

But to normal people, in real America, they think this stuff is crazy. And, finally, we have somebody in the Oval Office with a team that can root this stuff out. So keep going. We are just getting started with this stuff, and we will be back next week with more ridiculous things that the Democrats want funded with your taxpayer dollars.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about how my delusional Democratic colleagues have tried to poison our country's young people with what I call a woke mind virus.

Before I got into politics, I spent 40 years working with young people, from the high school level to the college level—higher education, we call it. I coached, recruited, and mentored young people all over the country—thousands of them. I saw firsthand how hard work and a quality education can change a person's life, no matter where they come from, what they look like, or how much money they have.

I used to tell my players that, if they work hard, there is no limit to what they can achieve. It is called the American dream.

Our Founders came here because they envisioned a country where the sky is the limit and people aren't bound by the circumstances that they were born in. But, unfortunately, the Biden administration and the Democrats have spent the last 4 years communicating a much darker message to our young people.

This country was founded on merit, but instead of focusing on hiring the best and brightest, Biden, Harris, Obama, and the "woke mind virus" Democrats have spent the last 4 years dividing our country based on diversity, equity, and inclusion—or, better known to all of us, what is called DEI. This poisonous ideology says that people should be hired based on their skin color or sexual preference, not because of how they might do in a job.

And to make matters worse, the Biden administration used 1 trillion American taxpayer dollars to pay for DEI programs in the Federal Government—1 trillion. You heard that right. American taxpayers are footing the bill, and they were paying for things that were racist, divisive, and woke—a woke propaganda.

So I don't know about you; I want a refund. I want my money back. We all pay taxes. Why in the world would we do that?

Let's call DEI what it really is: a fundamentally racist, prejudice, and anti-American ideology that is designed to divide and oppress people. That is exactly what it is. It is baffling to me how Democrats don't see this. Or do they?

They claim to be a very tolerant, inclusive party rooted in equality, but as

we have all learned, Democrats are only tolerant as long as you agree with them. I thought we left the stain of discrimination and race-based hiring practices behind in our country a long, long time ago, but apparently not. It is clear that Democrats would rather divide Americans based on their race, gender, creed, or sexual orientation than live in a world where people are hired based on intellect, experience, work ethic, and merit—what a thought.

So let's set the record straight. This country owes you nothing except for the opportunity to succeed. That is what is great about this country. And if you don't succeed, you can get back up and go again. We are the only country that allows that. For generations, Americans understood this—all Americans: an opportunity to pursue your dreams, to use your God-given talents to contribute to making this country the greatest place to live in the world.

I have always said this: If you were born in the United States of America, you hit the lottery, 100 percent. And I guarantee you, the other 7 billion people in this world would give anything to take the place of any of us, from the poorest to the richest.

To my new granddaughter of just 2 weeks, Rosie Grace, if there is any one thing I can teach her as a grandfather, it is the value of hard work and determination. There is nothing that takes the place of that—nothing. With a strong work ethic and a commitment to excellence, opportunities will open up for her, or anybody, to live a happy, successful life. And that is all a grandfather like me now can ask for—hard work and determination.

So what kind of message is it if we are teaching our young people that they are victims of their circumstances and the American dream is only for people who have a certain skin color? That is the opposite of the American dream.

But Democrats don't care one bit about that—not one bit. I have listened to it for 4 years. Obama started a horrible trend that Democrats carry on to this day. He used racism to divide the Americans and politically enrich themselves. Look at the money they have made. The woke mind virus has taken hold of them. They have lost their ever-loving mind. They would rather promise racism and promote it—sexism, divisiveness—than support solutions that empower, unify, or uplift our country and our people.

Democrats are obsessed with hating this country and tearing it apart. They want a different United States of America. If it is anything that is pro-American or pro-traditional values—it doesn't matter—Democrats will attack it, demonize it, and demonize us for supporting it.

These people have zero respect for human life. They have shown their true colors in the past few years, ever since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, which sent abortion back to the States, where it could be voted on by the people, in-

stead of politicians. They have raised Cain. Since then, Democrat politicians have said the quiet part out loud, admitting that they think there should be no limits to abortion. How can you believe that?

That means that they are OK with aborting a baby at 9 months of pregnancy.

Former Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, a Democrat, said that he supports post-birth—after-birth—abortions. Are you kidding me?

And other Democrats, like Minnesota Governor Tim Walz—remember him, flash in the pan?—signed a law to allow abortions after birth—signed a law in Minnesota for abortions after birth.

What do they do with that? They cut these babies up and sell the body parts. It is never talked about too much, is it? Can you believe that this is who the Democrats picked as their Vice Presidential candidate? I can believe it. That means that, in Minnesota, a doctor can kill a baby after he or she is born, right there on the delivery table. It is evil, and it is absolutely sick.

But it isn't just babies Democrats have no respect for. They also have gone out of their way to attack women and girls. Just last week, every single Democrat in this body voted against my bill to protect women and girls in sports.

Oh, we have got to give these transitional boys an opportunity to participate.

Really? How about giving, in fairness to young girls and women, the opportunity to compete at a level that they are in; give them an opportunity not to play for second or third but to play for first. How about that?

The woke mind virus has struck again. Democrats who claim to be pro-women would rather protect a few transgender people than protect the millions of women and girls who make up half of this country.

Oh, we have to be nice. We have to be nice to everybody.

No. We need a mental health program in this country. That is what we need.

Democrats who claim to be pro-women would rather protect a few transgender people than protect the entire country of women and girls. It is backward, it is disgusting, and it is downright wrong.

You would have to be dumber than a box of rocks to celebrate this, but that is what they did. They celebrated the handful of transgenders participating against women.

Oh, we knocked it down because it was supported by Donald Trump, who wrote out an Executive order protecting women and girls.

Thank you, President Trump.

By the way, 79 percent of Americans and 67 percent of Democrats support that men do not compete against women—a huge majority. Every single one of my Democratic colleagues went against their constituents and voted against this commonsense bill to protect women and keep men out of women's sports.

Democrats basically are hypocrites—big-time. They claim to be pro-woman but allow men to dress up as women and take rights away from actual women.

When we saw this firsthand, during the Biden administration, when they had actual drag shows at the White House, it made me sick at my stomach.

But the hypocrisy doesn't end there. Democrats celebrate when Hamas protectors violently attack Jewish students, but they demonize and imprison pro-life activists who peacefully protest outside an abortion clinic.

Whose side are you on?

Democrat colleagues say they are pro-choice but lose their minds if a parent dares to ask a question about vaccines for infants. I mean, they go off the deep end when we talk about vaccines.

They claim they are the party of decency—really? Tolerance—are you kidding me? But turn a blind eye to multiple Democratic mayors being arrested for being pedophiles. Yes, that is what I said—pedophiles.

The former Democrat mayor of University Park, MD, was arrested and charged in 2024 with 28 counts of possessing and soliciting child pornography; in jail, 24, mayor, right down the street.

The year before, 2023, a different Democrat mayor from College Park, MD, pleaded guilty to 140 counts of possessing and distributing child sexual abuse images: mayor, leader, Democrat, believes in the way of life for the Democratic Party, a pedophile.

So two Democratic mayors in Maryland have been arrested in the past 2 years for pedophilia. You can't make it up. The woke mind virus strikes again. I have yet to hear a single floor speech from my Maryland Democrat colleagues about this catastrophe, a leader caught doing this. They don't care. It doesn't bother them.

They seem to find plenty of time to criticize President Trump every time he breathes, but they don't worry about pedophilia. How about we all speak out about it?

I have yet to see them take the time to condemn multiple elected officials from their State who have been arrested and contributed to all this child pornography. It is sad, but we shouldn't be surprised.

Democrats only pretend to care about the oppressed or the most vulnerable among us when it benefits their agenda. After all, it was Democrats in the States like California and Washington who introduced bills to change the term—the name of it—“sex offenders” to “minor-attracted persons.” You are not a sex offender anymore if you beat up a little child, molest a child. You are not a sex offender. You are a minor-attracted person. We don't want to hurt anybody's feelings, OK? What a joke. It makes me sick to my stomach.

If it wasn't for the reelection of President Trump on November 5, I real-

ly don't know whether we would have made it. Our country was headed straight to the gutter—straight to the gutter. I mean, just listen to all of this. It makes no sense.

Now we have common sense. We are trying to get common sense back in our country. We have to push for it. Thanks to President Trump and the ideas he has brought back to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, this administration is working around the clock to get this woke crap out of our government, our military, out of classrooms—out—get back to teaching our kids.

