

to increase the size of the Arizona State Supreme Court. He knew the incredible power of a supreme court pick, even at the State level.

Mr. Speaker, we in Congress must not underestimate that power, especially now. Donald Trump has nominated Judge Brett Kavanaugh to fill a seat in the U.S. Supreme Court, and here is what we know:

Judge Kavanaugh believes that a woman has no legal right to full autonomy over her own body;

Judge Kavanaugh believes that the agency created to protect consumers from fraud and predatory lending is unconstitutional;

Judge Kavanaugh believes that access to affordable healthcare should be determined by your age or your gender or your preexisting condition;

Judge Kavanaugh believes that the President should be above the law.

Here is what we don't know:

We don't know what is in the hundreds of thousands of pages of Kavanaugh's records that the Trump White House has refused to release, contrary to a century of Supreme Court precedent. That is unacceptable.

The Invest in Ed decision in Arizona is a blatant example of judicial power gone wrong, judicial power used to undermine democracy.

If confirmed, Judge Kavanaugh would join a panel of Justices with this very same power: the power to keep gutting the Voting Rights Act, the power to keep green-lighting partisan gerrymandering, the power to keep signing off on GOP efforts to purge the voter rolls.

We cannot allow this to happen. Doug Ducey's State supreme court set back democracy in Arizona. What Doug Ducey did to Arizona, Donald Trump will do to America with this Supreme Court. We cannot let that happen.

My colleagues in the Senate should reject Judge Kavanaugh's nomination. Our democracy depends on it.

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OMINOUS SOCIALIST TREND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise to sound the alarm about an ominous trend that seems to be taking hold in our Nation.

In June, a self-avowed democratic socialist jumped into the national spotlight in her quest to join this body. Many view her as carrying the mantle for a new socialist trend among some in the United States.

So, I ask, what would socialist policies mean for our country's future?

I have come to realize that a whole generation of Americans have grown up for whom the Soviet Union is just a distant historical memory. Many have no personal memory of when the Soviet Union came crashing down in 1991, which was dramatic proof that its so-

cialist system was a dismal failure. Many can't recall the feeling of national pride over the fact that, in contrast, the free economy of the United States had succeeded in producing the highest standard of living in world history.

So perhaps it is understandable that, for a new generation, the old, empty promises of socialism seem to carry a new allure.

Socialism, by definition, is the political and economic theory of social organization whereby production, distribution, and exchange should be owned and regulated by the community as a whole. In other words, what is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.

Usually, it is the latter that gets people to buy in. That is, what is yours is mine. This concept holds a strong appeal for many people because it addresses legitimate concerns over inequity and injustice.

The problem is that, for all its high-minded fairness, socialism doesn't work. It is not just a castle in the air; it is the promise of a palace that is really built on quicksand. You don't have to look back to the Soviet Union to see this.

Venezuela is just the latest tragic example of socialism's devastation. At the beginning of the 21st century, Venezuela was one of the top 20 richest countries in the world. Today, its poverty rate is 87 percent, and its inflation rate is predicted to be approaching 1 million percent—yes, 1 million.

Once, Venezuela's capital was a tourist destination with a thriving culture. Today, it is the crime capital of the world.

This crisis is the result of the redistributive policies and the systematic destruction of economic freedom by a corrupt and elitist administration.

As President Trump said in his first speech to the United Nations General Assembly: "The problem in Venezuela is not that socialism has been poorly implemented, but that socialism has been faithfully implemented."

It is a sobering reminder that while socialism's torchbearers may change, the havoc it wreaks with its hollow promises remains the same. What we must remember is that America is not immune.

As President Ronald Reagan famously said: "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it on to our children in the bloodstream."

Socialism, faithfully implemented, could cripple our Nation's peace and prosperity over time, just as it did in Venezuela.

It is easy to see the allure of socialism. Socialists say that they desire an equitable distribution of wealth and then characterize capitalism as rampant greed and materialism.

Ironically, it is typically the advocates of socialism who display the excess desire for material goods. There is the obsession with making things free,

from phones, to internet access, to a college education. There is the obsession with disparities in income, rather than a concern with job opportunities.

