

week with President Zelenskyy. To have that display on live television breaks my heart. This situation, such that we would humiliate our ally of Ukraine and at the same time talk about the greatness of Vladimir Putin, I just find disgusting. People are no students of history if they buy into that thinking. For the longest time, we have stood with the people of Ukraine.

Do you know what the briefing was when they invaded Ukraine? They called the Senators down, and the intelligence Agency says: Let me tell you what is going to happen when, finally, Putin pulls the trigger and invades Ukraine. Those Ukrainians will last between 3 days and 2 weeks—that was it, 2 weeks if they are good—and then there will be guerilla war.

Well, they were certainly wrong. Here we are, 3 years later, and the Ukrainians are still fighting.

How many Ukrainians have died so far? We can't come up with an accurate figure, but we know 46,000 have died—46,000 have died—in fighting Putin, who invaded their country, and this President calls the head of the Ukrainian country, Zelenskyy, a dictator and says that he actually invaded his own country.

What in the world is he talking about? These people have been fighting to the death, and millions have been displaced. They have been standing up for the values that we cherish in this country. To walk away from them and to subject their leader to what we saw last Friday in the Oval Office is disgusting, humiliating, below the dignity of the United States.

I stand behind Ukraine. Maybe that is why I am wearing this tie today. I stand behind Ukraine because I believe those people are fighting for the very values that we treasure. They have stood by the United States, and they have said “thank you” many, many times to me and to others.

We need to stand behind NATO and Ukraine and stand for the values that are important. Hitching our star to Vladimir Putin is a fool's errand. It is a disaster waiting to happen. I hope to goodness we don't reach that point.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORTS  
ACT OF 2025

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, I rise today in strong opposition to any attempt by the Federal Government to meddle in decisions about who can and cannot participate in school sports.

Simply put, it is not the Federal Government's place to tell State and local sports leagues across this country how to do their jobs. This is a decision

for local communities, where players and parents can participate in that discussion at the local level.

This is a decision for sports leagues to thoughtfully craft policy that actually takes seriously what is best for all players, not blanket mandates that will undoubtedly have unintended consequences for the safety of all students.

I, for one, trust our States, our leagues, and our localities to make these decisions without interference from Congress or the President. For years, we have seen them do it thoughtfully and carefully. They have done what is best for the children, in consultation with parents, teachers, coaches, and community members. This is exactly how this type of policy should be created.

But Republicans are now saying that they actually know better than these local sports leagues. The President is saying that he knows better than parents what is good for their children. President Donald Trump and my Republican colleagues have inserted themselves into this discussion, tying the hands of leagues that are actually focused on the best interest of our children. And as far as I can tell, it is just to score political points and stir the pot of the culture wars.

I will close with this. Too often in this debate, it gets lost that we are talking about real people. It is clear that my Republican colleagues, when they casually dehumanize trans Americans in their attack ads, forget or simply do not care that they are talking about real people—often youth, often children—who already do not feel welcome in their communities.

This legislation tries to send the message that certain kids are not welcome in Little League or on the basketball court, and, really, that they are not welcome in school at all, beside their peers—what a heartbreaking message to tell a child. No American, especially those who are already vulnerable, should be demonized and picked on so that politicians can win elections—period, full stop.

At the end of the day, while Republicans are focused on playing politics with children's sports leagues, I am focused on issues that I hear about from my constituents every day. I am focused on lowering household costs and taking on the big corporations that are price-gouging families at the grocery store and at the pharmacy.

I am focused on growing our made-in-America economy and making sure that everyone has a fair chance to get a good-paying job. I am focused on ensuring that people can access high-quality healthcare and protecting Medicaid. I am focused on the people of Wisconsin and their needs, not stepping on their right to decide what is best in their own local communities.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

NOMINATION OF LINDA MCMAHON

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I got my start in politics as a mom in

tennis shoes fighting to protect a preschool program, and I still wear that label proudly. I am a former preschool teacher. I am also a former community college educator, and I am also a former school board member. So I don't mess around when it comes to making sure every single one of our students, in every corner of our country, has access to quality public education, one that leaves them prepared for the future and opens the doors of opportunity wide. It is not a responsibility I take lightly; it never will be.

