

BIRTH TOURISM

Mr. President, in one of his first acts back in office, President Trump defended our country's cherished principle of equal citizenship by ending birth tourism. For years, foreign tourists have abused our Nation's birth-right citizenship by visiting America with the sole purpose of having their children here.

These tourists have no intention of staying here or of even raising their children in America. Instead, they return to their home country to rear their children, who now have the benefit of American citizenship but no ties or loyalty to our Nation. This abuse of our citizenship is wrong. Yet Democrat-aligned groups are trying to stop President Trump's order in the courts.

When you look at the numbers, you realize how much is at stake with this Executive order. According to one estimate, birth tourism results in 33,000 births to women on tourist visas each year. Think about that—33,000. That is tens of thousands of people each year who claim American citizenship and all its benefits, while having nothing at stake in the future of our country. To no one's surprise, birth tourism has spawned a multimillion-dollar industry, and it is rife with fraud and criminal activities.

In China, traffickers charge clients tens of thousands of dollars to coach them on lying to Customs and Border Protection, obtaining a visa, and reaching our country.

In fact, the problem has gotten so bad that airlines in Asia are turning away pregnant passengers to America over birth tourism concerns.

This cannot go on, which is why I fully support President Trump's efforts to bring this terrible practice to an end.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, the idea that men and women citizens are bound by a common set of laws that are applied consistently and universally, regardless of one's income or political power or political affiliation, is a fairly modern invention because, for thousands of years, laws were simply what rulers used to impose and maintain power, to control people. Laws were applied or crimes were invented for the ruler's critics, and laws were ignored or waived away for those in favor with the regime.

Now, early Americans had watched the British Kings apply laws selectively, both in Britain and in the Colonies, and our Founders sought to create a nation where all men were equal in the face of the law and that the law was applied uniformly and justly.

That idea, equal justice—the law applies to everybody regardless of whom you support politically or whom you are aligned with politically—was in many ways the Founders' most vital check against tyranny. That is the dif-

ference between a democracy made of equal citizens and an autocracy, where the law is simply whatever the ruler decides. It is a foundational principle of American constitutional democracy. It is not something we can take for granted.

Now, I will admit that likely every President has made a decision or decisions that compromised that belief in the rule of law. Often, those decisions were related to one of the maximalist powers that the President possesses; that is, the power of the pardon. I, for instance, did not agree with President Biden's decision to issue pardons to his family members. I thought that was excessive. I thought that compromised the rule of law. But this President's contempt for the rule of law—Donald Trump's contempt for the rule of law—is unprecedented.

What we are all watching right now is Donald Trump throw away the idea that laws apply to everyone equally, and it is astonishing to watch so many of my Republican colleagues fall in line. Some of them may be on board for the destruction of the rule of law because they want the Trump family to rule forever, but many of them know that this is wrong, what is happening, and their silence is heartbreaking.

Donald Trump issued a statement over the weekend:

He who saves [the] Country does not violate any Law.

That is a quote attributed to one of the most notorious dictators of the last half-millennium, Napoleon Bonaparte. It is a stunning claim that Trump—not the law or Congress—decides what is legal and illegal.

If he had said that in 2017, maybe we could just write it off as Trump being Trump, as just bluster, trolling, but this time, he has actually implemented a methodical campaign to seize control of the law and apply it differently depending on whether you support him or oppose him.

Take for example what happened on Friday night. Trump ordered the Department of Justice to cut a deal with the indicted mayor of New York City, Eric Adams. The deal was simple: If Adams pledged loyalty to Trump and agreed specifically to cooperate with Trump's immigration raids in the city, Trump would look the other way regarding Adam's corruption. The charges would be dropped, and Adams could keep stealing money as long as he was politically loyal to Trump.

They didn't hide this deal. Adams and a high-ranking Trump official literally went on TV to announce that they had formed an alliance based upon the release of charges in exchange for political loyalty.

But when Trump told the highest ranking Justice Department employees in New York City to execute the corrupt deal, they wouldn't. The top official resigned rather than take part in the corruption and so did the next in the chain of command. By the time Trump found someone who would im-

plement the deal, seven DOJ lawyers and four of Adams' deputy mayors had resigned because what was happening in plain view was a fundamental challenge, a fundamental corruption to the rule of law—a rule of law that up until today, Republicans and Democrats had both revered.

