

trips and travel under an inadequate set of ethics rules.

Last week, Chief Justice Roberts gave a speech, and he said something encouraging. He said:

I want to assure people that I'm committed to making certain that we as a court adhere to the highest standards of conduct.

He said:

We are continuing to look at things we can do to give practical effect to that commitment.

While I appreciate the Chief Justice's commitment, the fact is that we need action, and he doesn't need to look far away for solutions. We have known for years what the Court needs: binding rules and enforcement mechanisms, just like every other Federal judge has operated under for decades.

If every other Federal judge has ethical standards and disclosures, why does the Chief Justice for the highest Court in the land not have at least those levels of ethical standards but even higher?

The Senate Judiciary Committee has the responsibility to exercise oversight over the Federal judiciary. We take it seriously. We have held two ethics reform hearings so far this year, and soon we will consider legislation to restore trust in the High Court.

When billionaires and other people with interests before the Court try to make friends with the Justices through gifts and luxury giveaways, and when they obtain special, private access to these Justices for themselves and others or their friends, it is a serious problem. At a minimum, it creates an appearance of undue influence that erodes the public's trust in the Court's impartiality.

We don't yet know the full extent of the benefits that Harlan Crow and his company gave to Justice Thomas and his family, nor do we know yet how many other people and companies with interests before the Court may have gotten special, private access to Justice Thomas or some other Justice through trips and lodging that people like Harlan Crow have sponsored.

My Democratic colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee and I sent a letter to Mr. Crow and the three companies that we think sponsored the trip for Justice Thomas. We asked him: Tell us about the gifts. Tell us about the access of people to Justice Thomas during this hospitality extravaganza. The information would be valuable for us in writing a law for the ethics standards of the Court.

Mr. Crow responded through his attorney last week with a letter that took some astonishing legal positions. He basically claimed that Congress lacks the authority to either legislate or conduct oversight when it comes to the Supreme Court's ethics. He also tried to assert separation of powers as an excuse not to answer our questions.

Of course, Congress has enacted many ethics laws that apply to the Justices, including a law we passed just last year—a bipartisan law, sponsored

by a Democratic and a Republican Senator, on stock transaction reporting. The Justices have announced they are going to follow those laws.

Mr. Crow is a private citizen, not a branch of government. He can't claim separation of powers as a reason not to provide information pursuant to a congressional oversight request. He is a businessman. He is not a branch of government. If Mr. Crow is convinced he has done nothing wrong, what does he have to hide?

Senator WHITEHOUSE, the chair of the Federal Courts Subcommittee, and I responded to Mr. Crow last week and informed him that he still has until next Monday, June 5, to provide the information we requested. As I mentioned, we will soon be considering legislation in the committee, and his information could be helpful in our legislative effort.

Let me close by reiterating that Chief Justice Roberts does not have to wait on Harlan Crow or Congress. He can clean up this mess today by adopting a resolution binding the Justices to higher ethical standards.

This is the Roberts Court. History is going to write the history of the Supreme Court in the name of this Chief Justice. It happens all the time. He is going to be known as the Chief Justice who ignored an ethical challenge that went to the heart of the integrity of the Court or as a Chief Justice who finally responded, in a historic manner, to do the right thing by disclosing to the American people exactly what the conduct is of his Justices.

Chief Justice Roberts has known for more than 10 years that this is a problem, and the solution is within his authority. He should act before the end of this Supreme Court term.

Don't leave this hanging. Don't leave town, leave Washington, with the issues of the Justices of the Court unresolved.

I honestly believe, whether I voted for them or not, that there are Justices in that Court who are uneasy and uncomfortable with the current state of affairs. They are trying their level best to follow the law, and they can't explain why others are not. They want to have an opportunity to prove their own reputations and their own integrity, and they should. The Chief Justice should be listening to them, and I hope he is. It is the Chief Justice of the Court's time to act. If they don't, we will.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we are back in session today after a week or so of being out of session. We have a habit of calling that a recess although it doesn't necessarily feel like a recess. Some people like to call it a home State work period, which seems a little awkward. Nevertheless, it was good to be back home, but it is also good to be back here in the Nation's Capital to do

the work our constituents sent us here to do.

The term "recess" implies a restful and relaxing break from work, but for me and most of my colleagues, those recess weeks are some of the busiest ones of the year. Since the Senate gavelled out about 2 weeks ago, I have traveled across Texas to meet with my constituents, including time in Austin, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Pasadena, and Dallas. When you have the privilege of representing 30 million Texans, it takes a little bit of effort just to get around the State, but we do it on a regular basis, and I am always invigorated by the interaction with the folks I work for.

