

wrote of in the Constitution she believed in so fiercely.

Our democracy may have been founded in the 18th century, but it wasn't fully built when the ink dried on the Declaration of Independence. It was shaped and strengthened, forged and formed, not just by those whose faces loom large on Mount Rushmore but by someone who was often the smallest, quietest person in nearly every room she ever walked into. It is because of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's brilliance and resilience that so many of us have the rights we too often take for granted, and it is because of her that who I am today is possible.

Long before she was a Supreme Court Justice, she was a relatively unknown law school professor who altered the course of history when she argued that the equal protection promised under the 14th Amendment didn't just mean equal protection for men. Her legal genius was captured in her first landmark victory and reflected in her choice of a male plaintiff to demonstrate that discrimination on the basis of sex harms every American, male and female alike.

Suddenly, thanks to this idealistic, young lawyer who spent her own law school years having her place questioned because of her sex, it became illegal to discriminate against women because they happened to be women. That same tenacity, that same trail-blazing intellect, that same woman also helped pave the way for me to succeed in my career as a woman in the military.

In 1973, she made sure that the equal rights for women she had helped to secure extended to the women who were seeking to defend our Nation, arguing and winning her first case in front of the Supreme Court—getting the Justices to rule in an 8-to-1 fashion that the military could not give a female servicemember fewer benefits than her male counterparts.

Her life, her position, and her title changed over the next couple of decades, as we all well know, but her convictions did not. It was 23 years after standing in front of the bench of the highest Court in the land to argue that our Armed Forces could not discriminate against a woman in their ranks that Ruth Bader Ginsburg herself sat on that very same bench and issued a ruling that changed everything for countless women who dreamed of serving their country in uniform. She struck down the State-funded Virginia Military Institute's male-only acceptance policy, granting women the ability to learn and train alongside men at one of the top military academies in the Nation.

In a ruling I plan to read out loud to my little girls some nights instead of their usual bedtime stories, she wrote of potential female VMI students, arguing: "Generalizations about 'the way women are,' estimates of what is appropriate for most women, no longer justify denying opportunity to women

whose talent and capacity place them outside the average description."

I can't begin to imagine the number of women generals and flag officers and servicemembers she paved the way for with those rulings, but I do know the story of one, not a flag officer—just me, myself.

As I was a couple years into the Army when she wrote that decision, Ruth Bader Ginsburg helped make my career in the military possible. She helped make my hope of one day serving in a combat role regardless of my gender, of one day commanding a unit—despite most of my crew being men—achievable. It was because of her that my dreams had the opportunity to become a reality.

You know, yesterday, I told my 5-year-old, Abigail—named for Abigail Adams, another feminist—that we were taking a field trip instead of our usual homeschooling routine, and I took her and her younger sister, Maile, to the steps of the highest Court in the land. I didn't expect to get emotional, and I didn't expect to tear up, but with Maile in my lap and Abigail by my side, I started to cry. I was crying because it was not just my military career Ruth Bader Ginsburg helped to make possible but my family too.

I may never have been able to become a mom if it were not for Justice Ginsburg. Without her, without what she did to safeguard healthcare and reproductive freedoms, I might never have been able to get pregnant through IVF. I might never have been able to have my two little girls; never would have been able to watch Abigail place a bouquet of white roses on the steps of the Supreme Court if Ruth Bader Ginsburg hadn't spent decades in that very same building, defending my rights. She changed—no, she gave me the opportunity to achieve my life as it is today.

Her passing isn't just heartbreaking for me and for countless other women across this country; it is a loss for our entire Nation. It is a loss for justice, a loss for equality.

While today I will continue to mourn everything we lost when she passed last Friday, I promise that tomorrow I am going to roll up my sleeves and honor her in the way I believe to be most true to how she lived her life—by fighting like hell for what is right and for all of our rights.

My daughters might be too young to remember going to the Supreme Court to pay our respects to RBG, but they will know her legacy, and already, every day, they are living proof of its power.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HOUSING REPORT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, the coronavirus has been the great revealer in our country. This crisis, of course, isn't happening in a vacuum. It is layered atop a system that already was not working for a whole lot of people and that had centuries of racism built into it.

Few places is that more true than in our housing system. When it comes to housing, like so many problems in this country, we have a President who makes things worse, not better. For 4 years now, President Trump and his administration have systematically undermined fair housing.

I would add, since the Senator from Utah is in the Presiding Officer's chair, that I would do a shout-out for his father and what he did as Secretary of HUD in the late sixties, early seventies in trying to move this country forward.

