

Tomorrow, we honor the anniversary of September 11; and as we do so, we rededicate ourselves to the promise of “never forget.”

Well, that is what this morning’s ceremony will be all about. We will never, never forget the sacrifice of the fallen 13 servicemembers. We will never forget the obligation we all have to our troops in uniform and to care for them. We will never forget our duty to keep going, to defend the values of freedom and democracy that they so nobly fought for.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

#### COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as students head back to school, college campuses across the country are hoping this academic year begins more calmly than the last one ended.

Back in May, the tantrums of campus radicals made some elite schools so inhospitable to learning, particularly for Jewish students, that administrators were driven to cancel commencement ceremonies. Since then, Columbia University’s president has resigned, along with three deans who were put on notice for anti-Semitic comments made about a panel on Jewish life on campus back in May.

These are, of course, steps in the right direction for an Ivy League institution that professes—professes—a commitment to “thoughtful, rigorous debate” and a campus culture “free of bigotry, intimidation, and harassment,” but Columbia and other universities have a great deal of work still to do to earn back the trust of students, parents, and alumni alike.

Other recent personnel decisions actually inspire less confidence. Remember, for example, the Columbia doctoral student who served as the unofficial spokesperson of the violent Hamasnik mob that forcefully occupied a campus building? In between her studies of Marxist poetry, she demanded that campus officials provide the trespassers with food and water. Months later, she is now scheduled to teach a required course for undergraduates on nothing less than contemporary Western civilization.

So the decline in the Ivy League’s academic rigor is well-documented, but it would seem that, at a bare minimum, its instructors ought to be able to distinguish between civilization and barbarism and to act accordingly. A survey conducted over the summer by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression found that 72 percent of

college students agreed that, in at least rare circumstances, it could be acceptable for students to have an encampment as part of a campus protest, and more than one-third agree that it would be acceptable to deface school property.

I have to wonder whether a survey of the parents of college students or, for that matter, the campus staff who clean up their misbehavior, wouldn’t paint a different picture.

Unfortunately, what used to be a reliable path to the middle class appears to have turned into a breeding ground for childish radicalism. Fortunately, this radicalism may begin to face limits to its own upward mobility.

Earlier this year, over a dozen Federal judges described Columbia as an “incubator of bigotry”; declared that they had “lost confidence in Columbia as an institution of higher education”; and announced that they will not hire law clerks from Columbia Law School until it undertakes serious reforms.

Predictably, this news is met with howling from liberal busybodies. In fact—get this—a State prisoner even filed an ethics complaint against a number of judges.

Apparently, the left would have the signs outside America’s courthouses read: “Hate must have a home here.”

Fortunately, Chief Judge Richman of the Fifth Circuit wasn’t having it. She observed in her opinion dismissing a complaint that “judges . . . have discretion to refuse to hire law clerks who graduated from a university that does not foster what the judges believe to be important aspects of higher education, such as viewpoint diversity and tolerance and differing viewpoints.” Indeed.

Columbia would do well to heed these judges’ warning, and their colleagues on the bench would do well to heed their example.

Meanwhile, the Biden-Harris administration hasn’t skipped a beat in ensuring that taxpayer dollars go toward subsidizing the post-modern indoctrination on display in so many American towns.

Over the summer, the Supreme Court upheld a stay on the administration’s SAVE plan. But the administration still won’t take no for an answer, pushing forward with yet another version of student loan socialism.

Last week, the scheme hit another roadblock in Federal court.

Remember, the Penn-Wharton model has estimated that previous iterations of this scheme would have cost taxpayers tens of billions of dollars. Even left-leaning think tanks have criticized student loan socialism for the regressive nature of its beneficiaries. But the Biden-Harris administration, like the Marxists of Morningside Heights, keep coming back for more.

#### JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, now on another matter, as we reconvene this week, the Democratic leader announced the Senate would, in his words, “continue confirming the Biden-Harris administra-

tion’s well-qualified judges and nominees.” Nearly all the way through the administration’s term, our colleagues would be right to wonder: What does he mean by “well-qualified”?

The Biden-Harris administration described Julie Su as well qualified to serve as Secretary of Labor after presiding over \$30 billion in unemployment fraud in her home State of California.

