

open season on American reproductive freedom.

Since then, Republicans got to work. States passed sweeping abortion bans. They peeled back protections for birth control. They created confusing, punitive, and terrifying schemes that have thrown patients into jail and charged their providers for simply receiving and providing basic medical care. And this is just the beginning.

Today, my Republican colleagues are again seeking to advance their anti-choice, anti-health, anti-family, anti-freedom agenda right here on the Senate floor. They want to strip funding from health centers that prescribe birth control. They want to strip funding from health centers that provide birth control, that treat infections, that screen for cancer—and, yes, that offer abortions. The result? Hundreds of closed clinics. Traveling farther to get care. Paying more or not getting care at all. Untreated illnesses. Delayed cancer diagnoses. I will not allow that to happen without a fight.

Let me be clear about where Republicans stand. Republicans will not protect the right to an abortion. Republicans will not protect the right to birth control. Republicans will not protect the right for Americans to decide their own futures. Instead, they will continue to pursue an agenda that is so offended by bodily autonomy that they would rather follow the extremism of the few than the will of the majority, who want their reproductive rights protected.

We must make the right to contraception the law of the land. Are you ready for me to say that again? We must make the right to contraception the law of the land before extremist judges and legislators further strip it away to advance their radical political agenda.

By the way, this is not some hypothetical. In his written opinion for the Dobbs decision, Justice Clarence Thomas on the Supreme Court of the United States urged the Court to overturn settled precedent and threaten the fundamental right to contraception.

We know what the “GOP” really stands for: “Gutting Our Protections.”

That is why I am again calling for the Senate to pass my Right to Contraception Act. This legislation would enshrine in Federal law the right to obtain and use contraception and put in place vital protections for providers.

The right to contraception shouldn't be a partisan issue. Americans of all parties overwhelmingly support it. It is central to an individual's health, well-being, life, liberty, equality, and economic and social freedom. It is a right grounded in the fundamental ability to make decisions about one's own body, one's own family, one's own future.

We must meet the clarity of their extremism with the clarity of justice. That is why I am out here on the floor of the Senate today—to make sure we debate that clarity which must be brought to this central issue of families' well-being all across our country.

Therefore, I ask that the consent be modified; that, instead, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 422. Further, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection to the modification?

The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, claiming Republicans pose a threat to contraception is absurd. Despite fearmongering and election-year stunts from the left, over-the-counter daily oral contraceptive pills are available everywhere and have been for years.

Democrats have repeatedly made it clear that they want to control every aspect of your life—your healthcare, your job, your finances, and, yes, even your children.

To be clear, I support access to safe and effective contraception options for women. But that is not what Senator MARKEY's bill does. Instead, it attempts to provide drugs and sterilization procedures to minor children without parental consent. You do not need to be a parent or a grandparent to know this is profoundly wrong. It is dangerous, it is immoral, and it must be stopped.

Out of concern for every single child in this country, I cannot support this. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Is there an objection to the original request?

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 4872

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, if you open a history book in any middle school classroom in America, you are going to find a very familiar pattern. Throughout history, societies have repeatedly decided that certain groups of people were exceptions to the promise of human dignity.

When we look back on those injustices, it seems almost impossible to understand how people could have accepted such profound disregard for human life. Yet history shows that these tragedies rarely begin with hatred alone; they begin with a more subtle idea that some human beings somehow fall outside the circle of protection owed to everyone else.

Every generation faces its own unique question about human dignity, which brings me to a question, and I would like my colleagues and the American people and especially the next generation of leaders—some of

them in this room today—the question is, Who deserves human dignity?

In the land of freedom and opportunity, we are constantly talking about equality, inclusion, and defending the most vulnerable, and we should ask those questions. I mean, those are fundamentally American values. But those ideas only mean something if they are applied consistently.

For 250 years, Americans have prided ourselves on being the voice of the voiceless, but for some reason, far too many fall silent when the dignity of the smallest and the most vulnerable members of our human race is questioned, and that is the unborn.

But human dignity is not conditional. It does not depend on age or size or ability or circumstance. Human dignity is inherent. It can't be earned. It can't be granted. It can't be taken away. And the most fundamental dignity we all possess is the right to life.

So if we aspire to be a nation that defends the equal dignity of every person, then our actions both at home and abroad must reflect the values we profess. The United States cannot credibly champion human rights while pursuing policies that deny the unborn the most basic right of all, and that is the right to life.

So as we approach the fourth anniversary of the ruling in Dobbs, there is more that we must do to defend the right to life. So I applaud the Trump administration for uncovering loopholes that previous administrations exploited to use U.S. foreign aid programs to fund and promote abortion abroad.

One of the greatest measures of American leadership is not merely the power that we profess, but it is the principles that we project. And it is the values we champion abroad that should reflect the values we share at home.

If human dignity is truly universal, then the foreign aid funded by American taxpayers must be consistent with our Nation's most fundamental truth, and that is that every human life possesses inherent dignity and that the first human right is the right to life.

That is why I have introduced the Protecting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance Act, so that we don't repeat history.

My bill would codify the Trump administration's efforts to once again put American values first in U.S. foreign assistance programs, preventing any future administration from using such programs as loopholes to deny life to the unborn.

One day, history will render its verdict on whether we choose to defend human dignity. It is my hope that future generations find that we remain faithful to America's first principle: that we are all created equal.

