

Heaven and Hell; rather, the business of the U.S. Government is to preserve peace and order so that you and your neighbors can precisely wrestle about things such as Heaven and Hell or sports loyalties or dietary preferences. America can handle principled pluralism and honest, serious debate.

This resolution ought to have the support of every single Member of this body. After all, each of us took an oath to defend this very idea when we first came here. This is what America is actually about.

The text of the resolution before us states:

Expressing the sense of the Senate that disqualifying a nominee to Federal office on the basis of membership in the Knights of Columbus violates the Constitution of the United States.

Whereas, throughout the history of the United States, the religious liberty protected by both the First Amendment and the No Religious Test Clause of the Constitution of the United States has been at the heart of the American experiment;

Whereas, in 1960, the presidential candidacy of John F. Kennedy was met with significant anti-Catholic bigotry;

Whereas, then-Senator Kennedy responded to the bigotry with these timeless words: "For while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been, and may someday be again, a Jew or a Quaker or a Unitarian or a Baptist. . . . Today I may be the victim, but tomorrow it may be you, until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped at a time of great national peril.";

Whereas the Knights of Columbus (in this preamble referred to as the "Knights") constitute the largest Catholic fraternal service organization in the world;

Whereas the Knights have a proud tradition of standing against the forces of prejudice and oppression, such as the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi Germany;

Whereas the Knights are founded on the principles of charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism; and

Whereas, in 2017, the Knights made more than \$185,000,000 in charitable contributions and volunteered more than 75,600,000 service hours: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that disqualifying a nominee to Federal office on the basis of membership in the Knights of Columbus violates clause 3 of article VI of the Constitution of the United States, which establishes that Senators "shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support th[e] Constitution" and "no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States."

Period. Full stop.

If a Senator has a problem with this resolution, they are probably in the wrong line of work because this is what America is. This is a super basic point. No religious tests. If someone has a problem with this resolution, what other parts of the Constitution are they against? Freedom of the press? Women's right to vote? Freedom of speech?

This isn't hard. There are no religious tests for serving on the Federal bench. We in this body should rebuke these anti-Catholic attacks.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the

consideration of S. Res. 19, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 19) expressing the sense of the Senate that disqualifying a nominee to Federal office on the basis of membership in the Knights of Columbus violates the Constitution of the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SASSE. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 19) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. SASSE. I thank the Members of this body for reaffirming basic constitutional 101 stuff today. I will report back to Brian Buescher, the nominee for the Federal Bench for the District of Nebraska, that he can ignore those questions he received about whether he would resign his membership in the Knights of Columbus before this body proceeds to vote on his confirmation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING TOM WEISNER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Aurora, IL, is blessed with a long history of visionary leadership. The first public school district in my State was founded in Aurora in 1851. Aurora was a center of abolitionist activism before the Civil War.

In 1881, Aurora, of Chicago's northwest suburbs, became one of the first cities in America to line its streets with electric lights, and people began to call it a City of Lights—Paris on the Plains.

Sadly, last month, 2 days after Christmas, one of Aurora's brightest lights was extinguished. Former Aurora mayor Tom Weisner died after a long, brave, and public struggle with cancer. He was 69 years old.

Tom Weisner spent his earliest years in nearby Batavia, IL. He came to Aurora in the 1960s to attend Marmion Military Academy. It was during his time at Marmion that Tom met his future wife, Marilyn Hogan, who was then a student at Marmion's "sister school," Aurora Madonna High School.

What a great pair. As a young couple in the 1980s, Tom and Marilyn served together in the Peace Corps, helping rainforest dwellers in the highlands of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. They were married for 46 years.

After finishing their Peace Corps service in 1986, Tom and Marilyn returned to Aurora, and Tom was hired by the city's then-mayor, David Pierce, to be Aurora's director of emergency services. Over the next 18 years, he headed a number of city agencies, including the departments of motor vehicles, public property, and community services and organizational development.

"It was in his three terms as Aurora's mayor, from 2005 to 2016, that Tom Weisner left his greatest mark. His keen understanding of organizational efficiency, his commitment to public service, and his passion for children, for a vibrant, sustainable economy, for the arts and environment, and many other concerns helped to make Aurora a better place to live, own a business, and raise a family.

There is one statistic that says a lot about the kind of leader Tom Weisner was: In his 11 years as mayor, Aurora rehabilitated 11 bridges. At a time when government at all levels is struggling and often failing to maintain basic public infrastructure, Aurora repaired 11 bridges in 11 years. The strengthened bridges helped spur a rebirth of Aurora's downtown.

The Fox River is one of Aurora's greatest economic and cultural assets. Mayor Weisner authorized the city's first long-term plan for the river. He oversaw the removal of a dam on the Fox River, which opened up space for bike paths and new commercial ventures, and he helped organize a regional coalition of communities to improve the southern portion of the Fox River.

Tom Weisner championed new conservation and sustainability policies that made Aurora a greener city. At the same time, he supported changes that made it easier and faster to obtain city building and other permits.

He oversaw the construction of a new police headquarters, with new tools and more resources, and crime in Aurora decreased.

Children were a special concern of Mayor Weisner. Under his leadership, Aurora created a new program called SPARK to help children from birth to age 5 to prepare for kindergarten. SPARK stands for "Strong, Prepared, and Ready for Kindergarten." It is a collaboration involving Aurora's public schools and public library, the local United Way, and other groups. Nearly 5,500 children and their families have benefited from its services.

Next year, a new Paramount School of Performing Arts will open and offer young people a chance to study under some of the best teaching artists and professionals in the country. Tom helped raise money to make this happen.