

Kavanaugh's character from those who have worked with him and socialized with him, dating all the way back to high school. But Democrats wouldn't let a few inconvenient things—like a complete lack of evidence or an accuser's request for confidentiality—get between them and a good smear. It is despicable.

The contrast with the completely professional conduct of Chairman GRASSLEY could not be starker. As soon as Chairman GRASSLEY learned about this allegation, he handled it through proper channels. He immediately began gathering the facts. His office promptly conducted a transcribed interview of Judge Kavanaugh, in which, under penalty of felony, he unequivocally denied the last-minute allegation. The office received statements from all the other supposed witnesses, who either directly contradicted the story or denied knowing anything about it.

What is more, Chairman GRASSLEY ensured that Dr. Ford could be heard in a forum of her own choosing—either here or in California; either in public or in private; either with the staff or with the Members. He has gone above and beyond to accommodate her request. Thanks to him, we have a fair and open hearing scheduled for Thursday. Dr. Ford will be able to state her allegation under oath, and Judge Kavanaugh will be able to respond.

But the smear campaign didn't stop there; that was just act one. According to the reporter of this second allegation, the accuser "came forward because Senate Democrats began looking." And now they are calling for even further delays and further obstruction over a second decades-old allegation that is so thin and so unsupported that the New York Times refused to even run a story about it. This claim is so dubious that the New York Times passed on the story entirely after having looked into it.

Here is why the New York Times declined to publish: It "interviewed several dozen people over the past week in an attempt to corroborate her story and could find no one with firsthand knowledge"—not one person "with firsthand knowledge" to support the allegation—but, rather, multiple, on-the-record denials again. The Times also reported that the claimant said she herself is uncertain of her claim. That is the New York Times, whose credo is "all the news that's fit to print," and it found this latest last-minute allegation not even fit to print.

Oh, but that hasn't stopped Judiciary Committee Democrats from shoveling it into their smear campaign and demanding further delays. They kept this one a secret from Republicans, too, by the way. Evidently, several Democratic offices knew of this allegation for at least a week, but as with Dr. Ford's claim, they sat on this one, too, so the committee could not take any proper action. They just wanted it to wind up in the press—another orchestrated,

last-minute hit on the nominee. Now they are acting like it is a legitimate reason to delay things even further, as though they have not already announced themselves as being completely opposed to this nomination anyway, as if they have not already promised the far left they would lead the fight to bring this nomination down whatever it took, whatever the cost.

Let's put aside this last-minute, unsubstantiated smear. Let's return to the facts. Let's have a fair hearing on Thursday.

Here are the facts that we do have: Hundreds of men and women who have known Brett Kavanaugh across his life have written or spoken out that he is a man of strong character and tremendous integrity. Numerous witnesses have testified before the Judiciary Committee that he is a trusted mentor, a loyal friend, and a lifelong champion of women. More than 75 women gathered last week to share their decades-old knowledge of Judge Kavanaugh as a "responsible guy who treated us with kindness and respect" and as a "true gentleman in all aspects of his life."

Separately, of course, it remains beyond reasonable dispute that Judge Kavanaugh's legal brilliance and excellence on the bench make him one of the very most qualified Supreme Court nominees in the history of our country.

All of these facts are, quite clearly, on one side. Maybe that is why the Democrats are so panicked. Maybe that is why they are so willing to try to bring down this nominee. In the meantime, a good and honorable man and his family are receiving death threats. They are the subject of smears and are facing Senate Democrats who say he has no presumption of innocence because they don't agree with his judicial philosophy.

Well, before the week is out, both Judge Kavanaugh and Dr. Ford will testify under oath before the Judiciary Committee. Chairman GRASSLEY has made sure the facts will be heard, and Judge Kavanaugh and the American people deserve nothing less. I want to make it perfectly clear that Judge Kavanaugh will be voted on here, up or down, on the Senate floor. This fine nominee to the Supreme Court will receive a vote in this Senate in the near future.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, last week, our efforts to restore regular appropriations hit another milestone. The President signed into law our first appropriations package. It will fund critical efforts in energy research and security, waterways and infrastructure projects, and in improving care at the VA.

Earlier this month, the Senate passed the conference report that will fund the Departments of Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services,

and Education. We anticipate that the House will take up the package this week, and work continues on other important legislation.

Soon, we will act to provide long-term stability and reforms to the Federal Aviation Administration, the Transportation Security Administration, and the National Transportation Safety Board. We will also take up America's Water Infrastructure Act, which will bolster the efforts of the Army Corps of Engineers and make commitments to improving water quality and advancing hydropower.

Most immediately, we will continue to process the President's well-qualified nominees. We are, today, considering Jackie Wolcott to serve as U.S. Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency and as U.S. Representative to the United Nations in Vienna. I urge all of our colleagues to join me in voting to confirm her.

TRIBUTE TO DAN SULLIVAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, over the Senate's history, we have welcomed into our ranks many brave men and women who have served in uniform. From the earliest days of our Republic, when veterans of the Revolution laid down their arms to serve as legislators, the Senate has been the home of patriots who know the true meaning of service and sacrifice. Some of our colleagues have even decided to pull double duty—continuing to serve in the Reserves while suffering the slings and arrows here in the Senate.

We have, today, a unique opportunity to honor one of these colleagues. Earlier this month, the news came that our friend, the junior Senator from Alaska, had attained the rank of colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve. DAN SULLIVAN has spent the last quarter century as a marine, earning the Defense Meritorious Service Medal and serving on Active Duty in Afghanistan. Those of us who serve here with Senator SULLIVAN are hardly surprised that someone so "squared away" has risen to this milestone.

His promotion is recognized in a special ceremony today here in the Capitol, where, I understand, Senator SULLIVAN's father will pin on his new rank.

I know this body will join me in congratulating him and in thanking both Senator SULLIVAN and Colonel SULLIVAN for all of his service to the Nation.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.