Meanwhile, other parts of Trump's team are engaging on the other side of the ledger, targeting and harassing—using the law—the President's critics, because that is what happens in a nation without the rule of law. Law enforcement lets loyalists like Adams off the hook and is overzealous in targeting critics.

Let me give you just one example of what is happening right now as we speak. Last month, Trump's new FCC Chairman opened an investigation into a single radio station that had the audacity to simply file a news report about an ICE raid that was happening locally. Multiple other sources filed similar reports with similar footage, but only one investigation was opened, and—you guessed it—it was against the radio station that was owned by a high-profile critic of Donald Trump, George Soros.

So the game is clear. Like, we can see it. They are not even hiding it. There is not a rule of law anymore; there is one set of law for people or entities who are loyal to Donald Trump, and there is one set of law for people who dare criticize him. That is not democracy.

If we don't find a way—Republicans and Democrats—to come together to defend the rule of law, if we don't say that what is happening today—deals being cut with corrupt politicians in exchange for their pledges of loyalty to Donald Trump—if we can't speak with one voice about that kind of corruption, well, then our democracy is cooked.

NOMINATION OF KASHYAP PATEL

Mr. President, that brings us to the pending nominee to lead the FBI, Kash Patel. If your plan is to destroy the rule of law and turn the Department of Justice into a political weapon that rewards loyalty and punishes dissent, then Kash Patel is the perfect person to lead the FBI, and that is likely exactly why he was chosen.

Listen. Kash Patel is a joke. Many of my Republican colleagues know this. He has spent the last 4 years taking the most extreme positions inside the world of MAGA in order to make money for himself.

For instance, he says that he can provide proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the FBI was behind the January 6 invasion of this building. Let me say that again. The man that my Republican colleagues are about to vote to lead the FBI believes that there is irrefutable proof that the Agency he is about to lead secretly organized the violent assault on the Capitol. That is bananas. My Republican colleagues know that. That is a lie. And we are about to put this guy in charge of the

FBI, an Agency that he claims organized a secret plot to invade the Capitol?

He wrote a book called “Government Gangsters,” and at the end, he added an appendix entitled “Enemies List”—like straight out of the McCarthy era. He has a list—he wrote it down—of people he believes are enemies of America, and—shocker—they are all Democrats or Republicans who dared speak out and criticize Donald Trump.

You are going to put at the head of the FBI—the Agency that can arrest anyone they want, put people in jail—a man who thinks that anyone who disagrees with Donald Trump politically is an enemy of the United States?

Patel has further suggested that anybody who administered the 2020 election could be subject to arrest. Why? Because he believes in his heart that the election was rigged, despite the fact that Joe Biden won by 7 million votes—far, far more than Trump won by in 2024. So anybody that helped “rig” the 2020 election is, in his mind, a potential criminal.

This is off-the-wall stuff. Of course it is. Because while he believes this, he also knows that there is a money-making opportunity in all of this. This is his logo: “K\$H.” He is a brand. He says all of these things because he believes them but also because it makes him a hero to the gullible conspiracy theorists inside MAGA. He uses them. He sells stuff to them—sweatshirts, T-shirts, lapel pins. K\$H.

Now, if you buy this sweatshirt for \$55, it says: “All net profits go to the Kash Foundation.” But you know what we found out, unsurprisingly, is that in 2023, by selling all these sweatshirts and merch, the K\$H foundation had \$1.3 million in revenues. Now, it purports to support heroic conservative whistleblowers with legal services and other support services. Do you know what percentage of that \$1.3 million went to actual services? Less than 15 percent. Kash Patel pocketed almost all the money he made from selling these T-shirts.

He even hocks a COVID vaccine-reversal pill. Let me say that again. The incoming Director of the FBI, in addition to selling T-shirts and pocketing most of the proceeds, also sells a vaccine-reversal pill that is just, like, pure snake oil. But if there are enough people loyal to Donald Trump to buy anything Trump’s lieutenants sell on the internet, then fair game.

To top it all off, just recently, after his confirmation hearing, we also found out that Kash Patel has been a fashion consultant to a shadowy holding company controlled, it seems, by members of the Chinese Communist Party—like, honestly. Honestly. How on Earth are we going to let someone lead the world’s most important, most revered law enforcement Agency who is secretly in business with the Chinese Communist Party, who believes that the FBI organized the invasion of the Capitol, who runs a fake charity, and

who has a brand in order to make money off of his affiliation with Donald Trump? He has an enemies list. He thinks that people who helped elect Joe Biden are criminals.