Socialism holds a strong appeal for many because it legitimizes coveting your neighbor's possessions, which was once commonly understood as against the Tenth Commandment. And the premises of socialism, all under the high-minded guise of fairness, are anything but fair.

Capitalism, on the other hand, is responsible for the enormous levels of philanthropic giving that we see in the United States of America, the most generous Nation ever known to mankind.

We must continue to speak out boldly, not based on fear, but based on facts. We must continue to tell the truth, regardless of its popularity. We must continue to implement policies that unleash the power of our free economy and create more opportunities for all Americans, like the recently passed Tax Cuts and Jobs Act with its bipartisan opportunity zones.

It is my firm belief that, in the marketplace of ideas, freedom will always win out over socialism on the bases of merit, evidence, and facts. But it cannot win if no one is making the case.

Mr. Speaker, let's continue to stand up and speak out. Let's make the case for freedom and opportunity for all Americans.

SHAM NOMINATION HEARINGS IN THE SENATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court nomination and the sham hearings that are happening in the Senate today.

Even before President Trump nominated Judge Kavanaugh, Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL warned that the millions of pages in Judge Kavanaugh's White House records would reopen controversies dating back to George W. Bush's administration and delay consideration of his nomination. But instead of following regular order, rather than obtaining Judge Kavanaugh's full record and sharing it in a timely fashion with all the Senators, Senate Republicans simply changed the rules. This is unacceptable.

The nine Justices who sit on the Supreme Court make crucial decisions about justice in our country. At times, the Court's landmark decisions have shown the best of who we are and what our country stands for, the ideas that our public schools should not be segregated based on race, that women have a right to make their own decisions about their bodies, and that everybody has the right to marry the person they love.

In other cases, Supreme Court decisions have been stains on our Nation;

for instance, deciding that African Americans could not be U.S. citizens, upholding the cruel and unjust internment of Japanese Americans during World War I, maintaining segregation, and striking down key provisions protecting access to voting.

Make no mistake, Judge Kavanaugh poses a serious threat to the rights that we hold so dear. Take, for instance, the case of Jane Doe, the teenage girl who sought an abortion last year while being held in government custody in Texas.

Jane Doe did everything herself to secure that abortion. She got permission from a judge. She got her own transportation. And yet, the Federal Government physically blocked her from leaving the government-run shelter where she was detained.

So then the ACLU sued on her behalf, and her case eventually made it in front of Judge Kavanaugh. Although he recognized the time sensitivity, even clarifying that she would no longer be able to seek a legal abortion in Texas at 20 weeks, Judge Kavanaugh blocked Jane Doe's access to her legally allowable abortion when she was about 15 weeks pregnant. He gave the Trump administration 11 more days to find a sponsor, a process that he was aware takes months to complete. He told Jane Doe that, after those 11 days, she could ask a lower court again for an abortion. If at 17 weeks she was unsuccessful, then he told her that she could bring it up again to him for consideration, which would have been scheduled when she was, at that point, 18 or 19 weeks pregnant, if she were lucky. Court delays could have pushed it even further, seriously putting her at risk of being outside the window to obtain something that was her legal right.

But, fortunately, the full court overturned Judge Kavanaugh's decision a few days later, and Jane Doe was able to proceed in the course that she chose for her own body, a decision that Judge Kavanaugh vehemently opposed.

Fortunately for Jane Doe, Judge Kavanaugh's decision was not the crucial vote deciding her future. But if Judge Kavanaugh is confirmed, the rest of the country will not be so lucky.

There is broad consensus that Judge Kavanaugh would be a decisive vote to eliminate women's constitutionally protected right to abortion, a right, by the way, that is not partisan. Seventy-one percent of voters support that right.

In addition, Judge Kavanaugh's record shows that he could be the deciding vote to undermine access to healthcare for millions of Americans. He has written dissenting opinions in three cases that would have undermined the Affordable Care Act. In one of those dissenting opinions, Judge Kavanaugh argued that a President could choose not to enforce a law like the Affordable Care Act if he thought it was unconstitutional, even if a court had already ruled that it is constitutional.

