

was aware of Steele's anti-Trump work even before the FBI started their investigation.

This is information that the Justice Department failed to tell the FISA Court. The Justice Department failed to even apprise the FISA Court that the FBI had a counterintelligence case on one of Steele's key sources. The Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee colluded with the Russians.

They used a former British spy, Fusion GPS, and a law firm to create a fake dossier and then tried to cover it up by misreporting it under the Federal election rules.

This case is referred to as "Crossfire Hurricane." It is a textbook example of government weaponization. It was to get Trump at all costs as they could.

And now that weaponization has moved to the judicial system, our last line of defense against partisan political cancer.

District Attorney Bragg manufactured a crime by reviving a time-barred, State-based misdemeanor for alleging falsifying business records. To revive the alleged crime and elevate it to a felony, he alleged it was done in furtherance of another crime, and he also alleged interference in the 2016 election by Donald Trump.

So what were these extra crimes? Violation of Federal election law, tax law, and other business records. The judge allowed District Attorney Bragg to essentially prosecute alleged Federal violations in State court, but because it was a State court, Bragg couldn't actually charge Trump for those further crimes, which were Federal in nature.

So what an absolute mess and scary precedent this partisan process has created that is going to be a sore on public policy, statutory law, and a precedent to be carried on by other prosecutors in the future.

This was a case that Bragg initially declined to prosecute, just as his predecessor declined to prosecute. And that was a case that Federal prosecutors in the Southern District of New York declined and so, too, and as well did the Federal Election Commission.

Now, that prosecutor in Manhattan that failed to prosecute the same things that Bragg prosecuted was well-respected Cyrus Vance, Jr.

Now, we have Bragg taking up what an outstanding prosecutor by the name of Vance would not do. Even liberal legal analysts have noted that this case wouldn't have been brought against anyone other than Donald Trump.

A State prosecutor has no jurisdiction over a Federal crime, whereas the Justice Department does. And here the Justice Department and the Federal Election Commission have exclusive jurisdiction over these kinds of matters.

The Biden Justice Department didn't do anything to assert its jurisdictional hook as it routinely does when, for ex-

ample, States file lawsuits involving Federal immigration law.

Biden's No. 3 official at the Justice Department, Matthew Colangelo, left that perch to work as a line prosecutor in the Bragg office for this specific prosecution.

Eventually, the "zombie" case against Trump, as it has been described by legal scholars, was revived just in time for the 2024 Presidential election cycle. In fact, the grand jury came out with a verdict less than 2 months after Trump announced for the election.

Then, the judge allowed the jury to pick from not one but three different secondary crimes that I mentioned earlier that Trump allegedly committed to impact the 2016 election. This means that jurors could disagree on the crime. Yet the judge would still consider the verdict unanimous to convict.

As Andrew McCarthy said in his June 1, 2024, article, "The jurors were told that they needn't agree on what unlawful conduct Trump had engaged in to conspire to corrupt the election (which remember was not charged in the indictment.)"

This is a judge who repeatedly contributed to a group "dedicated to resisting the Republican Party and Donald Trump's radical right-wing legacy."

And McCarthy wrote in his article, "How can there be guilt beyond a reasonable doubt if the jury doesn't agree on whether prosecutors have proved a key element of the case?"

I could go on and on about the defects in this political persecution. What concerns me most is the damage that is done to our American institutions.

Federal law enforcement, the intelligence community, and now the judicial branch have contorted themselves in ways unimaginable just to try and, at the same time, destroy Trump. In the process, they have broken faith with the laws, with the rules, with ethics, with the truth, and with the American people.

The steel and concrete foundations of our law enforcement and the judicial institutions are breaking apart, piece by piece, bit by bit. It is not the American people who are doing it. It is those charged with running those institutions who are responsible for their shockingly quick decline.

That decline won't stop anytime soon so long as the left and their allies in the media continue to use the judicial system to destroy their enemies based upon make-believe cases.

The leftwing's lawfare crusade has given them what they wanted for a decade now: Donald Trump's conviction on something, anything, just a conviction.

