

a basic question—now, get this—President Trump is serving his second term, right?

Yes, he is.

Can he run for a third term?

I am sorry, I can't answer that. That may be a question that comes before the Federal court.

Once again, take it to the eighth graders in my State or yours and ask them the basic question: How many terms can a President serve? Two. The Constitution says it, and the President is in his second term.

They are afraid to say that for fear that this President will try somehow to enter into a third term in office. I can't imagine how he would. But they are afraid to answer the questions.

Those are the kinds of nominees we are getting before the Senate Judiciary Committee. I have never seen, in 20 years of service on that committee, people who are in such an embarrassing position that they embarrass themselves, their families, and friends who have gathered for them and refuse to answer fundamental, basic questions about the Constitution. I have just never seen anything like it.

Ed Martin led an unprecedented purge of all the people that I mentioned earlier. He tweeted from the Capitol on January 6, the day of the insurrectionist mob. I want to quote him. Ed Martin:

Like Mardi Gras today in DC today: love, faith and joy. Ignore #FakeNews.

Dismissing the violence of the January 6 rioters, Martin said:

We have to have less judgment on somebody who hits a cop.

I want to repeat that in Police Week because of our bipartisan salute to our men and women in law enforcement. Ed Martin, one of the top guys in the Trump administration, said in reference to what happened on January 6 in this building:

We have to have less judgment on somebody who hits a cop.

Get out of here. This man is at the highest level of the Trump administration.

Although his nomination failed to advance, President Trump continues to nominate people like Martin who defend January 6 rioters and embrace the Big Lie that the 2020 election was stolen.

It is even more of an outrage that during Police Week, when we honor law enforcement's bravery, service, and sacrifice, Senate Republicans are poised to confirm nominees who continue to spread fabrications about the police officers who protected me and other Members of the Senate, Republican and Democrat, from the violent mob on January 6.

Take Darin Smith—Darin Smith, nominated to the District of Wyoming. He stood by his radical and dangerous view that Vice President Pence should not have certified the results of the 2020 election.

Smith was on the Capitol grounds on January 6—this nominee for judgeship

was on the Capitol grounds on January 6—and made the reprehensible claim—listen to this. This is what Smith said: Hundreds of Capitol Police officers who risked their lives that day were guilty of “massive incompetence.” Smith blames the police for what happened on January 6. Without evidence, he claimed that rioters who breached the Capitol were victims of entrapment—1,500 victims of entrapment.

Moreover, Smith is not remotely qualified to be a U.S. attorney. He is going to be in the package, take it or leave it. Prior to becoming interim U.S. attorney, he had no courtroom or litigation experience whatsoever—none.

Smith's lack of experience has had real-world consequences. At least seven criminal defendants have filed motions to dismiss charges brought by Smith because he told members of the grand jury that the defendants were “murderers” and that every case before them involved “bad people.” Even the Wyoming U.S. Attorney's Office has admitted Smith's irresponsible and unprofessional comments were “ill-advised.” That is the word they used—“ill-advised.” Worse than that, Smith has violated these defendants' rights and endangered public safety by putting these prosecutions at risk.

He wasn't ready for this job. He still isn't.

Another nominee Senate Republicans are rubberstamping today is Phil Williams, nominated to the Northern District of Alabama. He bears many unfortunate similarities to Ed Martin. Neither one had any prosecutorial experience prior to their nomination. Instead, like Martin, Williams' main qualification appears to be he is a podcaster and he makes social media posts in which he spouts MAGA orthodoxy.

Like Ed Martin, Phil Williams has whitewashed January 6 and maligned the law enforcement officers—not the mobsters—the policemen who were here protecting Members of Congress, our staff, and visitors. Williams claimed that January 6 rioters were “hunted down”—his words—by law enforcement, whom he accused of “prosecutorial abuse many, many times over.”

This is a man whose nomination for a lifetime appointment to the Federal court is going to be voted on today, during Police Week.

He went on to call the prosecution of January 6 rioters “the Salem Witch trials on a national scale.”

Williams criticized the 87-month sentence imposed on a rioter named Guy Reffitt, claiming he is, according to Williams, “nonviolent.” In fact, Reffitt traveled to the Capitol on that day—January 6—wearing body armor, carrying handguns and cuffs, and planning to kidnap NANCY PELOSI and MITCH MCCONNELL.

