

good thing. People who are personally opposed to abortion or people who are pro-choice can agree that that is a good thing. Why did that happen? Because contraception was available. Why did that happen? Because healthcare was available that allowed, with more ease, women to access contraception. So now what do we have? We have three things going on. These restrictive laws that literally put doctors in prison for 99 years is what I will talk about today. We have an effort to defund Planned Parenthood and to reduce access to contraception as a result. Then we have an effort—a major effort—to repeal the entire Affordable Care Act, which would allow women to be kicked off of their healthcare insurance if they have a preexisting condition. Before that act came into law, in eight States, being a victim of domestic abuse was considered a preexisting condition. So do not see these laws that were just passed in these States and are being considered in these States as isolated. Look at it as a complete package, and it is not a package that the women of this country want to get in the mail.

I have always believed that a woman's most personal and difficult medical decisions should be made with her doctor and her family and that those decisions should not be undermined or politicized by Government officials. But that is exactly what we are seeing today. In the last few months, an alarming number of States have passed laws to limit a woman's ability to seek reproductive healthcare services. Kentucky, Ohio, Mississippi, and Georgia have all recently passed measures that basically amount to a ban on abortion. Just last week, Alabama passed a bill that effectively and in writing banned abortion completely. The bill which passed the Alabama State Senate—by the way, without a vote of a single woman senator—would allow a doctor who performed an abortion to be sent to jail for 99 years. The Alabama law's only exception is if a woman's life is at risk. It does not even include an exception for incidents of rape or incest. So what does this mean? Well, if your kid is in college and gets brutally raped, it means that she would not have a choice about whether or not she would carry a baby. That is what that law says in Alabama. And if a doctor intervened, if a doctor wanted to help in that State, he would be sent to prison for 99 years—or up to 99 years. This is not something I am making up or exaggerating; this is what this bill that passed one of the States and is similar to bills in other States actually says.

What we are seeing, of course, is wrong and unconstitutional. These bills directly infringe on a woman's right to make her own medical decisions and the precedent that the Supreme Court set in *Roe v. Wade*, which has been affirmed many times over the last 46 years.

You wonder where the public is on this? Seventy-three percent of Ameri-

cans do not believe that *Roe v. Wade* should be reversed. In my State, I have people who are pro-choice, and I have people who are pro-life. I have people who personally believe they do not want to have an abortion; however, they don't think that their views should dictate what happens to their neighbors. That is the problem. That is the nub of the problem with what is going on in these States.

The precedent in *Roe* is clear, but these lawmakers have decided that they want to take away a woman's basic right to make a personal healthcare decision. In fact, they are passing these bills with the hope that it goes to the Supreme Court where this administration has placed judges on that Court where there is a lot of hope, with the people who are passing these restrictive laws, that they are going to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

After signing the new abortion ban into law, the Governor of Alabama released a statement in which he said the sponsors of this bill believe it is time, once again, for the U.S. Supreme Court to revisit this important matter, and they believe this act may bring about “the best opportunity for this to occur.”

So don't tell me this is just one legislature deciding they are going to do something other people in this Chamber on the other side of the aisle don't agree with. No. No. No. This has been an effort that has been going on for years. This is an effort that is going on during an administration with a President that, in a townhall meeting in March of 2016, said that he thought women should be punished for making that decision. A few hours later, his campaign tries to dial it back with the statement: No, he meant that doctors should be punished.

This is not just an isolated incident, which is why so many of my colleagues have taken to the floor today. We can have individual disagreements, and we can have our own personal beliefs, but as elected officials, we must follow the Constitution of the United States. Overturning *Roe* isn't just unconstitutional. As I said, it is against the wishes of the vast majority of the people in this country.

In the last few years, as I have noted, we have seen an assault on women's access to care. We have seen it with the attempt to defund Planned Parenthood, even though, during the Obama administration, we saw a historic decrease in abortions. According to a CDC study conducted between 2006 and 2015, abortion rates fell to historic lows near the end of the Obama administration.

What should we be doing? Well, we should be providing more access to healthcare services, comprehensive health education, and contraception, not less. We should ensure that women are equipped with the knowledge and resources they need to make informed healthcare decisions.

In the Senate, I have fought back against efforts to undermine the abil-

ity of a woman to make choices about her own health. I have cosponsored the Women's Health Protection Act, important legislation led by Senator BLUMENTHAL, to prohibit laws intended to restrict women's access to reproductive health services, and I look forward to cosponsoring this bill again when it is reintroduced.