But what the leftwing has failed to foresee is the aftermath of their injecting partisan political cancer into our once storied institutions; that is, they run the catastrophic risk of the American people not caring anymore. Did the Justice Department indict someone on major criminal charges? Well, many

people may react with doubt about the merits and the integrity of that indictment because of the Justice Department's past political decisions.

Did the FBI arrest a major criminal? Well, many people may begin to question whether the person arrested is now a part of a political persecution based on made-up information like what happened with the FISA Court and Crossfire Hurricane and everything involving Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election.

A Democratic judge and prosecution team tried and convicted a Republican in a district that is almost 90 percent Democratic voters. They asked for going to someplace else where they might get a more fair trial, and they got a quick no.

So I hope you get the picture. That is why millions of Americans refuse to take this sham conviction very seriously. Trust is easy to lose, and trust is hard to gain.

Andrew McCarthy stated in his excellent analysis:

What happened in Manhattan was monstrous. The fallout is the antithesis of a constitutional republic that presumes innocence, imposes the burden of proof on the state, venerates its due-process rules, and guarantees equal protection of the law. The antithesis is now the norm. Regardless of what happens to Donald Trump, all of us will live to regret it.

Ultimately, only "We the People" can solve the constitutional crisis that politicians, law enforcement, and judicial officers have disgracefully created.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, as the presiding officer knows, I have come regularly to the floor to discuss multiple aspects of the scheme run by a bunch of rightwing billionaires to capture and control the Supreme Court and how that has come to affect so many Americans' lives.

Well, in case there were not enough ethics problems already at the Supreme Court after the billionaire gift program for certain Justices gave them luxurious, free, undisclosed travel gifts around the world, paid for homes for parents, education for dependents, and even an expensive motor coach that appears never to have had the principal repaid.

Now we know that MAGA battle flags were flown over the Alito residences. We don't know all the facts of what happened. We do know that Alito's version of events differs from corroborated statements of other witnesses to

those events, and for sure we know that people need to be able to trust that judges maintain the highest standards of impartiality, which includes avoiding even the appearance of bias.

And say what you will about the excuses and the reasons for flying MAGA battle flags over the house of a Supreme Court Justice, you cannot say that those flags did not appear. You cannot say that they did not create an appearance that, to a reasonable person, would raise serious questions about whether that Justice flying MAGA battle flags over his home had a bias, particularly with respect to cases arising out of the January 6 MAGA insurrection.

Whatever those fact differences are, they are important to try to get to the bottom of. And the problem is: It is hard to get those fact differences resolved because alone in the entire Federal Government—alone—Supreme Court Justices are subject to no fact-finding process. If the presiding officer or me or the minority leader or the majority leader were subject to ethics complaints here in the Senate, our Ethics Committee has the ability to investigate and to do factfinding, and even to take statements. It is true over in the House as well. Even the powerful Speaker of the House can be subject to sanction, can be subject to investigation, and to have to make statements. Heck, President Biden sat for an official interview about the documents in his garage. But the Justices—and only the nine Justices—are protected even from any factfinding, the most rudimentary foundation of legal process.

And it is ironic because, in theory, the Supreme Court is supposed to defend the integrity of legal process in this country, and what they do is they exempt themselves from its most rudimentary pillar.

Obviously, this is all part of a long string of problematic behavior that has come to the public's attention, none of which has received adequate fact-finding over at the Court.

So, for sure, these far-right Justices have demonstrated they need to be subject to an enforceable ethics code. You remember the routine they have been on? First it was: Don't bother us. This is nobody's concern.

And then it was: Oh, all right. We have this ethics statements that we are going to put out about our ethics.

And that wasn't good enough. So it was then: OK. OK. We will do an ethics code.

But it is like: We will play by the rules of baseball, except for that part about umpires. So we will have an ethics code. We will play by the rules of baseball, but we will get to call our own balls and strikes, and we will get to call ourselves safe on base every time, and there will be no dispute because there is no factfinding to be done.

We also know that the Justices won't talk to us about their messes, about

this problem. Justice Roberts just declined a meeting with the chairs of the Judiciary Committee and the Court's Subcommittee.

Alito sent us a letter expanding on his challenged version of events, but his correspondence is not subject to the veracity discipline of any sanction for falsehoods and omissions.

Again, and making matters worse, Alito's story conflicts with the accounts of other people involved, and the Supreme Court, uniquely in all of government, has no mechanism for getting to the truth. So if the Court won't create one, then we need to. And my Supreme Court ethics bill would do just that.

Every investigator knows that you have to take a proper statement to get to the truth. The Supreme Court itself took statements from employees when it was investigating the Alito-Dobbs draft opinion leak.

But no matter what the circumstances, no matter how bad it gets, no factfinding process applies to the nine Justices—just them. Everybody else in the government is subject to some factfinding process—not them. That can be fixed.

Nowhere is the Supreme Court forbidden to have an inbox for ethics complaints. Nowhere is the Supreme Court forbidden to hire clerical staff to sort out nutty from legitimate ethics complaints. Nowhere is the Court forbidden to hire staff attorneys to look into the legitimate ethics complaints and do a little investigating. Nowhere is the Court forbidden to allow the staff attorneys to interview Justices to help determine what the facts are.

"I am sorry, sir. This should take less than an hour, but I need to go through the events in this complaint and get your statement of what the facts are here." That is not hard.

And nowhere is the Court forbidden from allowing, for instance, a panel of senior respected Federal chief judges who administer the ethics code in their own circuits to compare what the Justices did, what the factfinding investigation revealed, with what those chief judges would allow in their circuits and then make that comparison public.

None of that offends the separation of powers. It would be all run within the judicial branch. And even without any actual disciplinary punishment, the rebuke of a Supreme Court Justice being told that their conduct wouldn't fly in other Federal courts would be a powerful corrective and deterrent.

There is an old saying that the best way to show one stick is crooked is to lay a straight stick down next to it. A panel of senior and respected Chief Judges could provide that straight stick. Even on an advisory basis, the straight stick would be valuable.

And we are going to continue working both on the Judiciary and Finance Committees to get to the bottom of the mischief at the Court.

252ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE "GASPEE" RAID

Madam President, now, if I may, I would like to change the topic to my favorite annual presentation here in the Senate, and that is to commemorate the anniversary of the burning of the Gaspee.

The Gaspee was a revenue cutter of the Royal Navy that was operating in Rhode Island waters, annoying and harassing the shipowners and the crews who were engaged in maritime trade. And they got so fed up that, one day, a trading ship called the Hannah was working her way up Narragansett Bay, and the Gaspee came along and instructed the Hannah that it should pull up and allow itself to be inspected, boarded, and potentially seized by Her Majesty's government.

They were doing a lot of that, by the way. It might have come back to bite them.

There was a ship called the Fortune, which was owned by a Rhode Islander. It was seized, taken up to Boston, and sold. And, at the time, one of the owners was not all that involved in the activities that led to the Revolution, but he got a little bit motivated when his boat got seized and his cargo seized and all of his goods were taken and the value shipped back to the King. He was Nathanael Greene. He ended up becoming Washington's aide-de-camp. He ended up running the southern campaign for George Washington. And the British general who was trying to manage the American Revolution wrote back to his wife: That damn Greene is more dangerous than Washington.

So it can be provoking to have your ship seized.

Anyway, there is the Hannah sailing up the bay. Here comes the Gaspee in hot pursuit. The Hannah has a wily captain who knows the waters quite well and sails the Hannah over shallows, where a river comes into the bay and leaves a sandy trail along the bottom.

And so the Hannah shoots over the shallows, and along comes the rather bigger, more lumbering Gaspee and grinds into the sandbar. And it is stuck. And the tide is falling. So it is going to be there for a while.

