

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MOODY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Democratic leader.

ALEX PADILLA

Mr. SCHUMER. I mentioned a few minutes ago, I had seen a video that sickened my stomach of a U.S. Senator being manhandled, we now know, by Federal agents and dragged out of a hearing room.

Now there is a second video that is even worse. He has been thrown to the ground—again, manhandled, brutally taken down, handcuffed. It was disgusting.

Anyone who looks at this—it will turn their stomach to look at this video and see what happened. It reeks—reeks—of totalitarianism. This is not what democracies do.

Senator PADILLA was there legitimately in that building to ask questions of what is going on in California, which everybody wants to know answers to. We don't get answers when we ask the administration questions in one way or another. So Senator PADILLA was exercising his duty as a Senator for his constituents to try and find out what happened and, instead, he gets manhandled, thrown out of the room, thrown on the ground, and handcuffed.

We need a full investigation immediately as to what happened and who did what and what is going to be done to see that this doesn't happen again to Senator PADILLA or other American citizens who are seeking their right to redress. It is despicable; it is disgusting; it is so un-American—so un-American—and we need answers. We need answers immediately.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

ALEX PADILLA

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, I am sure the American people right now are just starting to see what happened to the U.S. Senator from California—the senior Senator from California—ALEX PADILLA. He is at a press conference in California, where the Secretary of Homeland Security is, and he wants to ask some questions, with all that is going on in California. Look, I don't know what all happened, but Federal agents took him down—took down a U.S. Senator—saying that they are doing their job.

Why aren't more people down here speaking up about this nonsense?

This is ridiculous. I would use some other language, but I would probably get tossed off the floor right now.

Growing up on a small farm and cleaning a barn, my dad taught me how to take a shovel to all the stuff that came out of the animals. You know what that is called. I know what it is called. And some of the animals that did that were males. They were bulls. And the stuff that came out of them has a few names to it. I will call it manure today.

This is nonsense. This is awful. How can these Federal agents get away with this?

Is the President of the United States telling folks to go down and start arresting U.S. Senators, taking them down to the floor? Is that what we have come to, the executive branch doing this to our colleagues?

This is a Democrat. What happens when it happens to a Republican? Will I hear from my Republican colleagues then to say: No, we should not do this, Mr. President. Back down. Back off. You are wrong.

Will someone here have the backbone to tell the President of the United States: You crossed the line. Stop it.

I am so disappointed, so disappointed. And as a Latino U.S. Senator, for this to happen to another Hispanic here—there are several of us who are Hispanics here, Democrats and Republicans. Speak up.

When one of my predecessors was here, Dennis Chavez, there were places he could not eat in this town because of the color of his skin, because he was from a State called New Mexico.

Are we going to use our voices? Are we better than this in the United States of America? Or are we going to show all the other folks in the world who choose to do this to the people who were duly elected by their people? No, just go arrest them. Throw them down on their face. Treat them like garbage.

We are better than this in America, you all. We have got to speak up. I hope, by tonight, every Democrat and Republican Member of this body has the courage to say something. This has gone too far. It is not right.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

ALEX PADILLA

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I have come to the floor to say I am extremely outraged that the executive branch's security team has shoved a U.S. Senator out of a room, has proceeded to put that U.S. Senator on the ground and to handcuff that Senator. This is what we expect to see in authoritarian nations that can't tolerate a question, and they start to attack the institutions.

What we are seeing in the United States right now, we are seeing it in the form of the President willfully breaking the law on the rules control-

ling the executive branch, time and time again. We see it in his attack on the press, his attack on the universities, his attack on extorting law firms. We see it in the form of him using the Trump v. United States lawsuit to say: I, the President, am above the law, and I could issue pardons to the whole executive branch, who is above the law.

That is not the way it works in a republic. At least, it is not the way it works if we are a republic.

If we, through a subservient Congress and in combination with a deferential Supreme Court, slide into this authoritarian state, then we have failed our oath to the Constitution.

It is absolutely wrong that any U.S. Senator, for attempting to ask a question, be treated in this fashion.

I double down on the call of Leader SCHUMER. This merits a full bipartisan investigation—bipartisan because all of us are Members of the legislative branch. All of us have taken an oath to the Constitution, and all of us should stand up for each other and certainly our ability to explore the policies of this administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

ALEX PADILLA

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I never thought I would imagine having to stand here and discuss what I saw today: a U.S. Senator, in his own community, in the city in which he grew up, elected under the authority of the people, stepping forward to get answers to legitimate questions, and we see him being thrown to the ground after being removed from a room forcibly and put into handcuffs by multiple people.

This, to me, is such an abuse of authority. It is a violent act. There can be no justification of seeing a Senator forced to their knees, laid flat on the ground, their hands twisted behind their back, and being put into restraints. If you see the video, at that point, he is not fighting; he is not pushing.

But this is a pattern and a practice. This is not an isolated incident. I remind people that in my own community, in the city of Newark, we had a Congresswoman and a mayor at a facility. The mayor, invited into the gate; the Congress people, invited into a conference room; and then the mayor, asked to leave, who did leave; and then numerous agents run out to arrest that mayor. Now, the judge in this case said it was outrageous and reprimanded the Trump administration for the arrest in and of itself.

We see, time and time again, this administration trying to precipitate a response by the misuse and the abuse of force. This is more akin to authoritarian governments.

When you see a democratic nation having their executive begin to arrest mayors, begin to arrest judges, begin to arrest a U.S. Senator who is simply

asking for answers to their questions, to remove them from a room forcibly, to throw them to the ground, to put them in restraints, this is something that we should not tolerate. And by we—this is not Democrats and Republicans. This is we in this body.

We have a constitutional obligation to provide oversight to the executive; a constitutional obligation to ask questions, to make inquiries; a constitutional obligation to check and balance the authority of the executive.

So here we saw, before our eyes, a Senator in their district, in their State, asking questions, and we see him being shoved out of a room—but it did not stop there—shoved to the ground, shoved onto his belly, and have his arms pulled behind his back. This should outrage every U.S. Senator.

Mr. SCHIFF. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. BOOKER. I would yield for a question while retaining the right to the floor.

Mr. SCHIFF. I thank the Senator for yielding.

I just watched footage of our colleague—my California colleague—Senator ALEX PADILLA, being forcibly removed from a briefing by the Secretary of Homeland Security's staff. He went there to observe and to ask questions, and I watched with horror on this video, seeing these agents grab my colleague—my fellow Senator from California—grab him, push him out of the hearing, as he was identifying himself as a U.S. Senator, bringing him into a hallway, bringing him down to the ground, bringing his arms behind his back. I saw this happen to my colleague, and I am shocked by how far we have descended in the first 140 days of this administration, where we have a President calling out the military over the objection of a Governor to try to intimidate and interfere with law enforcement in California, calling out the Marines to try to inflame tensions in our city; and, now, this latest act, when a U.S. Senator goes to demand questions about the lawfulness or lawlessness of these actions, to see him tackled to the ground, brought to the ground.

What is becoming of our democracy? Are there no limits to what this administration will do? Is there no line they will not cross? We see lawlessness after lawlessness. We see threats to judges of impeachment and of physical harm. We see arrests of Members of Congress. And now this.

All of us have lived as part of a generation since World War II that was used to seeing our freedoms ever expanding. We saw walls coming down. We saw new democracies being born. We came to think that somehow this was inevitable like the laws of nature; that it was the moral arc of the universe always bending toward justice, only to see that it was not bending toward justice.

And to see this now at home; to see, in the United States of America, the

executive use force like this against a Member of a coequal branch of government; to see that it has come to this already—and not a peep yet from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, no whisper of dissent yet. I hope that changes. I hope that changes.

The Founders separated the powers between the executive and the legislative and the judiciary because they wanted to set ambition against ambition—ambition of one institution against another—to protect all of our freedom, but that requires that we go beyond our partisan affiliations and when something is wrong—dead wrong—when something is a threat to our democracy, that we call it out regardless of party. And this is wrong. This is wrong.

We ask: How do you lose a democracy? How does one lose a democracy? This is how you lose a democracy: actions like today. But even more importantly than what has just happened is what will happen in the next 24 hours. Will this be roundly condemned? Will this be roundly condemned or somehow will we just fall down some partisan line again and see another leap toward autocracy in this country?

ALEX PADILLA is one of the most decent people I know, one of the most dedicated public servants I know, someone of just the greatest character. We all know him well in this institution. He embodies public service. He never forgot where he came from. He came from very humble origins, and he never forgot where he came from.

And the beauty of this country is you can come from a very humble origin, and you can end up here. When I first got here, Jon Tester, a farmer from Montana and a Senator from Montana, told me about a conversation he had with John D. Rockefeller when he got here. He said Rockefeller told him: You and I came from very different places, but we both ended up here.

It is the beauty of America that ALEX PADILLA could end up here, by dint of his brilliance and his integrity and his compassion. And all of that is at risk. All of that is at risk right now if we let the abusive handling of this good man and so many other good men and women around the country—if we let this go without our firmest opposition, without our strongest pushback, without our strongest defense of our democracy.

With that, I ask the Senator from New Jersey whether he will yield to the Senator to my right, yield for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). Senator, excuse me. Let me consult the Parliamentarian for just a second.

The 10 minutes allotted to the Senator in morning business has expired. Another Senator may seek recognition in his or her own right.

The Senator from Washington.

ALEX PADILLA

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to the U.S.

Senate, a place where people are elected by their constituents to come here to be their voice—every one of us, Republicans and Democrats, elected by the people whom we represent to come here and be their voice and to do the job.

What is that job? To make sure that we are being their voice and speaking out for them. And part of that has to be asking questions. Part of that has to be demanding accountability, has to be getting information so we can do the best job possible.

It is unacceptable that a U.S. Senator, in his own home State, elected by millions of people, went to ask a question for his constituents, to get an answer, and was brutally thrown to the ground and handcuffed. That is wrong, and I cannot believe that we don't have Senators on both sides of the aisle calling this out as outrageous.

This is what a democracy is about. It is about us coming to the U.S. Senate, speaking out, asking questions, getting information so we can be their voice.

What happens when that voice is stifled? What happens when that voice is thrown to the floor and handcuffed? Our democracy is lost.

I have been here for more than 32 years. I have come to this floor often to speak out, to be angry, to be a voice for my people. I have never come this close to having tears in my eyes as I speak to both sides of this aisle about this horrendous incident that occurred.

We are a democracy, but we can lose that democracy. It can be gone unless all of us speak out and forcibly reject what happened to a U.S. Senator and to send the message that in this democracy it is just, it is right, it is part of our responsibility to speak up, to ask questions, and to be able to have the knowledge we need to represent the people that we come here for.

We use our voices, we use our votes to be a part of this democracy, not violence. When violence is done by someone representing this administration in a forceful way against a U.S. Senator, how does any one of us go home and tell our constituents that they can be part of a democracy, speak out about what they believe in?

This is so wrong. This is so wrong. I hope others speak up and speak out and, as a voice, we say we want our democracy to succeed. And in order to succeed, we need to be able to use our voices and to use our votes and to ask questions without being forcibly thrown to the ground, without being arrested by speaking up.

I say to the entire country: We have a democracy. We will lose it if we can't use our voices. We will lose this democracy. None of us should be silent. None of us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

ALEX PADILLA

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, this feels like a defining moment for the