

They said this about Mr. Mangi's nomination: Mr. Mangi's "conscious work with the Alliance shows an anti-victim and anti-police bias that would certainly cloud his decisionmaking as a judge." That came from the police. Those aren't my words; those are law enforcement's words.

By itself, Mr. Mangi's work for and with this organization that I refer to as "the Alliance" should be disqualifying, but there is more. There is a lot more.

From 2019 to 2023—4 years—Mr. Mangi also served on the advisory board of another group, and this group calls itself the Center for Security, Race and Rights—the Center for Security, Race and Rights. This organization is steeped in hatred and anti-Semitism. I don't know any other way to put it. I think any reasonable person who looked at the center's work would agree with me, at least as to my description.

Now, every single American I know—and I will bet this is true for the Presiding Officer too—every single American I know remembers where they were on September 11, 2001. We call it 9/11. We don't even have to explain ourselves anymore; we just say "9/11," and every American knows what you are talking about.

On the 20th anniversary of 9/11, Mr. Mangi's Center for Security, Race and Rights, on whose advisory board Mr. Mangi either sits or sat, sponsored an event. Here is the title of their event: "Whose narrative? 20 years since September 11, 2001." The purpose of this event was to blame America and blame Americans for 9/11. That is why they held the event. This event and the speakers there blamed "U.S. imperialism"—not the terrorists; "U.S. imperialism"—for the 9/11 attacks that killed thousands of innocent American citizens.

The event featured some of the most despicable speakers that even the most fertile imagination would be challenged to come up with. One of those speakers was Mr. Sami Al-Arian. Mr. Al-Arian was convicted of providing support to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Another speaker, Mr. Rabab Abulhadi, has ties to terrorist hijackers. A third speaker, Mr. Hatem Bazian, publicly called for an intifada in the United States. Hard men. Rough words. American imperialism.

Mr. Mangi claims that he didn't know about this event—that is what he told the Senate committee—but his center has a long, long history of sponsoring vile, hate-filled events, and that is just a fact. That is not rhetoric; that is just a fact. Are we really expected to believe that Mr. Mangi had no idea what the center was up to? He sat on its advisory board, for God's sake.

Now let's talk about the director of this center on whose advisory board Mr. Mangi sat. The director also has a vile history of bad behavior. In 2021, the director of this organization on whose board Mr. Mangi sat signed a letter. That letter is posted on the Alli-

ance's website. So far as I know, you can go to it and read it right now.

In the letter, the director says that she is "in awe"—"in awe"—"of the Palestinian struggle to resist violent occupation, removal, erasure, and the expansion of Israeli settler colonialism"—"Israeli settler colonialism."

Hamas murdered, raped, maimed Jewish men, Jewish women, little Jewish children, and according to Mr. Mangi's organization's director, it is Israel's fault.

The center's director describes himself as being in respectful awe. I think the vast majority of Americans would describe themselves as being nauseated.

The center's director, of whom I speak, also personally recruited Mr. Mangi to serve on the center's advisory board.

Again, are we really expected to believe that Mr. Mangi didn't know about the director's vile behavior? Did Mr. Mangi not even run a single Google search on this person?

On top of all of that, I do not believe—this is one person's opinion—I do not believe that Mr. Mangi told me the truth in our Judiciary hearing. When I asked him about his involvement with this radical organization, Mr. Mangi told me he only provided "advice on academic areas of research." That is what he told me. He said: My only involvement is "advice on academic areas of research."

Those aren't my words; those are Mr. Mangi's words. But it turns out he was also funneling money to the organization—tens of thousands of dollars from himself and from his law firm. I didn't know that at the time of the hearing. I wish that I had.

With these facts in mind—and I have tried just to stick to the facts—I find it very hard to believe that anyone can in good faith—no. Strike that.

I find it hard to believe that a fair-minded, objective person who is not involved in this nomination can defend Mr. Mangi's nomination. Some of my Senate colleagues are doing that. That is OK. Sometimes people disagree, and that is a good thing. I believe in having two sides, opposing sides, come together in a dialectic. Sometimes that is how you find the truth. But it has gotten kind of personal. I regret that.