Yesterday, of course, we celebrated Memorial Day. We did so in San Antonio yesterday with an incredible group of students who have been selected to attend America's military service academies. These young people are among the best and brightest in our State, and they have chosen to pursue a challenging and honorable career in our Nation's military.

Each Memorial Day, my office hosts a sendoff for these students, and it is far and away my favorite event of the year.

Now, these aren't just students I have recommended to the service academies; they are the ones—they include those recommended by any member of the Texas delegation.

We had about 500 people there in San Antonio yesterday, including about 100 students, and it was a great event. It is always inspiring to see these students answer the same call to serve that generations before them have answered. They are the next generation of military leaders. But, as we know, it is not just military leaders because, eventually, many of those folks will get into the private sector, as my parents and others did after World War II, and they become leaders in their own right in other capacities other than military. But it was a pleasure to spend the day celebrating the incredible journey that they are about to embark on.

I had a lot of fun kidding the parents because I said: Well, your son or daughter is getting a full ride to a service academy that is worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. And that always brings a big smile. Of course, that is not the main reason they go. The main reason they go is because they are young patriots and they work hard and demonstrated a lot of ability and self-discipline to get to where they are. But it was a delightful event.

Last week, I also had the chance to hear about how legislation that we passed last year called the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act actually was being implemented. As you will recall, this legislation was introduced in the wake of the shootings in Uvalde, TX, about a year ago, which claimed the lives of 19 students and 2 adults—2 teachers. There was, obviously, a need for more mental health and school safety resources, and that is in large part what that legislation provided.

So I visited three school districts that received school hardening grants that were authorized by the bill. Part of me, Mr. President, is very sad to go into a school and realize that these students have to be protected from these sorts of threats, because no child should have to go to school afraid for their safety. No parents should have to send their child to school afraid for their safety. Such are the times we are living in.

I was glad to see these protective measures in place. For example, in Agnes Cotton Academy in San Antonio, they recently installed a new digital portable radio system that connects to ear pieces and the school intercom system. I saw similar technology at the R. L. Paschal High School in Ft. Worth, which purchased specialized smart radios as well as a system that can send emergency alerts to school phones and digital clocks inside classrooms. At Pasadena Memorial High School, I was shown their ID badge school access system and new technology for anonymous threat reporting.

Each of these schools has been able to review their own readiness using the best practices that have been recommended for schools across the Nation and then invest in the technologies and capabilities that fit their needs. And it was great to hear about the way these and other schools across the State of Texas are using these grant funds.

This legislation also made the single largest investment the Federal Government has ever made in community-based mental healthcare. But experts say there should be about one school psychologist for every 500 students. But we are a long, long way from that goal. Texas currently has one school psychologist for every 2,500 students.

But grants from the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act are working to close that gap. First, we have to train the people in these professions so they can provide the services. Colleges and universities in Texas are already using some of these grant funds to help increase the number of mental health professionals in schools and in the State. They partnered with nearby school districts to provide real-world training opportunities. I am optimistic that the investment that we made and the hard work that they are doing will have a positive impact on student mental health on the workforce shortage in coming years—of course, with the goal to provide help for anybody who needs it in or around school.

So it is always good to go home and see the impact of the laws we pass here in Washington, DC.

Over the last few days, I also had the opportunity to talk about a new bill that I am working on called the FANS First Act. For years, musicians, sports teams, performers of all types, and their fans have been frustrated by the predatory ticket sales practices in the so-called secondary market.

What I mean by that is that a performer, an athlete, an entertainer, a museum, can sell tickets for a stated price; but, unfortunately, because of bots, these automated computer programs can go on and purchase large numbers of these tickets. It then provides an opportunity for professional scalpers to buy a huge portion of those tickets, then sell them at dramatically inflated prices on the secondary market. As a result, fans see sky-high prices.

Performers and sports teams have a frustrated fan base, and venues are left with empty seats. The only people benefiting from this current system are the scalpers—not the artists, not the teams, not the theaters, not the concert halls, or anyone else who adds value to the live performance experience.

This has been a problem for a long time, but it came into focus last year when tickets went on sale for Taylor Swift's Eras Tour. Countless fans waited in a virtual waiting room for hours but were unable to buy tickets because the bots or computer programs were buying up all the tickets from the primary ticket vendor.

In Austin, I heard from one of those disappointed fans, a young woman named Kate Testone. Kate has been a dedicated Taylor Swift fan for years—she said since she was 5—and was eager to buy tickets to see one of her all-time favorite performers. When she couldn't get a ticket from the original point of sale, she turned to the resale market but was shocked by what she found. A seat with an obstructed view cost \$450. An upper bowl seat was \$900. Many tickets were selling for thousands and thousands of dollars. Kate is a college student who said she eats ramen for almost every meal. I am not sure that is strictly true, but that is what she said. But for her and other countless fans, spending hundreds or thousands of dollars on a ticket is simply not an option.