So up goes the Hannah to Providence and reports on how they tricked the Gaspee into grounding itself on the sandbar. And, that night, drums are beat on the streets of Providence. Refreshments are served. And a gang of worthy Rhode Islanders decide to go down and fix the Gaspee, once and for all.

And six or seven longboats rowed down that night, under cover of darkness, with muffled oars, and they approached the Gaspee. They told its captain to surrender or they would board it and sack it. Captain Dudingston said he was not going to do that.

There was an exchange of gunfire, and the captain of the ship, whose actual rank was lieutenant—Lieutenant Dudingston—was shot in that exchange. He survived his wounds. He

was taken ashore by the Rhode Islanders, provided medical care, and ended up retiring back to his native Scotland, all well.

But that moment was probably the first blood drawn in the conflict that ultimately became the American Revolution.

So they did, in fact, take over the boat. They swarmed up the sides of it. They captured the crew. They took them all ashore. And then they went back out, and they lit the boat on fire.

Here is a rendition of what the Gaspee looked like burning, stuck on the sandbar. Of course, when the fire got to the powder magazine—boom. It went off like a bomb. We are still trying to find pieces of the Gaspee there, but it got blown to such smithereens that nobody has yet been able to find anything, despite some fairly diligent efforts.

We love the Gaspee in Rhode Island. Here is a new license plate commemorating “Gaspee Days,” showing the Gaspee all on fire, getting ready to blow up.

And here is what is interesting about it. I did an interview with the Washington Post.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the interview appended at the end of my remarks here.

This is from that article.

Pretty much everybody here—I suspect all of the pages who are here on the floor—know exactly what the Boston Tea Party is. Massachusetts has seen to it, over many, many years, that everybody knows what the Boston Tea Party was.

Well, as the story relates, 18 months before colonists dumped tea in Boston Harbor, Rhode Islanders attacked and destroyed a British Navy ship off the coast near Providence, furious with what they saw as the Crown’s overreach—18 months before.

You know, in Rhode Island, we sometimes have a little chip on our shoulder about being overlooked by our bigger northern neighbor—our northern suburbs, some might say. But, you know, when you actually blow up the damn boat and that is lost to history, but then up in Massachusetts, more than a year later, they push tea bags off the boat into the harbor and they get the credit for the great revolutionary activity, I want to come to the floor and do my very best to make that correction to history.

And one of the things that is nice is that people are starting to write more and more about this.

I will close by referencing “The Burning of His Majesty’s Schooner Gaspee,” a history of the event surrounding that incident, by Steven Park. And then in Nick Bunker’s book, “An Empire on the Edge,” he has an entire chapter inside, “The dark affair, the Gaspee incident,” that describes what was done.

And our Secretary of State’s office put together this presentation on the

Gaspee affair. It was titled “Gaspee: The Spark that Ignited the American Revolution.”

So I am here to commend the Rhode Islanders who struck that spark 18 months before those Massachusetts worthies drank their share of whatever they needed to do to actually get on a boat and push tea bags into the harbor—pretty brave. Nothing against them doing that, but—I mean, seriously—we captured the boat, we shot the captain, and then we blew the damn boat up. I think that merits mention in American history.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Dec. 14, 2023]

BOSTON TEA PARTY? RHODE ISLAND SAYS ITS REBELLION WAS FIRST—AND JUST AS IMPORTANT

(By Dan Diamond)

You’d be forgiven for thinking you know this story.

American colonists, itching for independence, stormed a British vessel. A spark in New England helped ignite a national revolution.

But this was not the Boston Tea Party.

Eighteen months before colonists dumped tea in Boston Harbor—an event that marks its 250th anniversary this week—Rhode Islanders attacked and destroyed a British navy ship off the coast near Providence, furious with what they saw as the crown’s overreach.

The burning of the HMS Gaspee on June 10, 1772, was the first major armed act of rebellion by the American colonists, Rhode Island historians and officials maintain. And the resulting fallout—with King George III demanding that the perpetrators be held accountable in a showdown between the colonial legal system and the British courts—helped unify the colonies for the war to come.

