

about the January 6, 2021, insurrectionist mob that crashed through the Capitol here, desecrating it, endangering the lives of innocent people—what did they say about it? They called it “legitimate political discourse”—legitimate political discourse—with five to seven people dead and 150 police officers assaulted. That is illegitimate; that is unacceptable, whether the intended victims were Members of Congress or the victims today are members of the Supreme Court.

Have the good sense, I say to my Republican colleagues, to be consistent. If you are opposed to violence and believe it is unacceptable in a democratic society, make that standard apply whether the victims are in one branch of the government or another. It is absolutely unacceptable in both.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, if Democrats have made one thing clear over the past 16 months, it is that they think that the Federal Government—or maybe just Democrats—knows best. It is evident in just about everything they do. And there is pretty much no end to the things they think the Federal Government should be in charge of—healthcare, childcare, education, elections, and the list goes on.

Take the current debate over abortion. There is one thing Democrats are clearly terrified of is putting this issue in the hands of the American people. Overturning *Roe v. Wade* would return the issue of abortion back to the people and their elected representatives. Democrats are keen to make sure that doesn't happen, probably because they know the American people are not in agreement with Democrats' extreme abortion agenda.

And so the news that the Supreme Court might overturn *Roe* and return the issue of abortion to people has been met with hysteria from Democrats. More than one has responded by calling for packing the Supreme Court so the Democrats can ensure they get the abortion decisions they desire.

Of course, yesterday, Democrats responded to the Supreme Court's pending decision by holding a vote on what has to be the most extreme abortion legislation ever considered by the U.S. Congress—a bill that would rip away even the smallest protections for the unborn and make abortion-on-demand, at any time, for essentially any reason, the law of the land.

Meanwhile, today, the Senate Budget Committee is holding a hearing on a favorite Democratic proposal—putting the Democrats in charge of Americans'

healthcare. Under Medicare for All, Americans can look forward to a future in which the government decides what healthcare Americans can access and what medications and procedures will be covered.

Never mind the nearly 180 million Americans who have access to health insurance through their jobs, many of whom are satisfied with their coverage. No, that coverage would be decimated in favor of Democrats' preferred “one size fits all” approach. I am not sure what Democrats have seen that makes them think government can efficiently run healthcare. Maybe they never had to deal with the IRS.

Oh, and let's not forget about the part where it has been projected that this government-run system could cost taxpayers more than \$30 trillion. So what is the problem with that attitude the Democrats have? Why should all of us be concerned by the fact Democrats think the Federal Government—or maybe just the Democratic Party—knows best?

For starters, it is clearly apparent that government does not always know best. Take our current inflation crisis. A big reason we are currently dealing with the worst inflation in 40 years is the Democrats' decision to flood the economy with unnecessary government money with their American Rescue Plan spending spree.

This legislation was billed as critical COVID relief that was going to help families and our economy recover. Instead, it helped plunge our economy into a massive inflation crisis that has left individuals and families struggling to afford necessities like gas and food.

To give another example, the President's Department of Homeland Security recently created a so-called Disinformation Governance Board. And the individual who has been chosen to head up this disinformation board is someone who, herself, has been a purveyor of online disinformation, as well as being hostile to what she apparently considers excessive free speech. Yet, apparently, the Biden administration thinks we should trust her to rule on disinformation.

Of course, this is not to say that we should distrust every move the government makes or whether the government can never do anything good. Assuming the government always knows best is to vastly overestimate the government's abilities. The Federal Government, like society, is made up of flawed human beings. Being a Member of Congress or a Presidential administration does not come anywhere close to conferring infallibility.

Another big problem with “Democrats' knows best” attitude is it usually involves a plan for government to take over ever-greater areas of American life. More government control usually involves less individual freedom.

Take the childcare plan Democrats included in their Build Back Better legislation. First, of course, Democrats

take the opportunity to add a lot of new childcare mandates and regulations. But more than that, Democrats' government subsidy program is set up to favor certain kinds of childcare and childcare providers. It is set to favor institutional childcare rather than home care or other models, like neighborhood co-ops. And it is set up to place religious providers at a disadvantage. That is right. Despite the fact that more than half of working families who use center-based care opt for faith-based centers, Democrats' program is set up to put these providers at a disadvantage.

Democrats obviously think childcare is better conducted in secular, institutional settings, so they set up their legislation to favor that kind of childcare, no matter—no matter—what parents actually prefer.

That is pretty much par for the course for Democrats, of course, who have made it very clear that they have their doubts as to whether parents are the best decisionmakers for their children.

Who can forget the Democrat candidate for Governor of Virginia who memorably said:

I'm not going to let parents come into schools and actually take books out and make their own decision . . . I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach.

This is a view that President Biden seemed to echo just days ago. I would love to hear the reasons why Democrats think government can make better decisions for children than parents who know their children as individuals and raise them and love them.

But to get back to my main point here. The childcare program in Democrats' tax-and-spending spree is a perfect example of what happens when government starts taking over. The government, instead of the individual, starts making decisions. The more substantial the government involvement, the larger the government's role in decision making is likely to be.

Again, that is not to say that the government has no role to play in American life. We need the Federal Government. Our national defense, for example, is most practically handled at the Federal level. But the Federal Government should be and is meant to be limited.

And allowing the government to take over ever-larger aspects of American life—whether it is childcare, healthcare, or anything else—is a recipe for the loss of individual liberty.

Finally, Democrats' “government knows best” attitude is a problem because, as we have clearly seen, it quickly leads to an attitude of “Democrats know best,” which quickly leads to pushing for special privileges for Democrats.

