

own rule when the same scenario came around again. You would expect the Senate majority to follow their own rule. What is fair is fair.

This is what Leader MCCONNELL said in 2016:

The American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Supreme Court Justice. Therefore, this vacancy should not be filled until we have a new President.

This is the McConnell rule—the McConnell rule. This is the principle that Leader MCCONNELL and then-Chairman GRASSLEY used to justify their refusal to even meet with President Obama's Supreme Court nominee.

Here it is—the McConnell rule: When it is a Presidential season, you can't vote on a Supreme Court nominee because "the American people should have a voice." Now, Leader MCCONNELL repeated that refrain for almost a year and so did almost every other Republican in the Chamber:

The American people shouldn't be denied a voice.

Give the people a voice.

The Senate should not confirm a new Supreme Court Justice until we have a new President.

I don't think we should be moving on a nominee in the last year of a President's term. I would say that if it was a Republican President.

If an opening came in the last year of President Trump's term and the primary process had started—

The primary process had started—we'll wait to the next election.

I don't even have to tell you who those quotes came from. It was nearly every single Republican in this Chamber. That is how they justified the unprecedented blockade of President Obama's Supreme Court nominee: no vote during a Presidential election year because we have to let the people decide.

They promised to stay consistent if a Republican President won in November. It turns out, a Republican President did win that fall, and a Supreme Court vacancy did arise in the final year of his term, not just during the primary process but long after it was over, with little more than a month—a month—before the election.

Now, whoops, didn't mean it. It is different now. We are supposed to believe this specious, flimsy, and dishonest argument that it is about the orientation of the Senate and the Presidency or how angry Republicans are at Democrats and all the big, scary things we might do in the future. Maybe that will justify it—anything not to admit the plain fact that they all made one argument for a year, an argument they insisted was a "principle" when it was good for them politically, and now they are doing the opposite thing.

The McConnell rule: "The American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Supreme Court Justice." It turns out, the McConnell rule was nothing more than a McConnell ruse.

Leader MCCONNELL, sadly, sadly, is headed down the path of breaking his

word to the Senate and the American people. He has exposed once and for all that a supposed principle of giving the people a voice in selecting the next Justice was a farce. Sadly, again—sadly—Leader MCCONNELL has defiled the Senate like no one in this generation, and Leader MCCONNELL may very well destroy it.

If Leader MCCONNELL presses forward, the Republican majority will have stolen two Supreme Court seats, 4 years apart, using completely contradictory rationales. How can we expect to trust the other side again?

For those of you on the other side who are still thinking about this and maybe some who might change their minds, just think of what this does to this body and people's word on one of our most solemn and sacred obligations: to choose a Supreme Court Justice fairly and honestly.

It is obvious why the Republican leader, when he comes to the floor, sounds so angry and defensive in his remarks. I will note for the record that the Republican leader did not once mention his principle in 2016—that the American people should have a voice in selecting the next Supreme Court Justice—in any of his speeches because he can't mention it.

Just to give you a sense of how far down the rabbit hole my friend from Kentucky has gone, yesterday—listen to this—this is what he said. Leader MCCONNELL said that President Obama asked the Senate "for an unusual favor" by fulfilling his constitutional duty to nominate a Supreme Court Justice with almost a year left in the term—"an unusual favor."

Only the Republican leader could look at our system of government so cynically. Apparently, the Senate's constitutional duty to advise and consent is an unusual favor when a Democratic President is in office but a categorical imperative when a Republican is in office.

That is actually his argument. I listened to the Republican leader yesterday. I listened to him this morning. Gone are all the invocations of giving the American people a voice. It is nothing so supposedly high-minded this time. No, this time the Republican leader isn't even hiding that his decision is nothing—nothing—but raw, partisan politics.

According to the Republican leader, when the President and the Senate majority are the same party, you can break all the rules to get your Justice. Change the rules of the Senate to pass Supreme Court Justices on a majority vote. Rush it through before an election. It doesn't matter if you said the exact opposite thing 4 years ago, 2 years ago, or even, for some Senators, a few months ago.

This is how our vaunted traditions of bipartisanship and compromise—on life support before—now end. This is how. By one side—in this case the Republican majority under Leader MCCONNELL—deciding that the rules don't

apply to them, even their own rules. That, when push comes to shove, it is brute political force, all the way down.

If my friends on the Republican side want that kind of Senate, they can follow Leader MCCONNELL down the very dangerous path he has laid down.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, one final matter. According to the official tally at Johns Hopkins University, the United States today will reach a staggering milestone of 200,000 Americans lost to COVID-19—200,000 Americans—more than any other country on Earth. Far more than we should have. Far more than we would have had there been a proper, coordinated, and energetic response to the virus by the Trump administration.

In the face of this tragic milestone, what does President Trump do? Does he mourn the astounding loss of lives? No, he goes off on the campaign trail, where yesterday he told his supporters that the virus "affects virtually nobody."

Affects virtually nobody? Tell that to the families and friends of the 200,000 who are in mourning.

Seriously, the day before the United States hits 200,000 deaths from COVID-19, the President said the virus "affects virtually nobody."

He also said: "If you take the blue states out, we're really at a very low level."

He also said: "It is what it is."

This is our President? My goodness.

Do you want to know why we have the worst pandemic response of any developed nation on Earth? You want to know why now nearly one out of every five deaths from COVID-19 come from America? It is because President Trump lied to the American people from day one about the gravity of this disease, and he is still doing it now, in a desperate and vile effort to boost his political fortunes.

And here in the Senate, Republicans will do anything—anything to back him, no matter what he says or does, as long as he nominates their judges.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.