“[T]his is a Matter in which the whole American Continent is deeply concerned and a Submission of the Colony of Rhode Island to this enormous Claim of power would be made a Precedent for all the rest,” founding father Samuel Adams wrote to Rhode Island’s deputy governor in January 1773.

But the Gaspee affair, which shook the colonies and rattled the crown, has been largely forgotten outside of Rhode Island. It’s been overlooked in U.S. history classes and remains little studied by historians of the American Revolution. The Washington Post reviewed six high school and college U.S. history textbooks and found no mention of the burning of the Gaspee, even as multiple pages were devoted to later—and, in the minds of many Rhode Islanders, lesser—events such as the Boston Tea Party.

“Nobody knows that well before anybody pushed a tea bag off a civilian ship in the Boston Harbor, Rhode Islanders blew up a military vessel,” Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) said in a recent interview in his office—sitting in front of a painting that depicts the burning of the Gaspee.

The senator from Rhode Island has repeatedly given speeches that celebrate the Gaspee raiders, and he’s denounced the attention paid to Massachusetts, saying that leaders of his neighboring state have spent centuries spinning their own history.

“They got drunk, painted themselves like Indians and pushed tea bags into the Boston Harbor, which we in Rhode Island think is pretty weak tea compared to blowing up the goddamn boat and shooting its captain,”

Whitehouse told The Post. “But you know, all those Massachusetts people went on to become president and run Harvard . . . so they told their story, and their story, and their story.”

Rhode Island-based historians agreed that the Gaspee affair is a case study in how important chapters in history become, well, history. The state’s own firsts—Rhode Island, for example, was the first colony to declare independence from Britain on May 4, 1776, two months before the other 12 colonies—tend to get relegated to footnotes in national stories about the revolution.

“So much focus is put into Massachusetts history, and Rhode Island gets overlooked,” said Kathy Abbass, the principal investigator of the Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project, which is working to locate the wreckage of the Gaspee off the shore of Warwick, R.I. “Partly that’s because the early histories were written by professors at Harvard and Yale, which set the tone for all the histories that came later.”

#### THE ATTACK ON THE GASPEE

There’s little dispute over the events leading up to the burning of the Gaspee—only how historically significant they were.

In Rhode Island, as across the colonies, residents were bristling at the taxes, fees and other burdens imposed by a British parliament an ocean away. That parliament, meanwhile, grew frustrated by what leaders saw as Americans’ efforts to evade the responsibilities of being part of the British Empire.

“The British were trying to raise money by capturing vessels that were sneaking stuff in and not paying duty,” Abbass said. “And yes, of course we were smugglers [in Rhode Island]—there’s no doubt about that.”

Commanded by Lieutenant William Dudingston, a Scottish naval officer, the Gaspee sailed into Narragansett Bay in early 1772, seeking to enforce trade laws that the American colonists were increasingly flouting. The British ship began to abruptly board colonial vessels off the coast of Rhode Island and seize their cargo, such as barrels of smuggled rum. Accusations soon proliferated that the Gaspee’s crew was stealing sheep and hogs from local farmers, and cutting down their fruit trees for firewood.

Rhode Islanders compared Dudingston to a pirate, sued him in a local court (which found against him) and even sought his arrest. But the British warned that anyone who attempted to interfere in the Gaspee’s work would be executed.

“Let them be cautious what they do; for as sure as they attempt it, and any of them are taken, I will hang them as pirates,” British Adm. John Montagu wrote to Rhode Island’s governor in April 1772.

Then came June 9.

A small ship called the Hannah, reportedly owned by Rhode Island entrepreneur John Brown, was headed toward Providence. It refused the Gaspee’s exhortations to stop—probably because the Hannah carried illegal cargo—and the British gave chase. But the Hannah’s captain, a local man named Benjamin Lindsey, knew the area better than Dudingston, and he led the Gaspee into waters that had receded because of the daily tides. The British ship ended up stuck on a sandbar, waiting for the tides to change again hours later.