Our kids are the future of this country, and the Department of Education is really at the heart of how we make sure they are set up for success. But Donald Trump and Elon Musk want to rip the heart out of public education in America and abolish the Department of Education—well, not if I can help it.

That is why I believe we need a leader at the Department of Education who actually believes in the mission of the Department of Education. We need a Secretary of Education with a really deep understanding of how to use this crucial position to strengthen educational opportunities and outcomes for every student in this country. We need a Secretary of Education who will put students first, not billionaires; who will stand up for our kids—every single one of them—even if it means standing up to Donald Trump and Elon Musk.

On each of these counts, Linda McMahon fails to make the grade. I have had concerns from the outset about whether Mrs. McMahon has the experience we should expect from an Education Secretary, and I am sorry to say my concerns have not been alleviated—far from it.

I asked her in our confirmation hearing about the Every Student Succeeds Act. That is the law I negotiated with Republicans to finally fix No Child Left Behind and to provide more flexibility to our States and schools, while ensuring accountability for our tax dollars. She couldn't name a single requirement of that law—not one. How is she supposed to enforce our education laws when she didn't even bother to study up before her Senate confirmation hearing?

On fighting for public schools, it is painfully clear that McMahon's plan for our students and schools is in lock-step with Trump's pro-billionaire agenda. They are going to let public schools get robbed blind as the richest people in the world suck money out of our schools and communities that need it the most. They are going to cut off funding that directly supports our students and teachers and send it straight to the pockets of unaccountable private and for-profit K through 12 schools.

And on standing up for our students, standing up to President Trump, Linda McMahon got it backward. When I asked her, at the hearing, about making sure schools get the money that we—Congress—pass, even if Trump and Musk try to block it, and making sure

that our students' data is protected, as DOGE tries to muck around with no oversight or accountability, she made it very clear she would not stand in their way.

But it gets worse, because when it comes to Trump's mission of destroying the Department of Education, she is all too ready to grab a hatchet and get to work.

The irony is that while Trump and Musk talk about eliminating the Department of Education, they are trying to involve the Federal Government even deeper into the schools than ever before. They talk about how schools and parents know best, and then they threaten schools if they don't do what they say. Apparently, Mrs. McMahon thinks: Why should we have a Department of Education if Trump and Elon Musk can actually just tell schools what they can do and what they can teach?

Let's be clear on what it will mean if Trump, Musk, and McMahon have their way and try to turn the Department of Education into something that kids read about in our history books. There are 26 million K through 12 students from low-income neighborhoods who could see their schools lose Federal funding, lay off teachers, or even close. There are 9.8 million students at our rural schools that count on Federal support, which could face similar challenges. There are 7.4 million students with disabilities who could see the IDEA Program upended, cutting off support that State and local taxpayers will need to provide.

There are 6.6 million students who get Pell grants to help them afford college or enter the workforce or further their careers who would be impacted by the chaos of abolishing the Department. And there are 8.1 million high school students and 3.3 million college students who are served by our career and technical education programs that are administered by the Department of Education.

Trying to abolish the Department, or even just taking a wrecking ball to the critical work that it does, will hurt our students who face homelessness. It will cut off Federal aid to students who want to pursue a higher education. It will undermine the enforcement of the rights of students with disabilities. It will reduce assistance intended to lift up students not getting the support they need. It will weaken protections for students and scrap evidence-based research that helps us know what is working, for whom, and how. And it will leave for-profit colleges free to rip off students and families, which we have seen happen in the past, and we can't let that happen again.

So the fact that Mrs. McMahon has not opposed Trump's grand plan to abolish the Department of Education is not just a redflag to me. It is a blinking, blaring fire alarm. It means either she doesn't fully understand just what the Department does and how devastating it would be to abolish it, or

she doesn't care. Either way, I find that disqualifying.