Prior to his arrest—listen to this—Reffitt, who has been described as “nonviolent,” said to his own minor children:

If you turn me in, you are a traitor, and traitors get shot.

Senate Republicans will also approve Dan Bishop, nominated to the Middle District of North Carolina—another nominee who has no previous experience as a prosecutor. Lifetime appointment to the Federal bench.

As a Member of Congress on January 6, 2021, Bishop voted against certifying the 2020 election results. He didn't accept what is clearly the fact: The President lost the 2020 election. President Biden won.

Bishop falsely claimed that “Democrats' attack on our elections . . . was coordinated & widespread.”

Even today, Bishop refuses to disavow debunked theories about the insurrection. He told me: “I have heard credible accounts that black-bloc/Antifa agitators were in the crowd and among the first to vandalize the Capitol building, so I think that leftists participated in and perhaps instigated the mayhem in part”—one of the wild conspiracy theories which he still stands by.

There is a clear through line here with these extreme, unqualified nominees. Their MAGA loyalty all but guarantees they will use their post in the U.S. Attorney's Offices to go after the President's political opponents.

President Trump has nominated these January 6 apologists for another equally concerning reason: He wants to make the case that the 2020 election was stolen to justify interfering in the 2026 elections, and he wants loyal foot soldiers in the U.S. Attorney's Offices who will help him carry out this mission.

Confirming these nominees to top law enforcement positions, particularly given their attacks on police officers simply for doing their jobs on January 6, is disrespectful to law enforcement—even more so during Police Week.

I urge my colleagues: Today, when this package comes before us, oppose these nominees. And because this racist package of nominees is a “take it or leave it” on nearly 50 nominees, by all means, leave it.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

#### RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this year, as we all know, we are celebrating America's 250th anniversary. This, of course, is an opportunity for all of us to reflect with gratitude on the many liberties and freedoms that we enjoy—fundamental freedoms not enjoyed by most of the rest of the world—all of which help make America an exceptional nation.

America is a country envied by millions or perhaps billions of people around the world who long to experience the liberties we too often take for granted here at home. But it is also true that many countries do not share

our values. Instead, they impose authoritarian or theocratic rules on their own citizens, as we have witnessed in recent years.

Even on continents like Africa, countries like Nigeria have come under international scrutiny for violating the rights and freedoms of Christians and other religious groups as their legal system has become more and more entwined with theocratic rule—in this case, Sharia law.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom issued a report last July detailing some of these abuses. The report found that Nigeria's enforcement of so-called blasphemy laws has created restrictions on the religious freedom of Christians and other faith groups.

Nigeria's Constitution grants authority to local governments to adjudicate their laws through Sharia, or religious, courts. In some states, this has resulted in the charging, fining, and imprisonment of non-Muslims. Twelve states in Northern Nigeria have been permitted to implement laws derived from a Sharia framework criminalizing blasphemy. They have also enforced Sharia-based code punishment that utilizes corporal punishment, including amputation and stoning, for certain offenses. Some state governments in Nigeria have thrown several people into prison for violating blasphemy laws, including a Christian nurse and a humanist, who were both released last year. Several more remain in prison to this day under similar charges, with some even sentenced to the death penalty.

In Europe, as a result of massive migration from Middle Eastern countries, there has been an increase in the practice of Sharia law in various Muslim enclaves—frequently, pockets of parallel legal norms in some urban centers.

While we as Americans allow freedom of speech and expression and religion, it is hard to imagine a judge in another country imposing the death penalty on someone for having different beliefs or for a judge to throw someone in jail for sending a message online that a religious judge finds offensive, which, of course, would never happen in America because of the First Amendment in part, which protects religious freedom. But this is a road that America could go down if we do not remain vigilant and committed to the foundational principles of individual liberty, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion enshrined in our Constitution.

These incidents occurring in Nigeria may seem far away, but they underscore the dangers of what can happen in a country that is not guided by the values that we hold dear here in America, and they offer a glimpse of what could happen in free Western countries like the United States if Sharia law became entwined in a nation's governing philosophy. As I mentioned, because of massive Muslim immigration from the Middle East into Europe, this is hap-

pening right now in many enclaves across Europe.