The Hannah successfully slipped away to Providence, where Lindsey quickly recounted his tale to Brown, one of the city’s leading merchants, who was a member of the loose resistance movement known as the Sons of Liberty and part of the family that helped found Brown University, the Ivy League university that would later bear its name.

Brown was also a smuggler—one of Rhode Island's most notorious, Abbass said—and had been nursing a grudge against Dudingston and his ship.

Learning that the Gaspee was temporarily marooned, “Mr. Brown immediately resolved on her destruction,” Ephraim Bowen, a local man who was among the several dozen men who joined Brown, would recount decades later.

As many as 60 men gathered in the Providence harbor that evening, launching boats and muffling their oars to quietly row out to the Gaspee under cover of darkness. As they approached the ship, a confrontation began—with one of the Gaspee raiders asserting that Dudingston was a criminal who had evaded the local law, Bowen recounted—that led to Dudingston being shot in the groin and arm and all of the ship's crew being taken from the vessel.

The Rhode Islanders burned the Gaspee to the water line early on the morning of June 10. Then the gunpowder on board exploded, sending pieces of the ship flying.

As news of the attack made its way to London, British leaders seethed. In a royal proclamation, King George III offered a reward of up to 1,000 pounds sterling—more than \$150,000 in today's currency—to anyone who could help identify and convict the “outrageous and heinous Offenders” behind the ship's burning. He also established a commission to conduct a formal inquiry, and the British vowed to transport any colonists indicted in the attack to England for trial and, almost certainly, execution.

But no arrests were ever made. Rhode Islanders refused to volunteer information about the Gaspee raiders, and local officials found ways to slow or stymie the British investigation. Colonial leaders further argued that anyone involved in the Gaspee's burning should face a jury of their peers in America. A Rhode Island sheriff even arrested Dudingston as he recovered from his wounds, charging him for the Gaspee's previous seizures of cargo.

Meanwhile, the nation's founding fathers exchanged fervent messages about the Gaspee's burning and the British response, setting up the committees of correspondence that helped them coordinate strategies in the years to come.

Adams, particularly, warned that Britain's determination to pursue the Gaspee affair, and the discussion of the deployment of troops, could lead to a cascade of events that might spark “a most violent political Earthquake through the whole British Empire if not its total Destruction,” he wrote in January 1773 to Rhode Island's deputy governor, Darius Sessions.

“I have long feared that this unhappy Contest between Britain & America will end in Rivers of Blood,” Adams wrote.

#### AN ‘UNCELEBRATED BURNING’ IS FORGOTTEN

Most of the Rhode Islanders involved in the burning of the Gaspee successfully concealed their identities from the British and even other colonials, helping confound the crown's probe. In some ways, their effort to hide was too successful: Even today, about half the men who burned the Gaspee are unknown.

But as the American Revolution began to slip out of living memory, Rhode Islanders tried to lay a claim to the first shot fired.

“The first blood that was shed in the revolutionary contest, by that very act begun, stained her deck, and it was drawn by a Rhode Island hand,” William Hunter, a former U.S. senator from Rhode Island, said in an address on July 4, 1826—50 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. “Yes, the blood of Lieutenant Duddington was the first blood drawn in the American cause.”

Those efforts to highlight the Gaspee affair had limited success. In the fight over the American legacy, Rhode Island would end up largely nudged to the side—a casualty of a battle between larger states, chiefly Massachusetts and Virginia, that were disproportionately home to some of the era's most influential figures.

“There was a very busy group of Boston-based intellectuals who were eager to frame Boston as the driver of the revolution and Bostonians as the inheritors of the legacy of the revolution,” said Nat Sheidley, a historian who runs Revolutionary Spaces, a Boston-based organization that runs public programs about colonial America—including this week's anniversary of the tea party. He added that America's elite leaders initially downplayed a number of revolutionary events, such as the destruction of tea in Boston's harbor, fearing that it would undermine the sense of order in the young nation.

“But by the 1830s, it felt a little bit safer to go there,” Sheidley said. “And so that's the moment where . . . the name ‘Tea Party’ is invented, and it becomes popularized as a story of what led us to the revolution.”