I thank Senator MURRAY for her leadership over her many, many years in this area. It is our responsibility to treat women in every State in this Union with respect and dignity, instead of using them as political pawns.

I join my colleagues in condemning these recent efforts to restrict women's access to healthcare services, and I will continue working to protect the health and lives of women across the country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is difficult to believe that it is happening, but I have seen it. It was about 5 weeks ago that I was in El Paso, TX. I went down to see what has happening on the border. You can't escape all the stories that have been written about the number of people who are coming to our border and what is happening to them, so I wanted to see it for myself.

I saw what was a detention facility for people who had been stopped at the border. There was a cell with a plate glass window, so that you could see everything inside. Above the door of the cell, it said, “capacity 35.” I looked inside and counted—took the time to slowly count—and I counted 150 men in that cell, standing shoulder to shoulder. Few of them could sit on the benches on the side of the walls—150.

There was one toilet in that cell. They were fed their meals to eat standing up. They slept taking turns lying down on the floor. Some of them would be there for 3 days and some as long as 6 weeks.

Next to that cell was another one with a plate glass window; you could see inside. Above the door, it read, “capacity 16.” This was a cell for women. I counted 75 women in that cell—“capacity 16.” There were four or five of them with nursing babies.

I have since learned, in the few weeks since I saw this and witnessed it firsthand, things have gotten dramatically worse. The cell with 150 now has almost 200 men jammed into it. The cell with the women is even worse than what I saw when I visited.

If I described these conditions in a prison in some foreign country, you would say: For goodness' sakes, the United States of America should speak up for human rights. We cannot allow human beings to be treated that way.

This detention facility for these immigrants is in the United States of America. It has to come to an end, and it has to start with a commitment by the people of this country through their elected representatives in Congress and this President to stop this inhumane treatment of these individuals.

Today, I am sending a letter that I never thought I would send. I am joining other Senators in a letter to the International Red Cross. You see, we call on the International Red Cross to go to developing countries and look at their prison situations and decide whether they are humane.

I cannot believe that I am asking them to do this in the United States of America. Because I have seen it with my own eyes and I have been told that it is getting worse, I feel I have no choice.

I am also asking for the inspector general of the Department of Homeland Security to immediately, on an emergency basis, review the detention facilities for adults and children. Why do I raise that point? We know what this administration did last year in a project called zero tolerance.

Zero tolerance, announced by the Attorney General of the United States Jeff Sessions, said we will treat everyone who comes to our border as a criminal. Understand that people can come to our border and present themselves, as many of these people do, and ask for asylum. They have turned themselves in. They are not sneaking in.

They have turned themselves in for adjudication as to whether they are eligible to be in this country. Attorney General Sessions said last year that we will treat them as criminals, and therefore, because they are suspected criminals, we will remove their children from them.

How many kids under zero tolerance were taken by the Trump administration away from their parents? More than two thousand eight hundred—I know that number because a Federal judge in southern California took this administration to court and said: I want an accounting for every one of those children.

I saw those children—at least some of them—in Chicago. They go through a bureaucratic process and end up at agencies—at Health and Human Services agencies to try to place them in foster care or connect them up with a member of their family.

I remember, in a room, they brought in some of the children who had been taken away from their parents. There were two little 4-year-old girls who I thought were sisters, and then as I looked more closely, I realized they weren't. They just seemed like sisters, and they had become friends at that facility. They were 4 years old, holding hands. We gave them crayons and coloring books, what you would give to little kids.

Then I went to an immigration court proceeding in downtown Chicago in an

office building. You would never know it from the street, but on the fourth floor of this high-rise, we have a U.S. immigration court. A very caring judge was there, and she was trying to get through a docket that was very heavy.

She invited me to stay for the first case of the day that involved two clients. It was tough to get this proceeding underway because zero tolerance had resulted in more children coming into these immigration courts. The difficulty in getting this hearing underway was that she said: Before we start, I want everyone to take their seats.

It was hard to get Marta to take her seat. Marta was 2 years old. She had to be lifted into the chair and handed a stuffed animal for her hearing. Luckily for the other client, Hamilton, he spotted one of those Matchbox cars on top of the table, and 4-year-old Hamilton scrambled up into the chair.

In the United States of America at an immigration hearing, the clients were 2 years old and 4 years old because of the conscious policy of this administration to separate children from their parents. So we have this setting with detention cells jammed with people in inhumane circumstances and the separation of children from their parents.

I sent a letter to the inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services asking about these children who had been separated. They came back to me a few months ago and said: We have discovered there were more.

