

ranks from the administration's position of no talks and no reforms.

One of our Senate Democratic colleagues wrote an entire Washington Post op-ed calling on the President to sit down with Congress and reform spending. Reports indicate that a whole group of House Democrats are already talking about negotiations and about compromise.

Just a few years ago, the Democratic leader, Leader SCHUMER, said this about the debt ceiling:

[It] gives another ample opportunity for bipartisanship, not for one party jamming its choices down the throats of the other.

So President Biden does not get to stick his fingers in his ears and refuse to listen, talk, or negotiate, and the American people know that. The White House needs to stop wasting time and start negotiating with the Speaker of the House.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

MITCH MCCONNELL AND JOHN FETTERMAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I welcome back my self-described, hard-headed Republican leader in the Senate.

It is good to see you, MITCH. I'm glad you are back.

I want to welcome Senator MCCONNELL as well as Senator FETTERMAN, who will be here today as well.

I spoke to him by Zoom several weeks ago, and I was really heartened by his message. He had the courage to step up and ask for help when he faced depression, to seek professional and medical advice, and I could tell by his responses and the tone of his voice that that decision had already made a difference in his life for the better.

I told him at the time I was so happy to speak to him personally, that what he had done publicly to address the issue of his own personal depression and the overall issue of mental health would save lives across America. I believe people will be inspired to follow his example and seek help.

We are, fortunately, living in a time and an age and a generation where the attitude toward mental health is much different than it was many years ago.

There was a time when mental illness was considered not just an illness but a curse, and people didn't speak about it. I know I had similar examples in my own family of people who were just speaking in whispers about the issues that related to my relatives.

That is changing for the better. Our honesty and openness in dealing with mental health makes us a better nation, and people will have better lives as a result of it.

I thank my colleague Senator FETTERMAN for stepping up and making the right decision in his life, and I am looking forward to his return.

VLADIMIR KARA-MURZA

On another topic, Mr. President, today, a Russian puppet court sentenced opposition leader Vladimir Kara-Murza to 25 years in prison. For

what? What did he do to merit a 25-year sentence in Russia? He had the nerve to criticize Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

This is his photograph, incidentally. He visited my office several times before he made the incredible decision to go back to Russia and to confront the Putin administration. Now he is facing a 25-year sentence.

It comes on the heels of reports that Russian authorities may be trying to slowly poison another opposition leader, Alexey Navalny, after a failed attempt on his life in 2020.

Previously, Vladimir Putin tried twice to poison Mr. Kara-Murza as well. This kind of extrajudicial, extralegal process has become all too common in Russia.

Apparently, Putin's fear of Russian patriots like Navalny and Kara-Murza, who have only advocated for an open and democratic Russia that is at peace with its neighbors, knows no ends.

Vladimir Kara-Murza, Alexey Navalny, and so many other Russians are courageously pursuing a better future for their country. They deserve our support and solidarity.

MIFEPRISTONE

Mr. President, this week, the fate of women's healthcare rests with the Supreme Court of the United States. In the coming days, the Justices are expected to decide whether one activist judge in Texas can singlehandedly disregard decades of medical and professional consensus, whether he can create chaos for doctors and women seeking abortion and cut off access to reproductive healthcare nationwide.

Remember when Justice Alito announced that the Dobbs decision would just give each State the authority to regulate abortion? It sounded so simple: 50 different standards for abortion, but then each State can make the decision.

Well, it has been less than a year since the Court's rightwing majority issued that decision overruling *Roe v. Wade*. Here we are, faced with the very real possibility that mifepristone—a pill, a drug, a medicine the Food and Drug Administration approved more than 20 years ago—could be banned or severely restricted all across the Nation—so much for each State's experiment on the issue. This decision would affect the medication nationwide, even in States where abortion has been judged legal.

So how did we reach this point? It starts with one Federal judge in Texas, Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk, and his original attempt to upend our Nation's drug approval process and ban mifepristone. You see, this drug has been on the market for over 20 years, approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

This story really reveals the fallacy at the heart of the Dobbs decision. Justice Alito and the rightwing majority claimed that they were just going to settle the controversy over abortion by returning the issue to each State, but,

in truth, they just replaced controversy with chaos. The Dobbs ruling didn't resolve anything. It merely paved the way for activist judges like Judge Kacsmaryk to impose their radical agenda on everyone else, even in States which had voted to protect the right to abortion.