So here is my message to everyone. Like any good preschool teacher, I will make it short and simple: We cannot have a Secretary of Education who doesn't believe in having a Secretary of Education.

It is kind of common sense. Why would we have someone in charge of the Education Department who thinks it should not exist, who doesn't care if we have a Department focused on getting our students and schools the support they need.

Madam President, let me finish with this. I still have in my office a quilt that my kids in my preschool made for me on the very last day I taught preschool. It is hung prominently on the wall of my biggest meeting room. It is a beautiful patchwork of squiggles and smiles drawn in bright, messy crayon. When I look at it, I remember the little hands that made each one of those squares. I think about those little heads with big, curious minds and a world of possibility before them. I remember the responsibility that we all felt to make sure they were leaving our preschool ready to succeed. I wonder how many of those children that made those little, small squares now have kids of their own, and I reflect on how the decisions we make in education today—the policies that we fight for, the people that we confirm or reject here—will set a course for our children and our country for years to come.

There are two clear courses ahead of us with this vote: one where we have a Department of Education that continues to work to support every student and give them the brightest possible future or one where we don't—one where every kid is on their own, one where lights are turned off and doors are shut and opportunities are closed, unless you happen to have the right ZIP Code or the right money.

I know which future I am going to vote for today: the one where we live up to our responsibility and all of our kids can live up to their fullest potential and pursue big dreams. I urge my colleagues to join me today in voting for that future and against Linda McMahon for Secretary of Education.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORTS  
ACT OF 2025

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, today, we have a very important day for women and girls across this country. The third time is the charm. This is the third time that I have had a vote on this bill. The other two times it has failed because we have had almost zero Democrats help to support women and girls in sports.

Over the past 4 years, women's sports at all levels have been under attack. Since the beginning of time, people have agreed that sex is assigned at birth and determined by God. But under the Biden administration, you

had people claiming that men can get pregnant—pure, absolute insanity.

But it didn't stop there. They weren't content just to erase gender norms that have been accepted for thousands of years. No, they wanted to allow transgender men to participate in women's and girls' sports. This has been happening at schools all across our country. We have women's teams in some States that are all boys. Let me say that again. We have women's teams in some States participating on the high school level that are all transgender boys—no opportunities for girls or women to participate on the team.

Young women have been forced to compete against men and even share locker rooms and shower time. And on top of that, your taxpayer dollars are paying for it.

Thankfully, President Trump just signed an Executive order that said no more—no more Federal money to any State that allows this to happen. But you have to understand, this only lasts as long as President Trump is in office. So we need this vote, which is going to happen in around an hour, to pass so we can make this into law.

This Executive order that he signed can be reversed. So we are going to continue to fight some States that are even not going by the Executive order—like Maine, some in Michigan, some in New Jersey. Some are saying, "We are not going to go by that law," even though the President of the United States says that men and women can't participate on the same team. That will end up going to court. So we will see how that happens and what the answer will be.

But a big part of the problem is that we have created an unfair playing field where different States have had different laws impacting women and girls everywhere. This is not only confusing, but it is very, very dangerous. Congress needs to act on this to protect women in sports and to ensure title IX protections are preserved.

My bill that we are voting on today, in about an hour, the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act, would make sure women's rights to equal competition, equal scholarships, and safe locker rooms are all protected.

This legislation has already passed the House, just about a month ago, with two Democrats actually supporting it. I appreciate the support of all of my Republican colleagues on this. You have all joined me in championing this very important cause for the past 3 years.

I especially want to thank Leader Thune for bringing this bill to the floor here in the U.S. Senate. This will be the third time. It is hard to get a bill on this floor, but it is so important, and he understands that.

I also want to thank my friend and former colleague Senator JOE MANCHIN of West Virginia, who is the only Democrat in the last few years to support