

to address his irresponsible alcohol use should be given one of the most stressful jobs imaginable and should be making life-and-death decisions on a daily and an hourly basis. There is no world where we should have a predator running the Department of Defense that is responsible for the well-being of millions of women and men in uniform.

I don't get how that is complicated.

Mr. President, let me just end on this. There is no world where the person in charge of our military should see his fellow Americans as the enemy. But Mr. Hegseth has made clear that is his view. Regarding Democrats and Republicans, he has written—and this is him:

The other side—the Left—is not our friend. We are not esteemed colleagues, nor mere political opponents. We are foes. Either we win, or they win. We agree on nothing else.

That is an especially dark view of our country. Our military uniforms do not say “Democrat,” they do not say “Republican.” They just don't.

You cannot be an effective commander if your people don't trust you. But how are troops supposed to trust you to keep them safe in combat if you think half the Nation is an enemy? How are Muslim servicemembers supposed to trust you if you think their religion is a threat to our country? How are women servicemembers supposed to trust you if you think they should be at home?

I don't have an answer to that. Maybe Mr. Hegseth doesn't either. Maybe that is why he won't meet with me. Then again, maybe it is because he thinks I am his foe because I am a Democrat, or maybe he doesn't think I should have a say in the military issues because I am a woman.

Mr. President, I do have a say, and I say someone like Mr. Hegseth is grossly unqualified to take on one of the most important jobs in the world. And I will be voting against him. I urge my Republican colleagues to seriously consider the message it will send to confirm someone for Secretary of Defense who has failed time and again to meet the most basic standards of conduct our women and men in uniform are required to live up to.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it has been 4 days. It seems like it has been longer than that, but it has been 4 days since President Trump took the oath of office as the 47th President of the United States. We have seen a flurry of activity since that time, which you would expect from President Trump. He has been waiting for that day for

some time now and has worked really hard to get there. But from securing our borders to securing protections for women in sports, it is abundantly clear that President Trump is not letting any dust gather under his feet.

I am particularly pleased to see him dismantling the Biden-Harris administration's DEI regime throughout the Federal Government. Some people may be asking: Well, why would the President waste his time on that? What could be wrong with having a diverse workforce?

Well, the truth is that, while DEI—or diversity, equity, and inclusion—may sound like a benign or a nice thing, the dystopian reality is that there is nothing inclusive about DEI programming. On the contrary, it is quite divisive. In practice, DEI initiatives do the exact opposite of what they purport to do, and they fly directly in the face of everything that America stands for.

On Monday of this week, we celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. In what was perhaps Dr. King's most famous speech, the “I Have a Dream” speech, he said:

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but [rather] by the content of their character.

To me, that is the ideal.

At the heart of the civil rights movement was a desire for everyone, regardless of race or gender, to compete on a level, merit-based playing field.

What is so misguided about these DEI initiatives is that they do the exact opposite of what Martin Luther King spoke about. Instead of judging people on the content of their character, the DEI regime would have us assign points to people based on characteristics like skin color and gender and give preferential treatment to people on that basis. These are immutable characteristics, not something any of us can control. So it is profoundly unfair to decide that one person in a job candidate pool gets more weight put on their application because of something that was an accident of their birth. I think most people, if they understand what DEI is all about, would agree that this amounts to an unfair hiring practice. It treats people differently based on gender or the color of their skin or some other immutable characteristic.

President Trump's Executive order does not just affect Federal hiring; it also directs Agencies and Department heads to eliminate DEI practices in grants and contracts as well.

I think this would be a great opportunity for the Department of Government Efficiency to take a look at it as well, as there is a lot of room to eliminate waste and inefficiency in Federal grants and contracts.

According to the Government Accounting Office—GAO—the Federal Government spent \$759 billion on Federal contracts in 2023, which represents roughly 12.5 percent of Federal Government spending for that fiscal year. A significant number of these contracts

are for the Department of Defense. With billions of dollars and our national security on the line, it is critical that these contracts are awarded to contractors on merit, not based on some DEI-centered criteria. We owe it to the taxpayers to be selecting the best and the brightest and the most effective people for a job, not picking the consulting firm that simply racked up the most DEI points.