Earlier this month, that is what happened. Judge Kacsmaryk, in Amarillo, TX, defied decades of scientific evidence to revoke the FDA's approval of the medical abortion drug mifepristone. The medication is used in more than half the abortions in America. It is safe, it is extremely effective, and studies show that it is safer than Tylenol and presents fewer risks than routine medical procedures like colonoscopy. In the past 20 years, millions of American women have used this drug to terminate an early pregnancy or to help manage a miscarriage with minimal complications. So this attempt to ban this medication isn't grounded in science, and it certainly isn't grounded in any concern about the safety of women.

You see, Judge Kacsmaryk is a long-standing, outspoken critic of abortion. Just this weekend, the Washington Post revealed that this very same judge in Amarillo, TX, failed to disclose to the Senate Judiciary Committee an article that he had cowritten criticizing abortion rights when he was nominated to the Federal bench.

So why exactly did this judge, a known anti-choice radical, end up deciding this case with implications in the entire United States of America? Well, it wasn't a coincidence, believe me. On the contrary, it was a classic case of judge shopping. That is when plaintiffs game the legal system to bring their case before a favorable judge.

In this case, the plaintiffs, a group of rightwing MAGA activists, filed a lawsuit challenging the FDA's approval of mifepristone in the Amarillo division of the Northern District of Texas. Under the district court's rules, all cases filed in the Amarillo division are assigned to one judge. You can guess his name: Judge Kacsmaryk. So these rightwing activists knew, if they filed an antiabortion lawsuit in Amarillo, their case would be decided by a friendly judge who shares their views and his ruling would have an impact not just on Amarillo and Texas but the entire United States of America.

Well, the plaintiffs got exactly what they wanted. Judge Kacsmaryk delivered. The scheme worked. He delivered the biggest blow to reproductive rights since last year's Dobbs decision—so much for each State making a decision.

His decision didn't return this issue to the States. It replaced the will of the people in the States with this judge's point of view. By attempting to ban mifepristone nationwide, the judge tried to impose new national restrictions on abortion that have no basis in science and are extremely dangerous.

Now, there have been a number of developments in this case over the past

week, and, as a result, the Supreme Court will take up the issue of abortion again, twice in less than 1 year. This lawsuit against mifepristone is only the latest example of the never-ending chaos and confusion women and medical professionals have experienced since the Supreme Court threw out *Roe v. Wade*.

All across America, activist judges and rightwing lawmakers are working hand in hand to impose increasingly onerous restrictions on reproductive care, and they won't stop until abortion is banned in every form in every part of the country. It is not about each State deciding it at all.

Of course, there is only one reason this relentless assault has accelerated: the Dobbs decision. By erasing a constitutional right that had been on the books for 50 years, the rightwing majority opened the floodgates for new laws and new rulings and even criminalizing abortion. And the laws seem to be changing almost every week. Doctors have no idea if the care they provide today will be legal tomorrow.

Recently, Florida decided that they would not allow pregnancies to be terminated after 6 weeks of pregnancy. It is just a fact of life—and every person knows it—that it usually takes much more than 6 weeks for a woman to be certain that she is pregnant.

So instead of ending the ban on abortion, the Dobbs decision has really opened a different debate: How far will we let this brand of political radicalism go?

Look at how these attacks on reproductive healthcare have escalated. First, the Supreme Court overturned decades of legal precedent to revoke a constitutional right. That is the first time it has ever happened in the history of the Supreme Court, revoking an established constitutional right.

Now, less than a year later, one judge in Texas has decided to escalate the situation. He wants to take drug approval decisions out of the hands of doctors and scientific experts at the FDA and violate decades of congressional and Agency precedent.

So, naturally, the American people are wondering: What is next? How far will the rightwing extremists go in destabilizing our rights and the rule of law? What is next? Birth control? Vaccines? Medicine for HIV/AIDS?

It is a genuine question. Just ask healthcare providers in Illinois who are wondering if they are going to face criminal charges for providing vital and potentially lifesaving care.

Let me tell you about one of them. Her name is Andrea Gallegos. She operates a clinic in Carbondale. She opened her clinic last October after the Dobbs decision. She wanted to provide resources to women traveling from other States. Today, roughly 95 percent of her patients travel from outside of Illinois.