President Trump is committed to abolishing the U.S. Department of Education, a Federal Agency that has failed our students for the past 40 years that I have been in education and especially under Joe Biden and Barack Obama. President Trump believes and is correct that our young people are the country's most important, precious commodity that we have. They are the future.

He understands that under President Biden, the Department of Education allowed radical leftwing teachers to push radical, hateful ideologies onto our kids. We don't need opinion teaching. We need to teach reading, writing, math, science, and history. What is wrong with that? What is wrong with giving them a chance because they have ruined the lives of thousands of young people because they have been indoctrinated.

You had drag shows that were being performed recently in elementary schools. I mean, in my day, you would have been arrested for that. Woke anti-American curriculum taught kids to hate each other—actually in the classroom teaching them: Hey, you hate them because of who they are or where they are from, what skin color they are—absolutely a crime.

Schools help children secretly transition genders behind the parent's back. Oh, you want to transition. You are 8 years old. Don't tell your parents. We will get it all set up for you—mind-boggling. The woke mind virus has struck again.

All of this, by the way, on the taxpayers' dime. You are paying for it. Meanwhile, we are 26 in the world in math, and we are 6 in reading. That is simply not good enough for the most powerful country in the world.

When I coached and recruited, I was shocked if anybody was over a ninth grade reading level. That is everybody. I don't care what color, where they are from; urban, rural. If you can't read, you can't learn. If you can't learn, you are going to end up working for somebody or just scraping to try to make a living.

But instead of teaching our kids to read and write, the Department of Education under Joe Biden became ground zero for woke indoctrination.

All they were concerned about was bowing to the teachers unions—you heard that—teachers unions teaching our kids to hate this country, its gov-

ernment, our Constitution, and each other. What are we doing? I am thankful President Trump is sending education back to the States where it belongs. I have advocated this for the last 20 years.

Just this week, the Department of Education announced it was firing more than 1,000 people right down the street. Thank goodness. They hadn't been doing anything. They had been working from home, and what they do, we can do it back in the States a lot better, and we can use that money to educate kids—what an idea.

Good. The Federal Department of Education needs to be completely shut down. It is not done yet, but we just got started. I have been saying it for a long time: We can't have a one-sized-fits-all, top-down approach to education.

You know, I am from Alabama. We teach kids a little bit different because we are in a different environment; rural areas, 60 percent farmers, agriculture, all those things. We don't teach the same things that you would teach in Chicago or New York. Send it back to the States. Let them control it. Let them teach our kids to have a chance in the future. Each child is totally different.

You know, the Federal Government can't do that. I haven't figured out in my 4 years yet what we can do, but at least we are figuring out: Hey, it is not working here. Close it down; quit spending money; and send it back to the States, which is why President Trump's plan to empower the States makes all the sense in the world.

But, of course, Democrats don't believe in common sense. They are only concerned about we have to control this because they know that if they don't control education—education is the No. 1 thing we have in this country going for us—if you take that away, everything else goes.

If they can't control education, they won't be able to infect the minds of all these young kids across the country. They want them to think that the Constitution is bad, that government is really bad, that your parents are bad, that you ought to listen to us.

You know, a spoonful of common sense goes a long way. So let me sum this up for you: Merit-based hiring is the only way to make a business successful—merit-based. When I coached, I had to win games or I was gone. I didn't care who they were when they played for me. I didn't care whether rich, poor, rural, urban, Black, White, it didn't make me a dime of difference. I put the best ones on the field. They were going to earn it.

That is how this country should be run. That is the difference between my Republican side and my colleagues on the left. They want everything given. It ain't going to work, folks. We are not going to have the country we had the opportunity to grow up in if we continue down that path.

Merit-based; men are men, women are women. Men cannot get pregnant,

by the way, but I learned that very, very young in life. Evidently my Democrat colleagues didn't learn that.

Protecting women and girls in sports is the right thing to do. Allowing elementary schoolers with undeveloped brains to get irreversible sex change procedures make absolutely no sense. It is evil and sadistic.

Teaching kids to hate each other based on what they look like, that is racist. That is exactly the direction that the Biden administration was going.

Children shouldn't be forced to watch drag shows. If you are an adult, you can do what you want in this country, but forcing this woke agenda on kids is downright wrong.

Making taxpayers pay for abortions in the military—wrong, against the law, but they did it anyway. I fought it for a year. I lost out in the end, but you know what, it was worth the fight.