I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 4873 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a

third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I want to say a couple of words about this bill that I strongly oppose.

This bill would expand the already draconian global gag rule to apply to more types of foreign aid, more services, and more organizations by codifying the Trump administration's so-called human flourishing policy. So this would basically be a gag rule not just on global health programs, which is bad enough, but on all nonmilitary foreign assistance.

What it would do is it would say that any organization anywhere in the world that provides, refers, or even mentions abortion or support of LGBTQ+ people or any diversity and inclusion initiative would be banned from getting U.S. foreign assistance. This gag order would put—basically, it would put a gag order on the world's most vulnerable people by the world's most wealthy Nation.

What is ironic about this is that this is not just a cruel policy but an incoherent policy because it would not in any way reduce abortion, which is what my colleagues say their goal is.

There was a previous narrower gag rule earlier imposed by the Trump administration, and in that case, abortion rates actually went up in those countries. Why is that? Well, because of this gag rule. It resulted in less access to contraceptives, to birth control, and more unintended pregnancies.

This is about forcing foreign governments and forcing multilateral institutions and NGOs to accept an ideological agenda or risk being cut off entirely from U.S. assistance.

I think everybody should have the ability to make their own decisions about their own bodies and their own lives and their own futures. Certainly, they should be able to make those decisions without somebody in Washington, DC, who knows nothing about their lives telling them what to do.

We should be joined together in our belief that U.S. foreign assistance should be helping people, lift them out of poverty, support them in getting the services they need, and not trying to impose an ideological gag rule on their activities.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, my colleague, whom I very much respect, has chosen to support the loophole through this objection. It allows taxpayer dollars to be used in a manner contrary to the values we cherish at home, allowing no voice to the voiceless.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mrs. MOODY. Mr. President, I rise today to ask unanimous consent to pass my Pregnant Students' Rights Act out of the Senate, legislation that would inform young mothers in school—at university or in college—of their rights to protect the most vulnerable among us. Today, we have an opportunity to ensure that students have the information and support they need should they become pregnant.

Navigating college can be challenging for any student but especially for pregnant women. Unfortunately, they oftentimes feel pressured to end their pregnancies or risk academic failure. No woman should ever feel like she has to choose between continuing classes or continuing a pregnancy. Young women who find themselves in this situation should know exactly what resources are available to them to help them carry their pregnancies to term and what their rights are while they are in school, whether that be in modified class schedules, excused absences, or other accommodations.

This legislation would ensure that young women would know their rights and know that they will have the support they need to stay in school, to carry a child to term, and to raise a baby. Far too often, they are told the exact opposite—that if they choose to have their babies, it will be the end of their academic careers, their life ambitions, and their career goals. They are made to feel abortion may be their only option, and that is not what any of us should want. It is not true.

With this bill, we will send the message that life is precious and that we want to help you make that decision to carry a child to term, to raise that child, and to continue your education goals.

This bill requires universities to inform students of the rights and protections for pregnant students, such as those modified class schedules and excused absences. It also requires universities to advise students on how to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if there is a violation.

This legislation comes at an important time. The CDC reports that almost 30 percent of all abortions in the United States are performed on women of college age, between the ages of 20 and 24. College-aged women may not be aware of their rights of accommodation. This would allow for that information to be shared, would mandate that universities do so, and would never make students believe they only have one choice.

I urge my colleagues to join in our mission, support this legislation, and protect the sanctity of life. We urgently need to protect the Pregnant Students' Rights Act today.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 300, S. 3627. Further, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the

motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, despite its name, this bill does nothing—nothing—to meaningfully help pregnant students, nor does it protect their rights. It is yet another step in a broader war on reproductive freedom—this time by threatening funding losses for colleges and universities that do not comply.

This bill would require colleges and universities to distribute information to all students about carrying a pregnancy to term and caring for a child after birth. That is the focus of this bill.

This bill intentionally—intentionally—excludes information about the full range of reproductive health, including contraception, abortion, even where those options are legal. That is not protecting pregnant students' rights; that is government-mandated bias.

Pregnant students who are legal adults do not need politicians, do not need government, deciding which facts they are allowed to know. What they actually need is medically accurate information so they can make informed decisions about what is best for their bodies, their families, and their futures.

While Republicans claim this bill is about protecting students, the reality is that this bill does nothing to actually expand protections for students.

This bill offers no guarantees of medical leave, flexible coursework, lactation accommodations, childcare assistance, housing support, or financial aid protections. In other words, this bill does nothing to address the real barriers pregnant and parenting students face every day.

Instead, this bill will threaten the funding universities and colleges rely on—funds that have been under attack by this regime. Already, the Trump regime has withheld or canceled billions in grants and other funding from colleges and universities. And now, with this bill, they are threatening the further loss of funds to force colleges and universities to comply by requiring—requiring—they to push out incomplete information that intentionally does not provide students the full range of options. And that is because this bill isn't actually about protecting students. It is about advancing Republicans' war on reproductive care.

Tomorrow is the fourth anniversary of the Supreme Court's disastrous Dobbs decision overturning Roe v. Wade, overturning a constitutional right that women in this country relied on and had for some 50 years.

And in the 4 years since Dobbs, Republicans have worked tirelessly to deny or limit access to reproductive care, to spread fear and confusion, and to shame those who seek care.