That was obviously not in my prepared remarks. I didn't know that you would be presiding, but thank you.

The Trump agenda—very different from the agenda in the Romney HUD administration—turned back the clock on civil rights protections that leave communities of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ people behind.

This week I released a comprehensive report from the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, detailing the ways that President Trump has made inequality and segregation in housing worse and the work we have to do to undo the damage.

More than 50 years after Congress passed the Fair Housing Act, access to housing remains not just unequal but separate and unequal.

The contours of our country are too often still defined by Black, Latino, Asian or White neighborhoods, all with very different levels of access to resources—schools, grocery stores, healthcare, clean air and water, public safety.

This is not an accident; it has been done by design. For decades, the Federal Government not only condoned housing segregation and discrimination—perhaps unbelievably, perhaps not—it actively promoted it.

We all know about Black codes. We know about Jim Crow, even if too many want to deny we are still living with this Jim Crow legacy today. It wasn't just the most blatant racist laws; discrimination was woven into the creation of our modern housing system from the beginning.

After the Great Depression, President Roosevelt created the government-sponsored Home Owners' Loan Corporation, the HOLC, and the Federal Housing Administration, the FHA.

These could have been tools for expanding opportunity for everyone. They did that for White Americans, but for Black Americans they did the opposite. HOLC partnered with local real estate agents and appraisers to make what they called residential security maps. These maps used color coding to differentiate between supposedly high-

risk and low-risk neighborhoods, with green signifying the best neighborhoods and red indicating a so-called hazardous area.

Neighborhoods that were home to people of color—even a small percentage—were marked “declining” or “hazardous.” That is what we know as redlining.

It was despicable racism, woven into the fabric of our housing system. We still live with the results. Capital, in the form of low-cost, stable mortgages, flowed to White neighborhoods—like the neighborhood in which I grew up in Mansfield, OH—and dried up in Black neighborhoods or neighborhoods that were home to immigrants.

White borrowers were able to build wealth through home ownership that could be passed down through families. Our government systematically denied Black families the same wealth-building opportunity.

From 1934 through 1962, 98 percent—98 percent—of all FHA mortgages went to White homeowners—98 percent.

It wasn't until Dr. King's assassination in 1968 that Congress finally passed the Fair Housing Act to outlaw discrimination and promote integrated communities. The Fair Housing Act was followed by the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act and Equal Credit Opportunity Act and the Community Reinvestment Act. These laws all provided powerful tools to root out discrimination and to invest in underserved communities.

But for too long, those laws simply weren't implemented.

Administrations of both parties ignored the Fair Housing Act's requirement that the Federal Government—this is a legal term—affirmatively further fair housing. Minority communities, though, remained underinvested. It took decades for all courts to say that if a housing policy has a discriminatory effect, it is, in fact, discriminatory. That is pretty simple. If a housing policy has a discriminatory effect, it is, in fact, discriminatory.

The government also didn't collect enough housing data to root out discriminatory housing that fed the subprime mortgage crisis. We know the 2008 crisis stripped away much of the housing wealth that families of color had fought for.

Today, access to housing and all the opportunity and stability that comes with it remains unequal. The African-American home ownership rate is nearly 30 percentage points below the White home ownership rate—30 percent below. Analysts have tried to explain the diversity with income and education as factors, but it never tells the whole story. With all else equal, similarly situated African Americans are markedly less likely to own a home than their White counterparts.

Black and Latino renters are also more likely to pay a larger share of their income toward housing than White renters, making it even harder to get by, even harder to save to buy a home.

We know—and many of us have repeated many times—that one-quarter of renters in this country pay at least half their income in rent and utilities, meaning if one thing happens in their life—their car breaks down, their child gets sick, or they have a minor workplace injury that keeps them out of work 4 or 5 days—everything in their lives can turn upside down. They can be evicted and all that happens with that. That is the legacy of redlining and racial exclusion at work.

During the last administration, President Obama made significant strides in enforcing civil rights laws that have been on the book for decades. But instead of continuing that progress, President Trump has simply choked that progress. He has turned back the clock. He has undone the progress that so many of us fought for.

Over the past 4 years, the Trump administration has done several affirmative—if you will—affirmative things to discriminate—not just that it didn't get around to enforcing, but it has done things that, by themselves, have caused damage to the progress we have made.

He appointed an OCC Director who undermined the Community Reinvestment Act by making it less likely that banks will provide the loans, investments, and services that these communities need.

The Trump administration cut back on housing data collection, allowing lending discrimination to go unchecked.