Further, in a 2013 speech, Judge Kavanaugh said that it is "a traditional exercise of power by Presidents" to pick and choose which laws to enforce. At a time when we are hearing reports from the highest levels of our government that top aides to the President are literally hiding papers from him so that he cannot execute orders that they view as dangerous to our security and would result in geopolitical crises, what we need is a Justice who will serve as a check on the executive, as our Founders intended.

The Senate has a responsibility to the American people to fully vet Supreme Court nominees. The most basic function is for them to do the leg work of obtaining all records related to those nominees. I strongly urge my Senate colleagues to adjourn the Kavanaugh hearing, as Senator BLUMENTHAL and my good colleagues proposed. A "no" vote is a vote for the people.

DISTRICT TRAVEL DURING AUGUST WEEK PERIOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share an update with the people I represent in Alabama on my travels during the August district work period.

Each year, all of the Members of Congress take the month of August to spend time on the ground in their respective districts, meeting with constituents and local leaders, businesses, industries, and, ultimately, listening to the concerns of the people at home.

Having this opportunity to hear firsthand from the people who live and work in Alabama's Second District is very important, and I believe it enables me to be a better representative of our shared priorities while I am here in Washington.

It was a busy month. I was fortunate to spend time in Montgomery, Ozark, Hartford, Geneva, Millbrook, Troy, Dothan, Fort Rucker, and Hope Hull.

During my time in Montgomery, I met with Elmore County Commissioner Troy Stubbs, Alabama Farm Service Agency director David McCurdy, leadership from Deatsville's Ingram State Community College, members of the Alabama Association of School Boards, folks from the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's Fusion Center, and more.

Also in Montgomery, I visited the Gift of Life Foundation's office, toured the MOOseum at the Alabama Cattlemen's Association, spoke to the American Society of Civil Engineers at their lunch meeting, stopped by Sabel Steel for a visit, addressed the Squadron Officer School at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base, toured Common Ground Ministries' Mercy House facility, and more.

In Ozark, I paid a visit to Wayne Farms to tour their recently opened feed mill.

In Hartford, I participated in a meeting about rural broadband development efforts with Wiregrass Electric Cooperative.

In Geneva, I had the opportunity to tour the impressive, newly completed career tech center called G-Tech.

In Millbrook, I was privileged to speak to the Millbrook-Coosada Kiwanis Club during their weekly lunch meeting.

In Troy, I visited with Troy Cable to learn more about their upcoming projects and some of the issues they have recently been facing.

In Dothan, I spoke to the Wiregrass chapter of the Association of General Contractors. We had a great discussion about a wide variety of topics, including efforts right here in Congress to revitalize our Nation's badly aging infrastructure.

I also visited Dothan Behavioral Medicine Clinic, where I received a briefing about Clinicom technology that is being used to diagnose mental illness. Mental health is an acute problem in this country, and I was pleased to learn more about their work.

I stopped by Fort Rucker to tour the aeromedical research laboratory. I talked with many employees there about the importance of Army Aviation to our national security and the innovation happening on-post right in the Second District.

I visited the Army Aviation support facility in Hope Hull for a briefing and an overview on their facility as well. While I was there, I enjoyed talking with General Gordon and Colonel Bass and many others.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the many productive, informative meetings I had during this August district work period. Now that the month is behind us, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to all the individuals, businesses, local officials, and others who hosted me and visited with me over the last several weeks.

It is always a true joy to be back at home visiting the various communities across Alabama's Second District, and I look forward to more opportunities to learn from the people I represent.

WASHINGTON'S CULTURE OF CORRUPTION IS OUT OF CONTROL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, wages are down; gas prices are up; and the culture of corruption here in Washington, D.C., is out of control. And all the while, the 45th President of the United States of America spends more time on the golf course than any other President in American history.

Things are spiraling out of control. The stakes are incredibly high. Notwithstanding that, the 115th Congress has been one of the most unproductive Congresses in the history of the Nation.