This is a really dangerous moment. It is a really dangerous moment. This deal that Donald Trump just cut with the mayor of New York—it is a big deal. It is a big deal.

I admit that prior Presidents have made decisions that compromise the rule of law, but we have never seen anything like this so brazen and out in the open, that the mayor of New York and a Trump official would go on national TV to announce that they had made an arrangement in which Mayor Adams could continue his corruption as long as he was politically loyal to Donald Trump. They did that out in the open on TV because it is a signal to everybody else out there that the law will be applied differently to you if you are loyal to the President and that the law will be zealously applied to you, maybe in excess of the letter of the law, if you are a critic of the President. That is why they went on TV, to show the world the corruption as a signal that things are different now, that the law is not the law; the law is what President Trump decides the law is.

The law loses all meaning when it becomes simply what the President, what the leader on any given day decides.

This is the worst possible moment to put a person like Kash Patel in charge of the FBI. It is heartbreaking to see so many of my Republican colleagues—many of whom I admire—put loyalty to Donald Trump ahead of loyalty to this country and, more specifically, loyalty to that sacred principle, the rule of law.

My prediction is that if you vote for Kash Patel, more than any other confirmation vote you make, you will come to regret this one to your grave.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, over the past week, Elon Musk and Donald Trump have fired thousands of Federal workers, many of them in New Mexico, without warning. The calls that I get to my office from constituents all across New Mexico are expressing concern, surprise, alarm, not knowing what is going to happen next, worried about a project. A professional whom I spoke to who works for the Bureau of Indian Education, who has a responsibility to help diagnose and support students with disabilities, asked: Do I stay and help these kids? What is going to happen with this stuff?

Whether it is our neighbors who work to support the National Labs to keep us safe or our friends who work at the U.S. Department of Agriculture helping our farmers and ranchers feed our Nation—these illegal mass firings are impacting communities across every corner of New Mexico.

To sum this up, what I keep hearing from New Mexicans every day is:

Please help me. Speak up. Say something. Do something. Bring attention to what is happening to the harm that is being caused in our communities, for all of our constituents.

This isn’t about Democrats or Republicans; it is about right or wrong. It is about real people.

Now, instead of protecting these jobs and helping our fellow Americans, Senate Republicans are pursuing a partisan budget resolution that will make it even harder for families to afford their healthcare, put food on the table, or get an education for their students, for their kids.

This is, quite frankly, chaos. And it is chaos that the American people cannot afford. New Mexicans and Americans from all walks of life rely on the programs that Republicans are now attacking. These are programs that feed seniors, veterans, children, the disabled. These are programs that house our veterans, that keep folks warm during these winter months.

And why are Republicans ripping these services away from people who need them? To fund this Trump tax scam. Now, it is 2.0. The American people and constituents across New Mexico are the ones who told me back in 2017: This really feels like a scam.

What Republicans are saying is middle-class families are going to get everything in here when it comes to a tax cut. But what we saw play out is: If you are making millions of dollars, you did OK, you got the brunt of everything that was in this tax scam.

Lying to the face of the American people is what happened in 2017, and it certainly feels the same now.

Let’s talk about one possible outcome of this budget resolution. In New Mexico, Medicaid covers 75 percent of births, supports around 92,000 children in my home State. Across the country, nearly 40 percent of babies are born with the help of Medicaid. For these babies and pregnant women, this program is vital, offering a chance to grow up healthier and have the best opportunity to succeed. We should all want that for our constituents. That is not partisan.

Unfortunately, Republicans have made it clear that they are determined to slash Medicaid. They tried it in 2017. What I hear from my Republican colleagues when they are being interviewed and being asked the question “are you going to cut Medicaid,” they certainly attempt to try in every form and fashion to say: No, no, no. We are not going to touch it. We are just going to leave it up to the States.

Let me translate what that means. What Republicans in Congress are going to do is work to eliminate every Federal dollar with Medicaid. There is this acronym FMAP. It is a Federal matching program to make Medicaid work across America. That is what they are going after. And if you visit with anyone across America who knows anything about how this program works, they will all tell you,