I also heard from my friend, music legend Robert Earl Keen, who is equally frustrated by the current system. Robert planned to sell tickets for the final leg of his farewell tour for about 100 bucks. But once tickets hit the resale market, many were priced at 1,000 bucks. I asked him about that, and I said: Well, does that money come to you, the person providing the intellectual property, the creativity that people wanted to enjoy?

He said: Absolutely not. As a matter of fact, my fans get mad at me if they think they are being gouged for these thousand-dollar tickets when, in fact, I have no control over that.

That extra \$900 from his fans' wallets did not go to him; it didn't go to the venue; it didn't go to the ticket takers or the concession workers; it went straight into the pocket of a scalper. Robert noted that fans often think that it is the artist's fault, but it isn't. Once tickets are listed, artists have virtually no control over what happens,

even though it is their name and their reputation at stake.

I heard a similar feedback from venues in San Antonio and Austin, including the Moody Center, the American Airlines Center in Dallas, and the Longhorn Ballroom. The same frustrations were felt by sports teams, everyone from University of Texas Athletics to the Dallas Cowboys.

There is an overwhelming sense that the current system isn't working, and it jeopardizes the relationships between fans and their favorite artists, teams, and venues, even though they aren't to blame.

I have been working on a bill called the FANS First Act to address some of the core issues we are seeing. The bill will focus on improving transparency so fans are aware that the thousand-dollar ticket they are about to buy is coming from a reseller who originally bought it for 100 bucks. It will also include reforms that improve consumer protection. That is really what we are talking about here: protecting consumers from the price gouging. It will restore market integrity, and it will punish the bad actors who engage in predatory ticket sales practices, particularly those who use these automated computer programs known as bots to purchase all the tickets once they go on sale just to sell them in the secondary market for a much higher price.

Senator KLOBUCHAR has been one of the leaders in this effort, and I am eager to hear feedback from stakeholders as we try to finalize the text on this bill. I certainly would invite any of my colleagues—particularly on the Judiciary Committee—on a bipartisan basis to work with us to try to come up with a bill that makes sense.

The frustration among fans, artists, teams, and venues is palpable, but I am optimistic we can come up with a bill that will punish the bad actors from ruining the live entertainment experience and restore the power to the artists that produce the wonderful entertainment that we all enjoy and help them protect their reputation against these predatory secondary market scalpers.

It was a busy week back home, and I am grateful that many people shared their ideas and feedback with me. It is an honor to represent 30 million people from Texas in the U.S. Senate, and I have come back feeling energized and ready to dive back into the work we have here.

It is apparently going to be all about the debt limit here for the next few days. We know that this, unfortunately, has been delayed for many months. We shouldn't have to back up against a potential default, but that seems to be the most common way we work around here. We don't get a sense of urgency until we get ready to fall off the cliff.

I am optimistic that we will be able to address the debt ceiling; and, at the same time, we can help restore some

measure of fiscal responsibility and integrity. It is simply unsustainable to have a \$31 trillion debt and say: Well, we want to raise our credit card limit, but we don't want to have an adult conversation about how we are going to pay the money back. That simply is not the way things work in the real world, and it shouldn't be the way things work here in Congress.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Tennessee.

ONLINE SAFETY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, the dangers children encounter when they go online have increased exponentially since social media platforms took over our lives. Just a few years ago, cyber bullying dominated our conversations about kids and the virtual world. Now those cyber bullies are joined by drug dealers, sex traffickers, pedophiles, and influencers who glorify mental illness, eating disorders, and self-harm.

Last week, the Biden administration decided to pay some attention to this pressing issue. While I am glad to see the White House get behind us on this issue, I would be remiss if I didn't point out that they are far behind.

Over the past 2½ years, the Senate has dedicated an incredible amount of time and energy to investigating the harm these threats have inflicted on young people. When Senator BLUMENTHAL and I led the Commerce Committee's Consumer Protection Subcommittee, we hosted five separate hearings investigating the inherent dangers children encounter online. The Judiciary Committee hosted a sixth this past February. During those hearings, we produced more than 500 pages of testimony. This is just the testimony from witnesses who have come before us in those hearings.

In addition to this testimony, we have collected hundreds more pages of evidence illustrating the devastating impact Big Tech has had on the lives of children and teens. We also found proof that these online companies knew they had lost control of their platforms, and still, even knowing it, still they made the affirmative choice to not protect their users. They did this knowing children were at risk.