Pedophilia is straight from the pit of hell. And, no, these aren't minor-attracted persons. These creeps, they are criminals, and they are sick in the head.

I thank God every day for President Trump and the return of common sense in this country.

I hope some of my Democrat colleagues will wake up to how the past 4 years of this woke ideology has poisoned our country, especially our young people. Folks, we have got a long way to go—long way to go.

Our future is in the hands of our kids. Let's give that future back to our kids. Let's educate them, put them on the right track, teach them the Constitution, teach them that we have a higher being in God—put that back in our schools. What a thought that would be.

Let's stay away—stay away—from our young kids, and let them have a chance to develop.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

(The remarks of Mr. CORNYN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1053 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CORNYN. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HALT FENTANYL ACT

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, just last week in my home State of North Carolina, narcotics investigators from the Iredell County Sheriff's Office and the Gaston Police Department seized 5 pounds of fentanyl that was in possession of an illegal alien. It was enough to kill over a million people. That is nothing short of a weapon of mass destruction.

The reality is that is not just a public health crisis. It is a nightmare that is destroying families, shattering communities, and devastating our country.

On average, nine North Carolinians die every single day from fentanyl overdoses. Every day, fentanyl claims nearly 200 lives across our country. Just last year, this silent killer took more than 70,000 Americans.

But they are not just numbers. These are sons and daughters. These are parents and siblings. These are our friends and our neighbors. These are people who should be living full, meaningful lives but, instead, have become statistics.

Let's put this into perspective. Just 2 milligrams of fentanyl similar to 7 grains of salt is enough to kill a person. If it is a sugar packet and you pour it in your morning coffee and it were to be filled with fentanyl, it could take the lives of 500 people—the quantity equal to a sugar packet. Now, if it was a standard 4-pound bag of granulated sugar—the kind we all have in our pantries—if it were filled with fentanyl, it would wipe out 905,000 individuals.

This deadly drug is flooding our communities, and it is not by accident. When I talk to law enforcement across all 100 counties in North Carolina, I repeatedly hear the same alarming message: Every single county is a border county. North Carolina is roughly 1,000 miles from the southern border, yet the fentanyl pouring into our country knows no distance and no boundaries.

This is a direct consequence of the Biden administration's reckless open border policies that allowed the drug cartels to exploit our immigration system and to flood our communities with illegal drugs. President Trump, however, is taking necessary steps to restore our border, restore order, and dismantle the criminal networks profiting off of human suffering.

But the consequences of President Biden's open borders and lack of action to mitigate the fentanyl crisis in our country remain the deadly reality facing our communities every day. This was not just a failure of policy by the previous administration. It was a betrayal of the American people to put political agendas over our public safety.

Even in the face of these staggering losses, Democrats continue to block bipartisan efforts to dismantle the criminal networks fueling the crisis. They refuse to support measures that would cut off the supply, crack down on traffickers, and strengthen our border security.

I ask my colleagues: How many more lives are you willing to sacrifice before standing up and saying, "Enough"? We can't afford to turn a blind eye to the sobering reality and traumatic consequences of this crisis. We need to make our streets safer, and we need to do it right now.

That is why I proudly stand with my colleague Senator CASSIDY in sup-

porting the HALT Fentanyl Act, a commonsense bipartisan legislation that will give law enforcement the tools they need to close loopholes and stop criminals from evading the law by simply doing two things: first, permanently classifying fentanyl and related substances under schedule I and, second, increasing the sentences for fentanyl traffickers.

This bill has already passed the House with strong bipartisan support, and now it is time for the Senate to do the same. Let's secure our streets. Let's stop the flow of fentanyl. Let's protect the American people, and let's do it before another innocent life is lost.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Kessler nomination.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled rollcall vote begin immediately.

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

VOTE ON PULTE NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Pulte nomination?

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 121 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Alsobrooks	Gallego	Moreno
Banks	Graham	Mullin
Barrasso	Grassley	Murkowski
Blackburn	Hagerty	Paul
Boozman	Hawley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeven	Risch
Budd	Husted	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Justice	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cotton	Lankford	Slotkin
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Cantwell	Gillibrand
Bennet	Coons	Hassan
Blumenthal	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Blunt	Durbin	Hickenlooper
Rochester	Fetterman	Hirono
Booker		