

In 1995, Mr. Mueller left a high-paying position in the private sector to join the DC U.S. attorney's office—in this case, the Homicide Division—working to hold violent offenders accountable for their crimes.

Three years later, he became a U.S. attorney himself, serving again in San Francisco and earning 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, President George W. Bush, to be the Director of the FBI. He was then confirmed unanimously by this body. His tenure at the FBI included leading the response to the September 11 attacks, spearheading the Bureau's efforts to combat cyber crime, which has been widely praised. In fact, in 2011, when his 10-year term was scheduled to end, we in the Senate voted 100 to 0 to extend his term as FBI Director through 2013, another 10 years.

Though our political system has become more polarized, each time Mr. Mueller has been named or nominated for a new position, he has received unqualified praise from people across the political spectrum and rightly so.

With Mr. Mueller's record as a war hero, a dedicated public servant, and an expert in law enforcement, it is hard to imagine anyone better suited to lead the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election. There is no one in Washington, DC, or, frankly, in all of America better prepared to do this job.

Serious congressional oversight of executive branch operations is always

appropriate. However, the reckless partisan attacks on Mr. Mueller's investigation and on Mr. Mueller himself are not the same as congressional oversight. Such attacks have made us less safe as a nation. The political smears like those we have seen undermine our rule of law and strike at the heart of our democracy. They are a disservice to the brave men and women in law enforcement who put their lives on the line to keep all of us safe.

As Members of the U.S. Congress, we have a duty to uphold the rule of law and the principles of fairness and independence that American democracy is built upon.

I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to defend the integrity of Mr. Mueller's investigation and reject the politically motivated attempts to discredit the investigation and its underlying conclusions. I call on the House and Senate majority to give us a vote on legislation to protect Special Counsel Mueller's independence and ensure that he can continue his investigation free from interference.

To ensure the integrity of our elections and our democracy, we must make sure we never allow a hostile foreign power to interfere in our electoral process again, and to do that we must allow the special counsel to get to the bottom of what Russia did in 2016 and whether it was aided by American individuals. That is what the whole investigation is about—those two parts.

History, of course, will be our judge. We will be judged about how we handled this crisis. We know that in 1787, when the Constitutional Convention

had just adjourned, Benjamin Franklin was asked what kind of government the Convention had chosen for our young nation. He responded that the Convention has given us “[a] Republic, if you can keep it.”

Democratic principles are only as strong as those elected to uphold them. I hope my colleagues will stand together and stand strong to preserve the rule of law and the institutions of this Republic we have been given, and we must “keep it,” as Franklin said.

I yield the floor.

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#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:17 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 6, 2018, at 10 a.m.

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#### CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 5, 2018:

##### EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

JEFFREY GERRISH, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A DEPUTY UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE (ASIA, EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST, AND INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS), WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR.

##### THE JUDICIARY

KAREN GREN SCHOLER, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS.

TILMAN EUGENE SELF III, OF GEORGIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA.