

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

country but also for this body. I understand that it may take a few moments for our Republican colleagues to watch the full video, to gather some additional facts, to come to a conclusion. But we need our Republican colleagues to be on the floor right now with us because this is not simply an assault on Senator PADILLA. This is not an assault on Democratic Senators. This is an assault on the rule of law. This is an assault on our democracy. And ultimately, we are robbing the ability of every single Senator to do our job if we are now going to be threatened with violence when we simply try to stand up for our constituents.

Now, we all have townhalls, and we are all often met with constituents who oppose us, sometimes very vocally. But, speaking for myself, I don't ask law enforcement to throw my constituents to the ground and violently handcuff them because they have a different opinion from me. You know why I don't do that? Because we don't do that in a democracy. We don't do that against ordinary citizens, and we certainly don't allow the administration and the law enforcement that works for the administration to do that to a U.S. Senator.

We will enter a banana republic if we don't find a way—Republicans and Democrats—to come together around this essential question of protecting our ability and our right as Senators to speak up for our constituents.

Now, I understand that my Republican colleagues are going to need some time to gather the facts, but we already have a statement from the Department of Homeland Security that has accused Senator PADILLA of being "disrespectful," as if that is a rationalization for violence.

Watch the video. Even if you believe that he was "disrespectful"—and, given the times, that is certainly in the eye of the beholder—that never justifies what we saw on that video: throwing anyone—never mind an elected representative of the people—to the ground to be handcuffed.

They say that he didn't identify who he was, and yet—watch the video—he clearly states:

I am Senator ALEX PADILLA.

They are going to spin this. But I am begging my Republican colleagues: Don't let them do it. Protect our ability as servants of the people to speak up for the people that we represent. Make sure that we do not normalize this kind of violence simply because the White House doesn't agree with people who dissent.

If this is how a U.S. Senator can be treated, then none of us ultimately are immune. If this is how a U.S. Senator can be treated, none of our constituents are safe.

This is a test for the country, but this is a test for the U.S. Senate as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

ALEX PADILLA

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, 2 days from today, June 14, is Flag Day in the United States. It is the day every year where we celebrate the flag, but it is not the piece of cloth that we celebrate; we celebrate core American values. And the most core American value is the one that we take an oath of office to, the Constitution of the United States.

The Constitution includes a Bill of Rights, and one of the most important pieces of the Bill of Rights is the First Amendment. It was drafted by Virginian James Madison, and it talks about the fact that there can't be laws or legal restrictions against the right of the people to peacefully assemble and petition government for redress of grievances.

That right is not something we are allowed. That right is something we are guaranteed.

My colleague and our friend ALEX PADILLA, born and raised in Los Angeles, loves his hometown—an MIT-educated, baseball-playing engineer who returned to his home, who served on the Los Angeles City Council and now serves in this body—has some very legitimate questions about why, in an unprecedented way, the National Guard and the U.S. Marines have been deployed into his city, over the objections of the mayor, over the objections of the Governor, in a historically unprecedented way and in a way such as to escalate tensions in his town rather than to reduce them.

So he decided to go to a peaceful public assembly. It was a press conference. It wasn't a private meeting to which he was not allowed entrance. A press conference's purpose is to share information with the public.

My colleague ALEX PADILLA, who goes to Wednesday prayer breakfast with me every week with a bipartisan group of colleagues, attended a public event so he could ask a question about why his hometown was being besieged by the Marines and National Guard over the objection of the mayor and the objection of the Governor.

His question was a grievance. He doesn't agree with the policies of the administration. He is guaranteed in this document the right to petition government for redress of grievances as an American, which is what we are supposed to do.

The Framers of the Constitution who put this in the First Amendment did it to protect the rights of ALEX PADILLA and all of us, but they did it for another reason. They did it because they believed it would help democracy work better, that democracy works better when people can speak freely. Democracy works better when people can profess their religion, when the press can operate freely. And democracy works better when people can gather peacefully and share their dissenting points of view. It makes our democracy work better.

Make no mistake, the effort to manhandle our colleague to push him out

of the room for asking an inconvenient question, to handcuff him, is an attempt to shut him up. It is an attempt to shut everybody up if you have a dissenting view from this administration. That is why the administration has deployed the military in an unprecedented way. They want to intimidate you.

They want to make you decide that although you were granted this as a right, they want to make you afraid to exercise the right. As I conclude, I would just say this: On Flag Day, I would encourage Americans of all kinds, find a peaceful assembly on June 14—on Flag Day—and attend it and show that you are a brave and patriotic American that embraces the First Amendment to the Constitution, and you will not allow anyone to intimidate you.

I was a missionary in Honduras in 1980 and 1981, and it was an authoritarian society. And no one was guaranteed the right to assemble or complain. You might do it and be OK one day; the next day you might be arrested; the next day you might be disappeared or even killed.

That is not who we are. We need brave, patriotic Americans to stand up, just as Senator PADILLA has done, and insist upon their right to peacefully assemble and present whatever critiques or complaints they have about policies that they find to be objectionable.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

ALEX PADILLA

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I have given a lot of speeches on this floor, and this is the least prepared but the most clear I ever will be: This is the stuff of dictatorships. It is actually happening.

A U.S. Senator was manhandled, shoved to the ground, and cuffed. He identified himself:

I am Senator Alex Padilla.

That should be enough. That should be enough. A U.S. Senator who is, by the way, protected by the speech and debate clause of the Constitution of the United States and a specific statute that allows him to oversee immigration facilities, and he says: I am a Senator, and I have a question.

To CHRIS MURPHY's point, they said, well, he was being disrespectful. Being disrespectful is legal. Being disrespectful is American. Being disruptive is OK if it is just using your words and not your body. This is the stuff of dictatorships. And the thing that is making me most terrified is I see zero Republicans, except for the Presiding Officer, in this Chamber. And I understand, if it is not a member of your own party, you want some context.

There is no context that justifies this action.

ALEX PADILLA is not required to be impeccable in every single way in order