

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

being gracious when he had to miss dinner or an important event because he was pulled away for work.

Tyler spent his entire career on Capitol Hill in my office, and for that, I would like to express my gratefulness to him. While I am saddened that his time working for me has concluded, I am thankful to have had the opportunity to work with him and beside him over the last 14 years.

He kept good stats on the work that he did. It is quite impressive: 4,091 meetings; 2,053 individuals, families, and organizations he has assisted with casework; 761 reports or memos drafted; 105 counties visited—that is every county in Kansas; 11 years of working to pass legislation to reform the post office; 3 new USDA programs developed as a direct result of the 2017 fires in Clark County.

In the next phase of his career, Tyler will still be helping Kansans as an executive officer with the Wichita Area Builders Association in supporting homebuilders, their customers, and the regional industry in South Central Kansas.

Tyler, with your invaluable experience, joyful attitude, and your constant drive to improve not only yourself but those around you—and I include me as being improved by your presence in my personal and professional life—you are and will be dearly missed. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors, and I look forward to hearing of your continued service to our State and its people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I want to extend my thanks to my colleague from Kansas for sharing that wonderful reflection on Tyler's exceptional work for the people of Kansas and for the people of the United States. We are blessed to have wonderful people to work with in this job.

NOMINATION OF PETER HEGSETH

Mr. President, I rise right now and today for the purpose of joining my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in opposing Mr. Hegseth's nomination as Secretary of Defense.

I appreciate Mr. Hegseth's military service, indeed, when evaluating his nomination—his service was what I appreciated most about his background—but unfortunately it is clear that Mr. Hegseth does not have the skills, experience, record, or character to lead a Department that has a budget of more than \$800 billion, is the largest employer of men and women in our country, and is tasked with safeguarding our Nation's security and freedom.

We take pride as Americans in the fact that our military is the very best. The standard of excellence and professionalism set by the men and women of our Armed Forces is central to our military's success and to our country's success. This high standard of competency and character, of both unmatched ability and uncommon virtue

is why America's Armed Forces command the respect of our friends, the fear of our foes, and the abiding faith of freedom-loving people everywhere.

America boasts the greatest fighting force in the history of the world. The heroes who serve in our Armed Forces deserve a leader who is worthy of that greatness, and Mr. Hegseth is plainly not up to that task.

Like many of my colleagues, I have concerns regarding Mr. Hegseth's character—the documented accusations about his excessive and uncontrolled drinking, his sexual harassment, sexual assault, and now accusations of being abusive to his ex-wife.

It is ironic that Mr. Hegseth and some of my colleagues have dismissed these concerns as partisan because, sadly, if this weren't a partisan confirmation process—for example, if my Republican colleagues were considering hiring Mr. Hegseth to join their staffs—we would all agree that these accusations would immediately be disqualifying.

Mr. Hegseth dismisses these multiple accusations from disparate people as a “coordinated smear campaign.” I don't think that the concerns of his former colleagues, friends, and family should be quickly dismissed as smears. Many other of the nominees who are being considered by this body aren't facing similar accusations even though there are people who vehemently oppose their confirmations, which begs the question of why Mr. Hegseth continues to face multiple similar accusations from different sources.

But, for a moment, let's do as Mr. Hegseth asks and put aside these accusations. Let us say for a moment that those who occupy the highest positions in public life shouldn't be above reproach, although indeed they should. Let us say that our servicemembers do not deserve a leader whose strength of character matches their own, although I believe they do. And let us say for a moment that character does not count, although indeed it surely always does. Let us, in short, ignore everything that Mr. Hegseth demanded that we ignore in his hearing. Even if we did that, I would submit that based on experience alone, Mr. Hegseth is mainly unqualified for the job as Secretary of Defense.

The Secretary of Defense is responsible for a budget of more than \$800 billion and is responsible for 3.4 million employees who serve on every continent across the globe.

To lead the Defense Department is a daunting task that requires leadership and managerial skills of the highest order. However, Mr. Hegseth's managerial experience begins and ends with his leadership at two small nonprofits, and his tenure at both resulted in concerns about his financial mismanagement at their helm. If Mr. Hegseth could not and did not effectively manage organizations with around 100 employees, surely no one can actually believe that he is ready to manage one of 3.4 million people.

We live in a dangerous and uncertain world. Iran and its proxies continue to menace our forces in the Middle East. Vladimir Putin is on the march in Europe. North Korea persists in testing our allies and testing its missiles. China—China—looks with a conqueror's gaze toward Taiwan.

To my Republican colleagues, I understand that you wish to support President Trump, but Presidents are sometimes wrong. We are talking about our Nation's vital security. We are considering the confirmation of the person who will be entrusted to marshal our resources as the enemy approaches, attacks our cyber defenses, or invades an ally. It matters—it matters—that we have the right person in this job. It matters that we get this one right.

Surely, there is someone in this great country of brilliant and brave people of all political stripes who is more capable and who has the experience and character necessary to forge under pressure the judgment that will keep us safe and free.

This is America. We have the finest fighting force ever assembled. We have more strength and power than any fighting force has had in human history. In the past, when we have looked for leaders of our Armed Forces, we have searched for our country's best and brightest, the most gifted minds of America's boardrooms, the brightest stars to come out of West Point, the most revered public servants to serve in these Halls. We did not need then nor do we need now to turn to the green rooms of cable TV networks for the Secretary of Defense.

Tomorrow marks the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge—a campaign in which my father served. In freezing temperatures, outnumbered and often undersupplied, our forces held the line against Hitler's onslaught. Our soldiers won because they were brave, they won because they were skilled, and they won because they were well led. Surely, the Armed Forces of the United States of America—the victors of the Ardennes, of Gettysburg, of Midway, and of 1,000 places in between and since—surely, they need a leader who they can have full faith in. Surely, America's best deserves the best.

Government's most important task is to keep America safe, secure, and free. It is a complex, fast-moving, and evolving challenge. It is a job that at times presents its occupant—the Secretary of Defense—no good or easy options. It is, in short, a deadly serious job where both success and failure have enormous ramifications. It is a job that depends on experience and character—the prerequisites for good judgment like no other.

No Senator should vote for someone who they can only hope will learn on the job—not for the Secretary of Defense. No Senator should vote for a nominee in the hope that he will display more personal discipline once he