On top of that are the additional hours we spent talking to parents who tried to protect their children. We also independently confirmed just how easy it is for predators to target young people with dangerous content.

I would implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to confront what is in these pages of testimony. Familiarize yourself with what we heard during these hearings and in conversations—heartbreaking conversations—with families and stakeholders. As you do, remember that the examples we discussed in committee weren't just available for children to access; in many cases, there was no hiding from it, which seems unbelievable until you actually speak to young people about

how pervasive this harmful content and many times illegal content is. This is why Senator BLUMENTHAL and I spent time talking to kids and teens about their firsthand experiences with dangerous content.

The Presiding Officer knows this issue well. He has worked on kids' online privacy. He did that when he was in the House, and he has done it in the Senate. So he knows the importance of the steps we have taken not to limit the conversation just to grownups but to talk to teens and children, and that is what we have done. No one has a better understanding of what is happening to teens online than teenagers.

So we invited them into the room and asked them: What can we do to be helpful?

What they told us that they needed was something that is more proactive and more enforceable than what the Biden administration has chosen to offer.

According to the White House's announcement, HHS and the Commerce Department will lead an interagency Task Force on Kids Online Health and Safety. Their job will be to identify harms to minors from online platforms and then develop voluntary guidance, policy recommendations, and a toolkit for industry.

That sounds awfully familiar, doesn't it? We have been doing that here in the Senate for more than 2 years. Yet the White House wants to start from scratch. What is the point in that? We know what the harms are. The harms have been articulated.

We also know that voluntary guidance will do nothing to make online platforms safer. We tried that kinder, gentler method, and it failed. It does not work. Social media platforms have proven to us that they are incapable of self-regulation. Why is that? Because, when our children are online, our children are the product. They are data mining our children. They are selling that data to the highest bidder.

The second item I want to highlight is a good development but one that will complement rather than replace work we have already done here in the Senate.

According to the White House's announcement, DHS and the Justice Department will work with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to create combined image repositories to help identify victims of online trafficking and sexual abuse. This is promising because it puts law enforcement on the frontlines. That is an important distinction, but this effort needs our support, which means staying the course on existing legislation to bolster both law enforcement and NCMEC's legal authorities.

On that front, this week, the Judiciary Committee will consider the REPORT Act. It is a piece of bipartisan legislation I sponsored with Senator OSSOFF that will require online companies and social media platforms to report known instances of child sex traf-

ficking or enticement on their platforms. It will also substantially increase the fines imposed for failure to report this abuse to NCMEC.

Importantly, the REPORT Act also includes another one of my bills, the END Child Exploitation Act, which requires online platforms to preserve reports to NCMEC's cyber tip line for a period of 1 year. By extending this retention period, we can ensure that law enforcement has enough time to access evidence and to prosecute these crimes.

This bill will also make it easier for NCMEC to transfer these cyber tip line reports to law enforcement, which will, in turn, help law enforcement prosecute cases faster and put more offenders behind bars—no more excuses.

You know, it is so interesting. I have talked to Tennesseans, and they thought this would already be the law—that these social media platforms would have to report these sex traffickers, these pedophiles, these drug dealers, these child sexual abuse images, and things that were online. They are surprised that they don't and that they don't take them down. So no more executives coming up here to the Hill to give us excuses for why they are not able to do this and complaining about how hard it is to tackle criminal perversion on their platforms—they need to get busy with this.

The policies laid out in the REPORT Act are critical to helping Silicon Valley and law enforcement stop predators. As I said, they ought to be the first ones to stand up and say: We have got some bad actors over here. We are going to take them down.

There should be bipartisan agreement on this. Everybody should say: Let's do this, and let's do it now.

I know I can't be the only person in this Chamber who is wondering why these big tech companies haven't kept their own promises to make the online world safer for kids and for teens.

The White House's plan for voluntary guidelines and toolkits gives these companies far too much credit. As I said, they have proven to us they are incapable of self-governance.

Why are they incapable? Because they need the eyeballs of our kids on their sites for longer stretches of time. That means the data is richer. That means they sell that data. They are putting profit before the safety of our children. Go talk to these parents who have lost their kids. Go listen to these teens who are recovering from social media addiction.

This is why, earlier this year, Senator BLUMENTHAL and I reintroduced the Kids Online Safety Act. It has 34 bipartisan cosponsors and the endorsement of more than 200 bipartisan organizations.

First, it would force platforms to give families the ability to protect minors' information, disable addictive product features, and opt out of algorithmic recommendations. Next, it would give parents the safeguards needed to protect their children's online experiences as well as to provide a