Before they announced it, this administration had been separating infants, toddlers, and children from their parents as they presented themselves at the border. The judge who was involved in the case in southern California stepped in and asked: Well, how many?

It is now reported at least 1,712 more kids may have been separated. That means we have over 4,500 babies, toddlers, infants, and children separated from their parents by this administration. Sadly, some of these children will not be reunited. Their parents were sent back, usually to the Central American countries they came from, and now the kids are in the system and way too young to even remember who Mom or Dad was.

This circumstance has reached the point of a humanitarian crisis on our border. How can this President, who was elected promising that he would do something about immigration, have brought us to this terrible moment where we have more people presenting themselves at the border than we have had in recent history—certainly those with children? We have never had families in these numbers showing up. The tougher this President's rhetoric is and the meaner his tweets are, the more people come to our borders. It is exactly the opposite of what he promised us.

This circumstance here is absolutely intolerable, unacceptable, and embar-

assing to our country. That we would have to call on an international organization to look at the way we are treating people in the United States—I am sorry it has come to this. But in good conscience, I can't ignore it.

The most recent news report said that another child died at the border. I think that brings the total to five in the last few months. Is that what America has come to?

We need to have an immigration policy that makes sense. Absolutely, we must have border security. In an age of terrorism and drug epidemics, I want to know what is coming into this country, and I want to know what they are bringing with them.

Second, the United States certainly cannot accept everyone in the world who wants to come here. It is understandable they want to live in this great country. That is what brought my grandmother and more to these shores as immigrants to this country. But we cannot accept everyone in the world.

Third, we don't want anyone dangerous coming into this country, period. No exceptions. If you are dangerous and not legal in this country, you should be gone.

Having said that, now it is our burden to come up with a comprehensive immigration bill that makes sense for this Nation of immigrants in the 21st century.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Senate and this empty Chamber tell you how much work we do on legislation. We give speeches—we ran for the Senate to give speeches—and occasionally we vote on another nominee every few hours. That is it. You will not see a comprehensive immigration bill come to the floor of the Senate. It hasn't—not this year and not for the previous 6 years. But the last time it did, I was part of a bipartisan effort that wrote one that passed the Senate with I believe 68 votes—an overwhelming rollcall, bipartisan, in favor of immigration reform. That died in the Republican-controlled House, and there has never been another try since. Why were we elected to come here if we can't face this problem squarely, dealing with what is going on at our border and making sense of our immigration system?

There is a humanitarian nightmare on our border, but I will tell you about another one. This President decided to end the DACA Program. I know a little bit about that—maybe more than some of my colleagues—because it was 19 years ago that I introduced a bill. We do a lot of that. This bill was called the DREAM Act—19 years ago. It said: If you were brought to this country as a child, you lived here, went to school, and didn't get in trouble with the law, you ought to have a chance to become legal in America. That was it. For 19 years, we have been trying to make it the law of the land and have been unable to get 60 votes in the Senate. We always got a majority but never the 60 votes we needed.

I appealed to my former Senate colleague and friend, President Obama, and said: Can you do something to help these young people who have never known another country and want to be part of the United States and its future? Many of the schoolchildren who visit us here get up in their classrooms every day, and I am proud to say they put their hands over their hearts and pledge allegiance to that flag. These kids do exactly the same thing. It is the only flag and the only country they have ever known.

So President Obama created what was called DACA, and more than 800,000 of these young people stepped up, paid a filing fee of almost \$500, went through a criminal background check, and were given a chance to stay legally in the United States for 2 years at a time, not to be deported but be able to work and go to school—more than 800,000 of them.

I really believe in them. And you know human nature—out of 800,000, there have to be some of them in there who are going to disappoint you. But I stand here today in the Senate and tell you that in all of these years since President Obama did that, I have never heard any of those stories. These are extraordinary young men and women. I have told their stories on the floor of the Senate—over 120 of them—of how these DACA-protected young people want to become part of America's future.

Let me tell you about a group of them in Chicago. Loyola University in Chicago is a great school, and they have a great school of medicine. When they heard about the DACA Program, they said: We are going to open up competition to these DACA-protected young people to compete to go to medical school. And the news flashed across the country because many of these young people who dreamed of being doctors had no chance because they were undocumented. Because of DACA, they were given temporary legal status, and because of Loyola University, they were able to apply. Over 30 of them were accepted to the medical school—some of the brightest kids living in our country who wanted to become doctors.