One of the downstream effects of DEI requirements in Federal contracts is they create an incentive structure for these divisive practices to bleed into the corporate world. This goes all the way back to then-President Richard Nixon, who implemented affirmative action requirements for private companies that contract with the Federal Government.

Since that time, there have even been instances of companies committing outright fraud in order to qualify for contracts that were prioritized for minority-owned businesses by claiming that an employee is a 51-percent owner in order to qualify for minority-owned status and thus get preferential treatment.

Now, some of the folks in the media not surprisingly are framing this action by President Trump as a reversal of the progress we have made in America in the civil rights era, but nothing could be further from the truth.

What we have to keep in mind is that the reforms of the civil rights era were enacted to address particular problems that our Nation was going through at that time; namely, segregation and widespread racial discrimination. Of course, these practices of racial discrimination that were so widespread during that time were far from our finest moments as a nation. I am thankful—thankful—that our country has been able to move forward from that era, and I applaud the men and women who went to great lengths and risked everything to help us turn the page on that chapter as a country.

But today, with rights granted to everybody, regardless of race, color, or creed, by law, we have a different situation where the law and the policies that were intended to end racial discrimination have evolved into the modern DEI apparatus, creating a new kind of discrimination—something we sought to avoid but which has now crept back into our country.

So the policies that were enacted to address one problem back during the civil rights era have been turned on their head—not to accomplish their original purpose but to do something entirely different, which is to enact preferences based on race, gender, and other immutable characteristics.

In fact, while the Civil Rights Act was being debated right here on the Senate floor, one of its architects, Senator Humphrey, expressed direct opposition to what is now part of the DEI bureaucracy. He said:

If the Senator can find in Title VII any language which provides that an employer

will have to hire on the basis of percentage or quota related to color, race, religion, or national origin. I will start eating the pages one after another, because it is not there.

So I think it is fair to say that President Trump's actions earlier this week are not a reversal of the progress we have made since the civil rights movement. They are better understood as the righting of the ship back to what Congress and the Nation intended to accomplish: a nation where all people have a chance to succeed or fail based on their merit and not on race.

So this action by President Trump, rather than reversing progress, is a return to the ideal that the United States of America should have always stood for but unfortunately did not, which is the equal dignity and equal treatment of every American under the law. That is our goal, and I am glad to see that President Trump has returned us to that original ideal since the civil rights era rather than to somehow paper over this effort to treat people differently based on their race, gender, or other characteristics.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BARASSO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO TYLER YORK

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, for the entire time that I have been a Member of the U.S. Senate, I have had the privilege of having on my team a Kansan who invests his time, his energy, his passion—he gives his heart for helping my constituents, for helping our constituents, for helping Kansans and Americans.

Tyler York has worn many hats in my office. He was a district representative, a caseworker, a videographer, and a legislative adviser. Tyler and I first met when he was completing his degree at Kansas State University and I needed some help and he helped me in 2010 on my Senate campaign. As a result of being a recent graduate of Kansas State University, Tyler was open to new opportunities and got the job driving me across Kansas. And during a 2-hour drive on I-70 from Manhattan to the airport, it became apparent to me that this young man was someone I wanted on my team and I benefited from his service every day.

At least, in this instance, I was right about him.

Tyler York joined my newly formed Senate team in Washington, DC, doing both constituent services and legislative work. A Kansan through and through, after a few years in Washington, DC, like many, Tyler decided to continue his work as a district representative to get back home to Kansas.

Tyler quickly became integrated, became a part, became familiar with the communities in South Central Kansas. And whether he was meeting with local leaders, making community visits, or assisting Kansans with problems they were having with the Federal Government, you could always count on Tyler to be diligently working with a smile on his face to solve a problem, to help people, to get things done.

Through his time assisting folks with Federal issues, doing what we all here call casework, Tyler became our go-to guy for issues related to many things, including the U.S. Post Office. As many of my colleagues know, we had lots of casework involving the challenges of the U.S. Post Office getting the mail delivered. Ready, willing, and able, he stepped up to every task. Tyler worked, especially in rural areas, to improve the consistency and the quality of the Postal Service. His work on this issue and others certainly did not go unnoticed.