Take recent conflicts involving the Supreme Court. Democrats have made it abundantly clear that they believe the only legitimate Supreme Court is a Supreme Court that hands down decisions in line with Democrats' policy

preferences. And they haven't just implied this. More than one Democrat has actually straight-out called this Supreme Court illegitimate, despite the fact that every single Justice on the Supreme Court was duly nominated and confirmed in accordance with the Constitution of the United States.

And the Senate, despite having the slimmest possible majority, in fact—a merely technical majority and absolutely no mandate for radical change—Democrats have pushed to abolish the legislative filibuster so they can steamroll through far-left Democratic legislation, including a partisan takeover of election law and, of course, the most extreme abortion legislation ever considered in Congress.

Just imagine the howls that would have resulted if Republicans had announced that we were going to abolish the legislative filibuster to institute a 20-week abortion ban—a ban that is much more in line with the sentiments of the majority of Americans than Democrats' far-left abortion legislation.

Or take the protests that have been going on at the Supreme Court Justices' homes. The President and other Democrats have made it clear they are perfectly fine with demonstrators congregating at the private homes of Supreme Court Justices to try and intimidate them into changing their vote.

I have to ask, would Democrats be fine with pro-life activists appearing at the homes of Justice Breyer, Justice Kagan, and Justice Sotomayor to try to intimidate them into changing their votes? I think we all know the answer to that. But because abortion is one of Democrats' pet issues, clearly, the usual rules don't apply. "Government knows best" quickly becomes "Democrats know best," which leads to one rule for Democrats and one rule for everyone else.

"Government knows best" is not a vision Republicans share. We believe that individuals, not Washington bureaucrats, are the best judges of what they and their family and children need. The government should be a backstop, not Big Brother.

We also know the more government expands, the more individual liberty shrinks, which is why we are firmly committed to a philosophy of limited government. Our country is founded to safeguard individual liberty and preserving that liberty it a sacred trust, which is why Republicans will continue to oppose Democrats' "Washington knows best," Big Government philosophy, and why we will continue to fight to make sure that Americans' right to run their own lives and shape their own destinies is protected.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

NOMINATION OF MARY T. BOYLE

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, in a few moments, the Senate will vote on the confirmation of Mary Boyle to be a

Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, CPSC. It appears that the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, finally has the votes lined up for confirmation of Ms. Boyle and that she will be elevated to this position. I think this is a decision that Members of the Democratic Party and the administration will come to regret and Americans, in general, will come to regret.

Recently, the Commerce Committee failed to report Ms. Boyle's nomination favorably. All Democrats voted aye; all Republicans voted no.

I think Members should understand this. CPSC plays a vital role in ensuring the safety of American consumers. For this reason, I have significant concerns about major administrative failures at the agency during Ms. Boyle's tenure as Executive Director there, including the improper disclosure of unredacted manufacturer and consumer data.

An investigation I led as chairman of the Commerce Committee last Congress determined that the unauthorized release of this data, which violated section 6(b) of the Consumer Product Safety Act, was the result of insufficient training, ineffective management, and poor information technology implementation.

All of these failings at the CPSC were under Mary Boyle's watch as the primary career official charged with the day-to-day administration of the Agency's business, and yet today we are being asked to elevate her to an even more important and responsible position at CPSC.

I am also deeply troubled by the CPSC's curtailing of port inspections for several months beginning with the pandemic and Ms. Boyle's involvement in this decision. In addition, she presided over the deficient and prolonged process of fully returning CPSC staff to work at these ports. So the inspections were not getting done. There are now hundreds, if not thousands, of unsafe products that entered the country under Ms. Boyle's watch, and we still lack a clear plan from the CPSC on how those dangerous products will be removed from the market.

This nominee has failed to demonstrate strong and effective leadership in her current position as executive director of the CPSC. Yet the administration and, apparently, the majority leader of the Senate are inexplicably trying to promote her to a higher position of trust and authority.

In light of these many problems at the Agency associated with Ms. Boyle's leadership, I think her confirmation will be a mistake, and I think my Democratic colleagues and the administration will come to regret this decision.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ARTISTS

Mr. BOOKER. I rise not expecting to give a speech today, but I want to, first and foremost, recognize the Chair, who is my "mother" Senator, and I want to thank her for her incredible service to this institution.

I want to thank, which I rarely do, the staff who works here and runs the Senate every day, but I rise today to talk for a moment about groups that we don't talk about enough on this floor. We usually talk about everybody from law enforcement to our military, but we don't talk about artists.

We are a nation that even from our founding during Revolutionary times, there were extraordinary artists who expanded the moral imagination of this country and helped us to see a nation that could be free from British rule and domination.

In every point of American history, from protest movements to battles for suffrage, we have had artists who have painted these pictures of an America, a vision for what could be, but even more than that, they have healed us during difficult times. They have pulled us together with their inspiration. They have called out injustices. They have brought light to the dark places of our country.

You know, Picasso talked about art being something that helps to shake the dust off the soul of humanity, but I think it does more than that. As an African American, I have seen art in the tradition of healing, of providing hope, of even calling out with specificity the instructions on how to be free.

We remember the song that Harriet Tubman pointed to:

Wade in the water, wade in the water, God is going to trouble the water.

That is the tradition that sourced my family. From enduring the pain of a nation that was unequal and divided, often in church with gospel songs, there was healing; there was hope. And even the poetry in the Harlem Renaissance spoke to an America that could possibly be if we just never stop believing.

As the great poet Langston Hughes said:

America never was America to me,

[But] I swear this oath—

America will be!

Who made America,

Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,

Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,

Must [make] our . . . dream [live] again.

O, yes, I say it plain,

America never was America to me,

And yet I swear this oath—

America will be!

I lean on poetry and song today just to get myself up in the morning. I have seen how artists have come to visit us here in the Capitol and Senators from