

Board was correctly decided, saying instead that the decision was correct with the benefit of hindsight—whatever that means. In the same district, where 6-year-old Ruby Bridges became the first African-American child to attend an all-White elementary school in the South, the Senate will consider confirming someone who claims that hindsight was needed to understand why the decision that allowed Ruby to go to the same school as a White child wasn't correct. That is who we are putting on the bench.

These are not just conservatives. We understand that the President and Republicans will put in conservatives, but hard-right, narrow ideologues who show no understanding or sympathy for people who don't look like them or pray like them or marry like them—what is wrong here?

It is not hard. If you need the benefit of hindsight to understand that *Brown v. Board of Education*, which brought an end to school segregation and led to the end of American apartheid, was correctly decided, you shouldn't be a Federal judge. I urge my colleagues, in the spirit of the Brown anniversary and what it means, to oppose Ms. Vitter's nomination this afternoon.

PUERTO RICO

Mr. President, now on Puerto Rico, briefly, as negotiations on a final package of disaster aid continue, I want to stress to everyone that we must remain focused on reaching an agreement as swiftly as possible. Disaster-stricken Americans in the West, the South, the Midwest, and 3 million citizens of Puerto Rico are waiting on Congress to deliver relief, in some cases for disasters that occurred over a year ago.

Why is this held up?

We know why. Republicans are not willing to give aid to Puerto Rico. There was a bill that would never pass the House and something they didn't think originally, when President Trump said: Don't do it. And they just bowed down. They thought they could roll over the House and the Democratic minority in the Senate, who wouldn't stand up for certain Americans.

Well, we did. Now, thankfully, we are making progress. Republicans are realizing that Puerto Ricans cannot be left out of the package, but now we must avoid poison pills at all costs. President Trump, if he sticks his thumb into this again and asks for something unreasonable, will delay disaster aid once again, just as he did before.

To my Republican colleagues, let's do this together. Let's do it in the right way. Let's do it in the way that can pass the House.

President Trump will sign the bill. We have to make sure this legislation gets across the finish line. Every time the President intervenes and Republican colleagues go along, it gets held up even further.

ABORTION

Mr. President, on the Alabama abortion bill, last night the Republican Alabama Senate passed, perhaps, the

most draconian abortion law in the country. It bans abortion in every stage of pregnancy, imposes criminal penalties—criminal penalties—on any doctor who performs one, and includes no exception in the case of rape or incest, even if the victim is a child. If a child is raped, they have to have the baby.

The Alabama bill is as extreme as it gets. It is a clear attack on women's freedom. It contravenes a woman's constitutional right to make private medical decisions. It would deeply harm women, turn doctors into criminals, and deny the right of rape victims, even if they are children, to make personal medical decisions.

The Alabama abortion bill is plainly inhumane. It should never have passed. The Governor should not sign it. If she does, it ought to be swiftly struck down by the courts.

IRAN

Mr. President, on Iran, over of the past few days, it has come to light in public reporting that the Trump administration's national security team has reviewed a plan to deploy as many as 120,000—yes, you heard that right, 120,000—U.S. troops in the Mideast should tensions with Iran escalate. I was stunned to read this report in the *New York Times* yesterday.

The administration just started a maximum pressure campaign of sanctions against Iran, but is it simultaneously reviewing plans for war? That would make no sense.

Meanwhile, the President oddly denied the report while also saying he would "absolutely" send ground troops to the Middle East. But if he did, it would be a "heck"—and I am paraphrasing—"of a lot more troops [than 120,000]."

Did we learn the lessons of the last decade? Do we know that we have to spend our time focusing on building up this country here, not build roads and bridges in the Middle East but do them here?

There is an alarming lack of clarity here. There is a lack of strategy, and there is a lack of consultation. The President ought to come up with a strategy and make it clear to Congress. An adventure like this—120,000 troops or a large number of troops—should have to be approved by Congress. It certainly should be discussed with Congress ahead of time. There need to be open hearings and closed briefings with the committees of jurisdiction immediately.

Any potential increase in our military presence in the Middle East should require consultation with Congress, and anything beyond that would require this body to act.

President Trump, what is your strategy? Where are you headed? Why aren't you talking to Congress about it?

PUBLIC HOUSING

Mr. President, finally, on public housing, it was reported last week that the Department of HUD has proposed a rule that would bar families with

mixed immigration status from receiving public housing assistance, even if everyone but one member of the family is a legal resident. So if it is a family of six—a mother who is an American citizen, four children who are American citizens, but a husband who is not and who is not here legally—they kick them all out. It risks displacing tens of thousands of legal residents and of American citizens, including 55,000 children. The administration has created crisis after crisis with the immigration community. Are they going to create another one and take 55,000 young American children, almost all of whom are citizens, and just kick them out on the streets when we know there is very little affordable housing? What a cruel and callous policy. It is another example of the Trump administration's desire to separate families and disrupt communities.

There is nothing to say about this proposed rule but that it is cruel, wrong-headed, and would lead to even more chaos than the administration has created already.

In an effort to appear even more punitive toward immigrants, the administration has conjured up a rule that could potentially force tens of thousands of children into homelessness or away from their families.

My message to President Trump and Secretary Carson is simple: Scrap this idea now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, it is an honor to rise today to speak in this Chamber on behalf of the people of Missouri. When I think of those who have served my State here before me, I am humbled. When I think of the true and strong Missourians who have sent me here, I am sobered, because to represent them will be a great responsibility indeed. I pledge to my fellow Missourians that I will work at this task with all the strength that God can give me, and I will serve without fear and without favor to any man.

We Missourians are known for our frankness, and today I will be frank because this is a moment of great need for my State and for our Nation. This Nation was born in a revolution by "We the People" and premised on a revolutionary faith that it is the people—the common man and woman who make democracy work—and it is the calling of every generation to renew that revolution for their day. In our time, our revolutionary faith is faltering, and in the heartland of this country, the great challenge of our age is unfolding.

I come from a town called Lexington, MO. It is a small place, but a proud one. It is a place where people wake early and work late to make a life for themselves and their children. It is a place where people value honesty and gumption and life's simple pleasures: a fine morning in a deer stand, reading