Undoubtedly, the White House also sold Rachel Rollins as well qualified to serve as U.S. attorney in her home State of Massachusetts, a position from which she resigned last year after she was caught attempting to influence an election and lying about it to investigators.

So it may be worth taking the term “well-qualified” with a grain of salt—even more so when you consider who is in this administration’s pipeline of upcoming nominees.

There are, of course, the ones about which the Senate has learned alarming and disqualifying details since we began our consideration, like Adeel Mangi, whose associations with terrorist apologists and advocates for cop killers seem only to have grown as the Judiciary Committee questioned him under oath; or Sparkle Sooknanan, who couldn’t seem to give our colleagues on the committee a straight answer about the nature of her involvement in advocacy for hedge funds’ right to collect on Puerto Rican debts; or Embry Kidd, who misled the committee about his record of letting sex offenders off easily.

There is the one so staggeringly unfit for life tenure on the Federal bench that the Judiciary Committee rejected her nomination itself: Sarah Netburn, whose political activism from the bench and failure to render timely decisions on the compensation claims of grieving 9/11 families cast doubt on both her ethics and her professional competence.

And there are the ones who, without a heavy dose of nepotism, wouldn’t have seen the inside of a Senate hearing room—from Kevin Ritz to Karla Campbell to Julia Lipez.

So the Democratic leader would have to forgive some of us for not suspending our disbelief. I can assure our colleagues that Senate Republicans are no more inclined today than we were in July to rubberstamp radicals for the Federal bench.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, have you ever seen an ad for a pharmaceutical’s prescription drugs on television? If the answer is no, then I would suggest you don’t own a television, because literally every single day we are bombarded with ads for pharmaceuticals. And they are very profitable because the drugs themselves are expensive, and people are encouraged to say to their doctors: I think I need Xarelto.

And the doctor might have to tell them: Xarelto has nothing to do with your current physical condition.

But, doctor, I have seen it on television so many times, and those people seem so happy. They are dancing once they take Xarelto.

Well, the doctors have to, many times, warn them about being lured into believing that it is something they need.

But there are people who definitely do need prescription drugs, and we know that story as well. But many people, despite their best efforts to comply with what the doctor wants, can't afford it.

Drugs cost a lot of money. In fact, they cost dramatically more money for exactly the same drugs in the United States as those for sale in Canada.

Why? Because the Canadian Government cares and the Canadian Government has laws that limit the prices that can be charged to Canadians in their health system for the same prescription drugs. Many times, we don't have that.

When he was campaigning for President in 2016, Donald Trump made it clear where he stood on this. I quote him: "When it comes time to negotiate the cost of drugs, we are going to negotiate like crazy," he said in 2016. Then he got elected, and he said: Fixing the injustice of high drug prices is one of the top Trump priorities. Prices will come down, he said. But they never did. Despite years of talk, Trump failed—no greatness there.

Thankfully, President Biden and Vice President HARRIS did more than just talk; they delivered. You see, for decades, the Medicare Program was blocked from bargaining with Big Pharma. Many of us kept arguing: Well, we let the Veterans Administration bargain to get lower prices for our veterans. Why wouldn't we do the same for elderly Americans?

But we changed that. We changed it in a bill called the Inflation Reduction Act.

Last month, President Biden and Vice President HARRIS succeeded in negotiating with pharmaceutical companies to lower prices for 10 of the most expensive drugs under Medicare. Some of the prices were lowered by up to 79 percent. As a result of this negotiation, 9 million seniors will save a total of \$1.5 billion each year in copays on these 10 drugs. That is real money, real savings for real people.

For example, 142,000 seniors in Illinois take Xarelto or Eliquis as a blood thinner, costing Medicare nearly \$25 billion last year. But thanks to the new law, Medicare was able to negotiate a price reduction of 60 percent, up to \$3,840 off the annual pricetag for seniors who were taking these two blood thinners.

Last week, I met with pharmacists from the University of Illinois in Chicago. They shared with me how many patients are forced to ration doses between paychecks. They said that should not be a reality in our Nation.

Well, we are just getting started. Next year, Medicare will negotiate lower prices for another 15 drugs, and another 20 the year after that.

We also capped the price of insulin to \$35, thanks to the Presiding Officer, saving 50,000 seniors in Illinois approximately \$500 next year.