I would like to share some of the comments I received from community leaders once they learned that Tyler was moving on. Lona DuVall, president and CEO of Finney County Economic Development Corporation shared:

We so appreciated Tyler York's role in expanding Senator MORAN's southwest Kansas presence. Senator MORAN recognized that our region was growing and we had needs that differed in many ways from other areas of the State [of Kansas], and he chose well in appointing Tyler, a native of our region, to create southwest Kansas office.

Tyler did a great job of providing connectivity between our region and the Senator's office in Washington, DC, and we will be forever grateful for Tyler's leadership in representing [us for] our region's needs at the Federal level. We wish Tyler only the best in his future endeavors.

Steve Dyer, former president of the Garden City Chamber:

Tyler's dedication to serving Kansans on behalf of Senator MORAN was always evident. He was responsive to our needs, always prompt and available, and he worked his tail off to ensure that our voices were heard, our questions were answered, and our needs were met.

And then Megan Barfield, president and CEO of the Great Bend Kansas Chamber of Commerce:

I have had the privilege of knowing Tyler for 5-plus years now during my time at the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce. He's always presented himself as one of the most engaged and truly genuine people I know. I had little experience in legislative affairs coming into my role, and I could always call on Tyler and trust him with whatever questions or direction I needed. Great Bend and Barton County thank you and we will miss you, Tyler.

Much of Tyler's most important work happened during times of hardship and adversity. In March of 2017, a wildfire burned across western Kansas, stirred up by high winds and fueled by dry prairie grasses. The fire lasted nearly a week and burned more than 450,000 acres across Kansas. Farms, ranches, businesses, and homes were lost to the fires. And this fire occurred

around Ashland, KS, in the county that is Tyler's hometown and home county and it was one of the main victims of that fire. So his hometown, his neighbors, the people he grew up with were in jeopardy.

It was a devastating time for the community, but they had a great ally in Tyler. They knew him and they trusted him. In the weeks following the fire, Tyler worked nonstop connecting first responders, landowners, and local leaders with Federal emergency resources. He kept me informed and updated on the situation on the ground and helped create legislation that changed the way the Federal Government delivers aid to help pay for fencing and the loss of cattle. That legislation became law and made a significant difference then and continuing.

He took great care of the people of Ashland, not just because it was his job, but because he truly, truly cared about them.

Tyler's help also extended beyond the borders of Kansas to the country of Afghanistan. Following the U.S. military's abrupt withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, we began receiving calls—as I recall, we received more than a thousand inquiries from Kansans asking what I, what we could do to help people who were stranded in Afghanistan; people who helped our soldiers, our interpreters, people who had a religion different than what the Taliban's beliefs are. A thousand-plus Kansans said: We need your help to get somebody out of Afghanistan that we know.

Tyler quickly became personally invested in these cases. This was a very difficult time for all of us and Tyler worked day and night making phone calls, contacting embassies. He was one of those individuals who took the people's problems, which in this case were life and death, to heart.

It was a difficult time for Tyler and for our office, as he wanted to have success in getting every individual that he learned about out of Afghanistan. He helped rescue 23 people, including children, from Kabul, Afghanistan in 2021.

One set of Kansans Tyler helped was the family of U.S. Army veteran Fatima Jaghoori. She had this to share about Tyler:

Tyler truly embodies the American spirit, helping others see the vision of American Dream by building ties with community members, listening to Kansans and working tirelessly for Americans. In one of the most uncertain times in history, Tyler acted to ensure all Kansans were heard, welcomed, and supported. Words cannot express my gratitude for Tyler [and for Senator MORAN]. Tyler is the compass, pointing at the direction to be a great American and a greater man. Tyler became friends of those people he helped escape from Afghanistan. He became a part of their families.

I know that this job often took Tyler on the road, driving around Kansas and missing valuable time with his family—with Alyssa, his wife. I want to express my gratitude to Tyler's family for supporting him in his work and for