

unlimited, unattributable amounts in money in politics corrupts our political system. Our political finance systems has been flooded with secret, corporate money since the 5-4 ruling in Citizens United. Mr. Ho's opinion on campaign finance favors corporations and the wealthy who use money to yield influence and shape policy.

Unfortunately, Mr. Ho is not the only Trump judicial nominee who has espoused such extreme views. Every single nominee has come from a preapproved list created by the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society. This intellectual hegemony will harm Americans seeking redress in the courts. Recently, three judicial nominees withdrew their names from consideration after the American public learned how inexperienced and unfit they were for a lifetime appointment. I encourage the Trump administration to submit mainstream nominees and to stop outsourcing our judicial system to rightwing think tanks.

SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, today I wish to commend Robert Mueller's career as a public servant and to condemn partisan, political attacks on Mr. Mueller's reputation and American democratic systems.

A brief glance at Mr. Mueller's biography reflects his consistent commitment to serve the American people with honor and courage. As a young man, Mr. Mueller served with distinction in the Vietnam war. His list of commendations and military decorations, including a Bronze Star, two Navy Commendation Medals, the Purple Heart, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, are emblematic of his leadership and exemplary service.

Mr. Mueller not only fought courageously on the battlefield, but upon returning home and earning his law degree, he continued serving his country throughout his legal career. He cut his teeth working in U.S. attorney's offices in Boston and San Francisco for over a decade, and when he later served at the Department of Justice, Mr. Mueller was nominated by President George H. W. Bush to lead the criminal division, where he oversaw cases as diverse as the prosecution of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega and the Lockerbie bombing.

In 1995, Mr. Mueller's dedication to public service led him to leave a high-paying position at a private firm to join the DC U.S. attorney's office homicide division to hold violent offenders accountable for their crimes. Three years later, he became a U.S. attorney himself, serving in San Francisco and earning himself a reputation as a dogged and fair prosecutor committed to enforcing the rule of law.

In 2001, Mr. Mueller was nominated by a second Republican President, George W. Bush, as the Director of the FBI, a position to which he was confirmed unanimously by this body.

Whether navigating our response to the atrocities of 9/11, leading the Bureau's reform in its aftermath, or trailblazing the Bureau's role in combating cyber crimes, his tenure has been widely lauded. In fact, in 2011, as his 10-year term was set to end, we in the Senate voted 100 to 0 to extend his term until 2013.

In an era of increasing political and cultural tribalism, each time Mr. Mueller has been named or nominated for a new position, he has received bipartisan and unabashed praise—and rightly so.

Mr. Mueller, as an expert in law enforcement, could not be better suited for the task at hand: an investigation into Russia's interference in the U.S. elections. That Russia interfered in our elections is neither conjecture nor an attempt to rewrite the political outcomes of 2016. It is a fact that was true for the U.S. and many European allies in the last year and will remain a serious risk to the validity of our future elections if we do not take action. Mr. Mueller's investigation will serve as a necessary step to secure the ability of Americans to cast their vote in confidence for those who will represent them in Washington. Nothing could be more sacred or more American.

Serious, prudent, and thorough congressional oversight is always appropriate. Reckless, partisan attacks on the integrity of an honest public servant are not the same as congressional oversight. Attacks like these embolden our enemies, animate opponents of democracy, and inspire terrorists. These attacks are nothing short of unpatriotic.

I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stand up for the integrity of the process that Mr. Mueller is leading. Skepticism of the outcomes of his investigation triggered by dishonest smears on Mr. Mueller's reputation by Washington politicians would have lasting results and would compromise the ability of law enforcement to protect U.S. from our enemies, foreign and domestic.

SAFE SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak about "A Beautiful Here," a memoir by Linda Phillips that chronicles her struggle to overcome the extraordinary grief of losing her son, Nuci, to suicide following his long battle with depression.

Linda writes about an empathetic, caring, and happy child who grows increasingly distressed through adolescence. Nuci retreated from their close-knit family and, despite their efforts to support him through several periods of crisis and treatments, he succumbed to his disease.

Though the family was distraught and heartbroken by Nuci's death, Linda Phillips was also appalled at the lack of supports for individuals struggling with suicide and for families who have lost loved ones to depression.

At multiple points, Nuci failed to receive services or the compassionate support he needed. Indeed, after calling a crisis hotline while in college, Nuci was taken into custody by police and placed in handcuffs. Ultimately, the incident resulted in his expulsion. On another occasion, he was told to wait over a month for services when seeking support for his depression while in school.

Linda also saw other families pull their children from much-needed treatment programs because they could not afford the costly care. She saw firsthand that survivors of suicide are often relegated to the shadows, met by uncomfortable silence, or blamed for their loved ones' deaths.

Linda's personal account sheds light on this tragic and pervasive problem. Though Nuci Phillips took his own life 20 years ago, his story, sadly, remains just as relevant today.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention reports that nearly 36,000 American's die by suicide each year; that is one American every 15 minutes. According to the Center for Disease Control, CDC, suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 10 and 24 and results in approximately 4,600 lives lost each year.

In recent years, a shocking number of young people have attempted or ended their life through suicide as a result of bullying. Though not all instances of bullying lead to suicide, bully victims are between two to nine times more likely to consider suicide than nonvictims, according to studies by Yale University.

Nearly one in four students aged 12 to 18 are affected by bullying and harassment, according to recent data from the Department of Education. Another Department study estimates that 60,000 students in the U.S. do not attend school each day because they fear being bullied. Bullying and harassment are a significant problem in our schools.

These are issues that we can begin to address today by confronting bullying in our schools through strong antibullying policies. In far too many communities, whether in Pennsylvania or across the Nation, we are forced to deal with tragic consequences of bullying or harassment when these policies or organizations do not exist. Other resources include school counselors and crisis hotlines.

My bill, the Safe Schools Improvement Act, may not prevent all incidences of bullying, but it is an important step in the direction of tackling this problem and holding school districts accountable.

Depression and suicide, whether brought on by bullying or not, is a serious disease with potentially deadly results. More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease combined.