There was a catch: If you went to Loyola and you needed to borrow money—and most of them did—you had to promise to give a year of service back to the State of Illinois, which loaned you the money to go to school, for each year they loaned the money. They signed up for it. They were ready to go to neighborhoods where we needed doctors and to small towns in rural America where we desperately need doctors. These young people are some of the best and brightest I have ever met, every one of them an inspiration.

When President Trump eliminated the DACA Program, he eliminated their opportunity to continue their medical education. You see, after 4 years of medical school, you go into a residency. A residency is a job, employ-

ment, and it is a lot more than 40 hours a week, I might add. But since President Trump eliminated DACA, they cannot legally take a job.

This case is going through the courts now as to whether the President had the right to eliminate DACA. He didn't. Last Friday, a second court said that he was wrong, that he had no reason, no basis to eliminate this program.

When you hear these stories about what is happening at the border and at these detention cells; when you hear about the conscious decision of this administration to separate infants and toddlers from their parents—4,500 of them having been separated; when you hear about this administration coming forward to eliminate the DACA Program and to stop these medical students from becoming doctors and serving in my State, where they are desperately needed, you have to ask: Mr. President, what is your immigration policy? Why have you made such a mess of this situation that wasn't very good to start with?

And what are we going to do about it? Anything? Not in this empty Chamber. Not today. We are just going to pick up the papers every morning and say: Isn't it a shame? Well, it is more than a shame; it is an embarrassment to this country that this Nation of immigrants has reached this moment.

Mr. President, I continue to appeal to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle: Please, come forward, and let's solve these problems together.

I have been part of bipartisan groups who have come up with comprehensive bills and all sorts of legislative responses. My door is always open to anyone who wants to sit down.

In the meantime, bring humanity to our border. Let's not do things with these people presenting themselves at our border that don't speak well of our values and our reputation around the world. We can do better. We can provide humane treatment.

Even as Congress fails to do its job, those people at the border deserve to be treated like human beings as we work through our legal issues and our political issues. No more separation of children from their parents. How devastating it must be for that child. When some of these parents were reunited with their children—these little babies and infants—the young kids wouldn't talk to their mothers. They turned away from them. With their body language, they said what we knew was going through their minds: You abandoned me. You left me. I don't know who you are anymore.

Over time, maybe they can reestablish that relationship. Child psychologists tell us there could be some damage that needs to be repaired there. Isn't that a shame, that an innocent child would go through that experience?

Now that we know there may be 1,712 more of these children, we need to do everything we can to work with this

Federal judge, who had the courage to step up, to reunite them with their parents as quickly as possible.

In the meantime, I want to call on this administration and the Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Kevin McAleenan, to go down to the border, take a look at the detention facilities, and do everything possible to make certain there is humane treatment there. These are desperate people risking their lives to come to this United States of America. We owe them at least humane treatment while they are here, as our political and legal system works its way through it.

(Mr. CRUZ assumed the Chair.)

ABORTION

Mr. President, people are following what is happening in States like Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi, where State legislatures are considering legislation on the issue of abortion.

I know this is a very inflammatory and divisive issue. I have seen it firsthand throughout my political career. I have good friends who are on one side of the issue, who smile and say hello but wouldn't vote for me in 100 years because of this issue. I have others who passionately support me because they are on the other side of the issue. For some people, it really is the litmus test on how they will vote for a candidate.

For over 40 years, we have tried to reconcile this issue, this basic question: When does life begin? In *Roe v. Wade*, the U.S. Supreme Court said: We are going to base it on the concept of viability, survivability of the fetus, as to an individual's right when it comes to making this decision as opposed to society's right or responsibility.

Over the years, there has been a lot of debate as to whether that *Roe v. Wade* decision was right or wrong. We have seen a lot of different efforts to change it—some successful and some not—and we have seen subsequent Supreme Court cases which redefined *Roe v. Wade* as well.

Now we have a group who believes they can move forward on this in the State of Georgia and in the State of Alabama. What they have proposed is much different from what we had accepted as the norm for decades. For example, they have eliminated any exceptions for rape and incest. Most people understand that victims of rape and incest should be viewed differently from others, but in the State of Alabama, they eliminated those exceptions in the law they have just passed.

Why are they doing that now when Federal courts in the past have—in the immediate past—decided they can't go that far? It is because they believe that because of the actions of the U.S. Senate, it is going to change in the courts. This President has appointed two new Justices to the Supreme Court—Gorsuch and Kavanaugh. The belief is, even though they have told us over and over again that *Roe v. Wade* was settled law, if this new law in Alabama