She tells us that the recent rulings on mifepristone have created chaos. Every day, she receives calls from ter-

rified patients who are wondering if they will even be able to receive care. The question she hears the most is: "Will someone come after me?" when I ask for assistance? And while Andrea tries her best to reassure her patients, the truth is, she is even struggling to understand the state of the law in America. She says the chaos and confusion are "putting pregnant [women] even more at risk."

Andrea and her patients are living with the real-world consequences of anti-choice radicalism, and it shows how the Dobbs opinion is entirely detached from reality.

Andrea said:

The Dobbs decision did not resolve any controversy . . . it has forced pregnant [women] to flee their home[s] . . . for health care. . . . It has forced citizens of this country to become medical refugees [in their own] states. . . . [And it has] forced health care providers to put their patients in dangerous, potentially life-threatening situations.

She said:

The Dobbs decision goes against what we . . . stand for in America . . . a person's fundamental right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

These are the words of a healthcare professional trying to operate within the law and wondering, as it changes by the week, if Dobbs returned the question of abortion back to the States, what about my State? What about their elected leaders? Our voters spoke, and our leaders took action to reflect their will to strengthen access to abortion. So why does one judge in Amarillo, TX, have the last word when it comes to medical abortions in my State or any other State?

This war on women's healthcare has gone too far. That is why the Senate needs to do its job: Stop the chaos and return and establish the "Roe v. Wade" woman's right to choose once and for all by passing the Women's Health Protection Act.

In the meantime, here is what Senate Democrats are doing. I joined 49 of my Senate colleagues in filing an amicus brief to the Supreme Court urging them to immediately overturn the Amarillo decision banning and restricting access to mifepristone.

Additionally, in the coming weeks, the Senate Judiciary Committee, which I chair, will hold a hearing on the state of abortion rights. This will be a followup to the hearing we held last year immediately after the Dobbs decision.

We have learned what happens when you revoke a constitutional right from the American people. We can never let this happen again. We need to respect the rights of women to make this choice, to make their own healthcare decisions, and to do it in consultation with medical professionals—doctors and medical professionals who are not living in fear that they are going to be imprisoned by making the right medical decision. And Democrats won't rest until we have restored access to these constitutional rights nationwide.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Texas.

SENATOR FEINSTEIN

Mr. CORNYN. Well, Mr. President, we are now back in session after a busy 2-week recess where I know many of us were traveling in our States or parts of the world and attending to our duties here in the Senate in various capacities. But now we are back here in Washington, DC, and it appears to me that we have a whole lot we need to do before the Fourth of July recess.

But before we begin the day-to-day task of legislating, the majority leader, it is reported, is expected to ask for some personnel changes in the Senate.

Senator FEINSTEIN, our colleague from California, has been out for a couple of months due to some health issues—not an uncommon occurrence here in the Senate, and I know the entire Senate joins me in wishing her a quick recovery and a speedy return here to the Senate.

But given the tight margins in this Chamber, her absence has created some complications for Senator SCHUMER within the Senate Judiciary Committee on which I serve.

Without her vote, our Democratic colleagues are simply unable to advance the most controversial and partisan judicial nominees whom the President has selected.

Given the lack of Republican support, these partisan nominees simply cannot move to the Senate floor for a vote. To get around the issue, Senator SCHUMER has come up with a unique proposal. He wants to temporarily replace Senator FEINSTEIN on the Judiciary Committee.

The idea is to remove her from the committee for an unspecified period of time, name a replacement, and then reinstate Senator FEINSTEIN when she returns. This is, it turns out, unprecedented. Over the years, Senators from both sides, as I indicated a moment ago, have needed time away due to various health issues. Never, not once, have we allowed temporary substitutes on committees, and now is not the time to start.

Republicans are not going to break this precedent in order to bail out Senator SCHUMER or the Biden administration's most controversial nominees. Yesterday evening, the majority leader said he spoke with Senator FEINSTEIN, and she hopes she will be back soon. We all hope that she comes back soon.

But it is another reason not to go along with Senator SCHUMER's ploy for temporary appointment of a member of the Judiciary Committee. Senator FEINSTEIN has been a mainstay of this body for more than three decades, and I hope to see her back in these Halls soon.

But until then, President Biden's most controversial partisan judicial nominees will have to wait.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. President, as I said, this Chamber has a lot to do—the 100 of us who