution. It doesn't allocate any dollars, doesn't change any policy. It is just a statement of belief

from the U.S. Senate. It is a statement to be able to say we hold certain things very important.

I will talk through some of the resolution part of it—the resolve at the beginning of it—but it ends with a very simple statement. It ends with:

Resolved, That the Senate—(1) recognizes and promotes the importance of parental involvement in their child's education; and (2) recognizes the necessity of school choices as a tool to empower all parents with the freedom to choose the best educational environment for their children and to reject destructive ideologies promoted by many public schools, such as Critical Race Theory.

This comes from a basic conversation that happens in my State and, quite frankly, in States all around the country. Parents should be the primary decision-makers for their children—not only where they are educated so that they don't live in a certain neighborhood and they say, I am sorry, you live there so you have to go here.

This is so the parents have the maximum amount of flexibility knowing one child may be a great fit for one school, and the younger child may be a better fit for a different school, whether that be a public school that allows flexibility within a district to be able to move place to place or, as it happens in my State, where you can even change district to district within public schools.

If a parent maybe works in one area—one school district—but lives in another, that parent can choose to be able to have their child go into a different district. Though it is a public school setting, it gives them the flexibility and the choice to do that. Why? Because not every kid is the same and not every educational environment is the same.

I would say in my State—and I would assume in other States as well—not every school district is the same. It is important to us in our State that every school district is successful. There is no place that we don't want any child to be able to be successful.

But we should all admit the facts: Not every school district is thriving. As we invest dollars and time and encourage great teaching in that district, that child who is in that district that is not being successful is trapped in a location that is currently not successful. Maybe they can be successful in 5 years from now when they work through the different issues they have, but that child doesn't have a second shot.

If that child has no other opportunity to be able to choose and their parents are locked into that spot, we basically say, We will fix everything in this district in a few years, and that child is just not allowed to get an option out. I don't think that is helpful for that child and that parent at that time.

Giving parents the ability to be able to make choices—whether public schools, charter schools, private schools—whatever may work best for their school and for their State and the policies their State has created seems like a smart thing to be able to do.

Any kind of teaching that is within a school that actually promotes one kid as the oppressor and the other kid as the oppressed simply because of the color of their skin should not be taught in our schools. Why don't we teach every child is equal? Why don't we teach every child should have opportunity? Why don't we teach every family has the opportunity in this great country of ours; and where we have weaknesses, we work on our weaknesses? But we don't label a child as an oppressor or as oppressed based on the color of their skin—at least we used to not in America.

But that is what is rising up with this critical race theory as it rises up from place to place. I have had many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle saying: That is not true. That is not being taught.

Great. Let's make the resolution. Let's say that we as a Senate don't believe that this should be taught. Let's teach every child. Let's love every child.

This resolution also affirms the rights of parents to be able to speak out—not in a violent way, not in a destructive way, but for parents to be able to speak out.

Why is it that several months ago, the Department of Justice in our Nation starts a whole investigation on parents to be able to say: Are there parents who are actually maybe closet terrorists who are showing up at school board meetings, complaining about what is being taught, complaining about a mask mandate in their school, complaining about a vaccine mandate, complaining about critical race theory, or just saying "I don't like this particular curriculum"?

That used to be the rights of parents, to engage, and now we hear: Really, parents don't know enough about these difficult things. Parents need to just sit down over there. We will take care of this as professionals.

So, again, this resolution doesn't add additional funding. It doesn't change the structure of our schools. But it does say: We as the Senate believe in the power of the parent to be able to make the right choice for their children.

So, with that, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to my resolution, S. Res. 493. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I got my start in national politics as a parent advocating for my kids' preschool program. I am a former preschool teacher. I am a former school board member. I