Back home in Texas, my constituents have become increasingly alarmed at immigrant enclaves that seek to adopt Sharia law right here in the United States. Last summer, a group of individuals attempted to create a Sharia law compound in Josephine, TX, known as the East Plano Islamic Center, otherwise known as EPIC City. This complex would have been a planned community strictly for Muslims centered around a mosque and a private Islamic grade school. The developers planned to have homes available for sale to noncitizens but restricted to those who would supposedly “contribute to the overall makeup of [the] community.” In other words, they would seek to bar people not sharing their same beliefs.

This is clearly a very lightly veiled attempt at religious discrimination and, of course, is prohibited by Federal law, including the Fair Housing Act, among other civil rights laws. Naturally, many of my constituents were concerned, as was I. There is something so alarming about this planned community where only residents of a particular faith are welcome and allowed to purchase a home and where principles of religious law like Sharia law would govern daily life, education, and commerce.

I wrote a letter to the Department of Justice asking them to investigate EPIC City for potential violations of Federal civil rights laws. Governor Abbott has been instrumental in making sure that this planned community will never come to fruition, and I am thankful for his leadership and remain committed to ensuring that Texas does not ever allow such a community to be created. Furthermore, I plan to introduce legislation here in the Senate to ensure that any attempts to impose or adopt religious law, including Sharia, never become realized.

Our country was founded on principles of liberty, equality, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech. We cannot shrink from these ideals by allowing certain individuals to advocate or embrace Sharia law, nor can we allow advocates for Sharia law to enter our country and actively work to undermine our Constitution.

We welcome legal immigrants from around the world, regardless of religious belief, who want to become Americans through a legal, orderly process, but we want Americans not just in name only but in terms of their willingness to embrace the very values enshrined and protected by our Constitution. We want them to become fully assimilated as Americans, as America always has.

By recommitting ourselves to our Constitution and to our founding principles, our country will see another 250 years of liberty and justice for all.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, multiple press articles and reports by human rights organizations, as well as United Nations human rights investigators, have documented widespread acts of horrific sexual violence against prisoners in the Middle East over many years. These articles and these reports describe—often in graphic, gruesome detail—a consistent pattern of sexual abuse corroborated by multiple sources and in some cases with shocking photographs and videos posted on social media by the perpetrators themselves.

These allegations amount to gross violations of human rights, including torture, and if committed by members of foreign military and police forces that receive training or equipment from the United States, they are sanctionable under U.S. law—the Leahy Law.

In Egypt, allegations of acts of systemic sexual violence against prisoners are not new. The allegations have been the subject of reports, including by U.S. and Egyptian human rights organizations and the Department of State, for many years.

We also know that Hamas militants who invaded Israel on October 7, 2023, committed absolutely brutal acts of sexual violence, including gang rape, against Israelis during the attack and against Israeli hostages.

On May 12, a team of Israeli researchers released a report which concluded that sexual violence by Hamas militants against women and men was “systematic, widespread and integral” to the attack. Many of us have condemned those barbaric crimes and called for justice for the Israeli victims.

I personally still have vivid memories of hearing personally of the horrors of these attacks from Israeli victims who bravely came and spoke to Members of the U.S. Senate.

There is also extensive evidence, both before and after October 7, of a pattern of sexual violence against Palestinian prisoners by Israeli security forces. Allegations of such abuses in Israeli prisons are not new, but they have sharply increased since October 7.

So have reports of widespread abuses and killings of Palestinian civilians by Israeli soldiers and acts of violence, including sexual assault and murder by Israeli settlers which reportedly continue to this day.

I will not repeat the gruesome details of the attacks reportedly committed against Palestinian prisoners by Israeli soldiers, but I do urge my colleagues, as uncomfortable as it may be, to read the articles by Nicholas Kristof in the May 11 New York Times entitled “The Horror of Sexual Assault in Israeli Prisons,” and “The Silence That Meets the Rape of Palestinians.”

The heinous acts that were described to him by former prisoners and witnesses, if proven in a court of law, would warrant decades-long prison sentences. Despite overwhelming evidence,