A century later, a 1922 New York Times article detailed “the uncelebrated burning” of the Gaspee and asked why the Boston Tea Party had developed a “much stronger hold” upon Americans.

“[A]s an exhibition of daring the tea party was literally a tea party and nothing more compared with the Gaspee incident,” Jonathan A. Rawson Jr. wrote in the Times.

#### THE GASPEE AFFAIR'S PLACE IN HISTORY

Even today, some historians are largely unfamiliar with the Gaspee or suggest that its burning was a regional matter. The Post found. But in Rhode Island, lore about the Gaspee is thriving. For 57 years, local volunteers have held an annual celebration—known as Gaspee Days—featuring a parade to celebrate the burning of the ship, which is increasingly joined by government officials, reenactors and thousands of residents.

“Declare your independence from bank fees!” reads one ad from a local credit union in last year's 250th anniversary booklet.

Other efforts abound. Rhode Island's secretary of state offers free Gaspee posters on demand. A Brown University instructor created a virtual reality app that allows users to be immersed in a reenactment of the story. A license plate depicting the burning of the Gaspee became available to state drivers this fall—and it looks “wicked cool,” said John Concannon, a retired pediatrician who is Gaspee Days' historian.

It's all part of a larger state goal: to ensure that the burning of the Gaspee is never forgotten again. Historians who have studied the event said that it merits more mention, particularly in textbooks.

“The thing about the Gaspee that is important was that the king took notice,” said Abbass, who has written about other colonial attacks on British vessels that preceded the burning of the Gaspee but provoked negligible reaction from the crown.

The king's intervention also led to a British attempt to circumvent the colonial courts, causing alarm and ultimately backfiring on the crown, Concannon said. He argued that several articles in the Declaration of Independence, including the right to a jury of one's peers, stem from the Gaspee affair—a more significant contribution to that document than made by the Boston Tea Party, he said.

That's one reason this weekend's latest celebration of the events in Massachusetts continues to vex Rhode Islanders. When it comes to the founding of America, Concannon said, the burning of the Gaspee is “just as important.”

Philip Bump, Azi Paybarah and Dan Lamothe contributed to this report.

#### CORRECTION

Because of a transcription error, an earlier version of this story initially misquoted Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) as saying the Boston Tea Party participants “painted themselves like idiots.” In fact, he said they “painted themselves like Indians.” This version has been corrected.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. And with that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, hurricane season started on June 1; and although we, of course, feel that particularly in Louisiana, I will note that last year, a hurricane hit Southern California. So this is something which can happen all over our Nation, and people in Louisiana know what people in California have learned: When there is a hurricane, there can be flooding. Now, we—I say “we” as we in Louisiana but, hopefully, people all over—know how to prepare; but this year, unfortunately, fewer people in Louisiana and fewer people nationwide will be able to count on the National Flood Insurance Program to help them in case they do flood.

The National Flood Insurance Program, or the NFIP, was created as a safety net for the most vulnerable Americans. The stereotype is that this is only for rich people who build properties on coastal islands which are bound to flood. The reality is these are working families. These are folks who have no place else to move. These are folks who have spent decades in communities that have never flooded; yet, nonetheless, they are left without the protection of the National Flood Insurance Program. The NFIP covers 4.7 million American homes, but because of the new FEMA risk assessment system, called Risk Rating 2.0, there has been an unprecedented spike in insurance premiums, making them unaffordable and causing people to drop their coverage.

I speak to constituents constantly about flood insurance. I just want to, if I can, channel my constituents onto the floor of the U.S. Senate and, perhaps, through C-SPAN and, perhaps, through the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD speak to the Nation through folks who feel as if they are not being heard.

I recently heard from a constituent in Larose, LA, who switched from the NFIP to a private insurance carrier because he could not afford his national flood insurance plan. Now, the private insurance plan isn't cheap—it is \$2,200 a year—but he would have paid NFIP somewhere between \$4,500 and \$5,000 a