We made vaccines under Medicare free. Vaccines can be expensive. The shingles vaccine cost up to \$385. Now they are free for seniors.

Starting in January, we will impose a \$2,000 annual cap on out-of-pocket costs for seniors, no matter how expensive their medications are.

But let me remind you—this is for a matter of record: Every single Republican Senator voted against these prescription drug savings. That bears repeating. Every single Republican Senator in this Chamber voted against this effort to lower prescription drug prices.

While Big Pharma has raked in many millions and billions of dollars, they have also worked to block this law. They have Republican allies in Congress plotting how to repeal these historic price savings.

How can the Republicans explain that? You have got seniors, many on fixed incomes, with expensive drugs that they need to stay alive, and they can't afford them.

We believe those prices ought to come down for those seniors, like insulin. That is a life-or-death drug for many people. The fact that we want to lower prices for seniors is just common sense.

So how do the Republicans explain it? You heard it earlier. Anyone who wants the government to step in and negotiate lower prices is a Marxist, a socialist, a communist. You hear this over and over again.

Well, if you are a student of history, this is nothing new. That is what they said about Social Security. That is what they said about Medicare and Medicaid. They believe that there is just way too much government for the government to step in and lower prescription drug prices. I don't. I think that is a reasonable role by government.

Remember, these same prescription drugs—virtually all of them—began with federally paid research, medical research by the National Institutes of Health, which taxpayers pay for. And the companies develop the drugs, and I thank God they do. But to say we should have nothing to say about the cost of those drugs and the burden they place on seniors is just unreasonable.

When it comes to critical medications, no one should have to choose between their wallet and their life.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. President, on one other topic of importance, for more than a year, story after story has broken about the ethical misconduct by sitting Supreme Court Justices. We are talking about the highest Court in the land, the nine men and women sitting on the Supreme Court who are not governed by

the same rules of conduct and ethical standards as every other Federal judge in America. They warrant special treatment.

Justice Clarence Thomas has been at the center of many of these stories. For decades—decades—he has accepted lavish gifts and luxury trips from a gaggle of fawning billionaires. The total dollar value we estimated for these gifts accepted by Clarence Thomas, by and large never disclosed, is \$4 million. Get that: A Supreme Court Justice in the highest Court in the land, life-and-death decisions every day, and he is receiving \$4 million in gifts that he doesn't disclose.

Justice Thomas has failed to disclose a vast majority of these gifts, in clear violation of financial disclosure requirements under Federal law.

Late last week, another story broke. I am hesitant to raise this story because it involves Justice Thomas's spouse, but I can no longer avoid the obvious. She is a political activist, and her activism raises serious ethical questions.

According to public reporting, Justice Thomas's wife Ginni sent an email to Kelly Shackelford, who runs the First Liberty Institute. This rightwing organization, which is on the advisory board of Project 2025, which we are learning more about, frequently litigates before the Supreme Court and strongly opposes Supreme Court ethics reform.

In her email, Clarence Thomas's wife Ginni thanked the organization for its opposition to court reform—ethical reform—writing, all in caps:

YOU GUYS HAVE FILLED THE SAILS OF MANY JUDGES. CAN I JUST TELL YOU, THANK YOU SO, SO, SO MUCH.

When asked about her efforts to overturn the 2020 election, Ginni Thomas told Congress that she and Justice Thomas just don't discuss each other's work. That is a little hard to believe, isn't it, when you see the missive that she sent to this organization.

Her comments on behalf of judges create a clear appearance of impropriety for Justice Clarence Thomas. Accordingly, I have called for Justice Thomas to recuse himself from any future case involving First Liberty Institute.

This is not the first time that Ginni Thomas's actions have raised serious questions about her husband, Justice Clarence Thomas's ability to fairly hear cases before the Supreme Court.

Ginni Thomas is a political operative who regularly works with rightwing groups on issues being litigated before the Court, and it isn't volunteer work in many instances. She is a political operative who works with these groups that litigate issues before the Supreme Court, before her husband Clarence Thomas.

Federal law requires the disqualification of a Supreme Court Justice in any proceeding in which the Justice's impartiality might reasonably be questioned, and the Supreme Court's own