Some people—not all people; the Presiding Officer doesn't do this—some people, when they are losing an argument, tend to rely on epithets, you know—"You are a racist" or "You are a sexist" or "You are a misogynist" or "You are a Nazi" or "You are a bigot" or, as in this case, "You are Islamophobic." Some of the Members of this body have made that suggestion. They have suggested that all of the people who are opposing Mr. Mangi's nomination based on the facts that I have just tried to describe as fairly as I could—some Senators have suggested that asking Mr. Mangi questions about his involvement with these organizations is Islamophobic.

One of my colleagues—which, again, is his right—came down to the Senate floor, and he said that certain Republican members of the committee "believed that he," referring to Mr. Mangi, "must be a terrorist because he is a Muslim." Wow. That got my attention. That is not true.

I believe that Mr. Mangi is not qualified to be a Federal judge because he supports organizations that celebrate people who kill law enforcement officers; he supports organizations that hate Americans; and he supports organizations that hate Jews.

When President Biden, as I said earlier, has nominated qualified people to serve on the Federal bench, I have supported them regardless of their race, regardless of their gender, regardless of their religion.

I confess to asking tough questions in committee. That is my job. When you are put on the Federal bench, you are there for life—for life. You are unelected, and you are there for life, and you have the full power of the United States of America, the most powerful country in all of human history, behind you, so you had better get it right.

Just a few years ago, for example, I voted to confirm one of President Biden's nominees, Mr.—now judge—Zahid Quraishi. Mr. Quraishi happened to be at the time the first Muslim-American Federal judge. I voted for him. He is doing a great job. Unlike Mr. Mangi, Judge Quraishi was not on the board of an organization that celebrates and advocates for the release of cop killers. He was not on the board of an organization that sponsors anti-American events and blames 9/11 on American imperialism. Judge Quraishi was qualified and is qualified to serve on the Federal bench. Mr. Mangi is not. He is just not. That is not Islamophobia; that is just a fact. And I think anyone who is being honest with themselves—particularly if you go look at the confirmation hearings and read the evidence—I think any person who is being honest with themselves would agree.

So, for these reasons, I ask my colleagues to oppose Mr. Mangi's nomination, and I urge President Biden to withdraw it.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

REMEMBERING PHIL HOWE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today, I rise to honor the life and mourn the loss, the passing, of a fellow Kansan, Phil Howe.

Mr. Howe lived most of his life in Manhattan, KS, and he loved his hometown. He was an active member of the community, a local businessowner, and a proud Kansas State University Wildcat.

The only place he may have loved more than Manhattan was his family's farm. During his younger years, Phil spent time at that farm. The farm was near Chapman and Solomon, where he enjoyed farming and fishing.

Phil attended Sacred Heart Academy and graduated in 1950. Afterward, he attended Kansas State University and completed a degree in business administration. Phil was also an active member of Beta Theta Pi Fraternity.

After graduating from Kansas State University, Phil married his wife, Margaret, and they were married for 57 years, until Margaret's passing 10 years ago.

Phil's career started at the Union National Bank, where he worked as a consumer loan officer. With years of banking experience, Phil decided to charter his own bank, to go out on his own, and, in 1969, the Kansas State Bank was opened. It was chartered and opened in a trailer home and now has grown to a nearly \$1 billion enterprise.

His interests in business did not stop with banking. Phil was elected to serve as president of the Griffith Oil Company and founded both Master Medical Company and Baystone Financial Group.

Years later, Phil served on the board of St. Mary's Hospital. He was an active member of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce and sat on the dean's business advisory council for Kansas State University.

Phil established foundations to help people across the Manhattan community and across our State of Kansas. Through the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation and the foundation's Youth Empowerment for Success Fund, he helped impact many, many lives, especially young people.

I would see Phil at Manhattan Rotary Club meetings. And I know I speak for many when I say Phil will be greatly and sadly missed.

Robba and I are praying for his family, his friends, and loved ones during this time. Robba attended the services this morning at Seven Dolors Catholic Church in Manhattan.

Mr. Howe was a respected businessman and community leader, the kind of person every community in Kansas wishes there were just more like him. More importantly, Phil was a kind and caring man of character and of faith—just what our State, our Nation, and world so desperately need today.

I offer these remarks with the greatest amount of respect and gratitude for a life well lived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

#### PUBLIC DEFENDER FUNDING

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, our judicial system is vital, and every player has an important role—from the judge to the prosecutor, to the public defender, to the bailiffs, to the jurors. Cuts to our Federal public defender program have caused real difficulties in meeting the constitutional obligation of the role that public defenders play in our justice system.

Every day, across the country, public defenders work to ensure that the Constitution is applied fairly and evenly to all, regardless of whether you are the richest or the poorest person in the

courtroom. By doing so, public defenders safeguard our democratic values, providing a necessary check and balance in our judicial system.

As the Senate's only former public defender, this is very personal to me, but it really is vital to all of us. I spent some of my first years after law school serving as a public defender in White River Junction, VT, and I saw firsthand how many people who find themselves in our criminal justice system are struggling with substance abuse or misuse, mental health challenges, and oftentimes both. And I saw how absolutely important it is that every person who comes into the courtroom gets as good a lawyer as those who walk in with a high-priced attorney.

The principles that public defenders represent are vital to what we believe in our Constitution: fidelity to due process and fidelity to equal treatment under the law. Those have been engrained in our country since its founding.

Mr. President, as I think you well know, John Adams—hardly a supporter of England—chose to represent British troops after the Boston Massacre. Why? Because he believed in the right to counsel, and he believed in the presumption of innocence, and that they were indispensable to our democracy. He had so much confidence in acting on those principles that it showed the confidence he had in the future of our country.

Public defenders are the direct descendants of those founding principles that underpin the rule of law so vital to our well-being.

As the Supreme Court recognized in 1938, when it required appointed counsel for Federal defendants, access to a competent lawyer is an "essential barrier against the arbitrary or unjust deprivation of human rights." That led the Court to realize, 25 years later, in the case of *Gideon v. Wainwright*, that the right to counsel is one of the fundamental rights for all of us who live in the United States. The Court's words then are as true today as they were before:

The right of one charged with crime to counsel may not be deemed fundamental and essential to fair trials in some countries, but it is in ours.

That is a confident country. It can live with the rule of law, and the rule of law requires representation. We will provide it, and we will make ourselves stronger for it.

For months, I have been talking to many of my colleagues, highlighting that there was a funding shortfall facing Federal public defenders. Six months ago, it looked like Federal defender offices across the country were going to have 10 percent personnel cuts. Those are very painful cuts, and really it was going to affect the quality of representation.

Instead, Congress acted, and Congress has basically corrected the shortfall in the final appropriations package released today. I understand that these

Federal funding levels will allow the Federal defenders to avoid layoffs this year and end what had been a proposed and very harsh hiring freeze.

I am so grateful. I am so grateful to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle: Chair PATTY MURRAY, Vice Chair SUSAN COLLINS, Chair CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, Ranking Member BILL HAGERTY, along with the chair of our Judiciary Committee, DICK DURBIN. All have worked diligently on this issue.

And I really want to thank the hard-working Appropriations staff for supporting the important role public defenders play in protecting our Constitution and our democracy and working as staff members to get the job done, with the leadership of their Senate leaders.

I ask that this budget cycle be a reminder and a lesson that we don't repeat this next year. The Constitution guarantees indigent criminal defendants the right to counsel, and it is our obligation to make certain that they are there, just as we pay for the salaries of prosecutors. The Administrative Office of the Courts has already submitted a budget request for next year that would allow us to honor this obligation.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to support public defenders throughout the next budget cycle.

This decision by this Congress in this budget to uphold and strengthen all of the people who play such a vital role in our justice system is an act of commitment and renewal to our constitutional principles, and it is an act of confidence in the future of our democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

##### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO MARY JANE COBB

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate Mary Jane Cobb for her career as executive director of the Iowa State Education Association. She began her distinguished career in education in 1994. After serving in a number of positions working with students across the country, Mary Jane came to Iowa in 2008. In her role with ISEA, she has worked with teachers and schools around the State on many issues affecting our students. Mary Jane had an impact on the education of hundreds of thousands of our students in Iowa. I congratulate her on her career and wish her a happy retirement.