The administration tried to make mortgages more expensive and harder to get, particularly for people of color.

The administration denied opportunities for home ownership to hundreds of thousands of young adults.

The Trump administration forced families to choose between access to affordable housing and food and healthcare and a path to citizenship.

The administration gutted the so-called disparate impact standard that helps root out policies that have hidden discriminatory effects.

The Trump administration dismantled the affirmatively furthering fair housing rule, essentially telling communities around the country: Don't even bother trying to create a better, more equal housing system, and we will not help you if you want to.

On and on and on it goes.

I invite everyone to read our report and join us to take action. We have our work cut out for us to undo the damage President Trump has done and to get to work to actually erase the legacy of redlining and the legacy of Jim Crow and build a housing system that works for everyone.

Housing is the foundation of so much in life, and when people start behind because they can't get access to clean, accessible, fair—fair and safe housing, they, in many cases, simply can't catch up.

We have to restore the Fair Housing Act to its full strength. This means

providing the tools to help communities create more inclusive housing markets, to end home lending discrimination, to strengthen fair housing oversight.

We must break down barriers to home ownership and redesign our housing finance system so that it better serves Black and Brown communities.

We have to protect the basic premise that LGBTQ people seeking shelter should be treated with the same dignity and respect as every other person. I think some of these are just so obvious, so important in a society like ours. I will say that one again—the basic premise that LGBTQ people seeking shelter should be treated with the same dignity and respect as every other American.

We must provide long-overdue investments in housing and community development in communities of color. Black families and other communities of color have endured too many decades of our country's housing policies failing them.

The same year we passed the Fair Housing Act, Dr. King gave a speech we call “The Other America.” In that speech, here is what he said:

Our nation has constantly taken a positive step forward on the question of racial justice and racial equality. But over and over again at the same time, it made certain backward steps.

The Trump administration is that backward step. Fundamentally, we all pretty much want the same thing—a home that is safe in a community we care about, where we can get to work and our kids have a good school, with room for our family, whether that is three kids or an aging parent or simply a beloved pet.

You should get to define what home looks like for you. You should be able to find it. You should be able to afford it. You should be able to do it without the crippling stress of “Can I meet my rent payment or my mortgage every month?”

For too many Black and Brown families, that has been out of reach—to find it, to afford it, to live in it without crippling stress.

Congress cannot ignore these challenges. We can't keep allowing the Trump administration to gut the tools we have to make people's lives better.

If we want to make the economy work better for everyone—including communities of color that have been systematically excluded from opportunity—we cannot shrink from these challenges. That is the purpose of the report we are issuing today. When work has dignity, everyone can find and afford a place to call home.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PROTECT AND SERVE ACT

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, across the country, Americans watched in horror as news stations reported the shooting of two sheriff's deputies in Los Angeles, who were brutally targeted by a murderous, violent criminal.

In North Carolina, just 2 days earlier, sheriff's deputy Ryan Hendrix, a father of two young children, a man planning to get married, was murdered in cold blood while responding to a family under siege by an evil criminal.

So far in 2020 alone, 37 law enforcement officers have been murdered by violent criminals and hundreds have been wounded while protecting our communities.

Despite these senseless deaths and the gruesome violence against police, there are those who support radical ideas like defunding or abolishing the police. These dangerous policies would allow criminals to roam free throughout our communities, unchallenged and unafraid.

The agitators pushing to abolish the police have sown the seeds of discord in our country by disrespecting law enforcement and disregarding their brave service to our Nation. Just look at Asheville, NC. Since June 1, over 30 police officers have left the law enforcement profession. These brave men and women are tired of being attacked physically, emotionally, and personally, simply for trying to keep their communities safe, every single damn day.

They put on a uniform to go protect their community, not sure if they are going to come back safe, and they do it anyway, and we owe them a debt of gratitude. But they are sick of the opportunistic politicians like the Democratic leader and AOC attacking them for just doing their jobs.

Worst of all is the specter of targeted attacks like those against the deputies in Los Angeles. The harmful rhetoric being used by the radical, anti-police leftists encourages an environment of hostility, which emboldens criminals and murderers. The result is brazen attacks against law enforcement officers in broad daylight.

In light of the toxic environment being created in this country, which devalues police, I believe the Senate must act to protect law enforcement officers and show them our support. That is why I have introduced the Protect and Serve Act with 16 of my Republican colleagues.

The Protect and Serve Act would punish criminals who target law enforcement officers and harm them. These criminals will receive up to 10 years in prison, and if they murder or kidnap a law enforcement officer, they will get a life sentence.

It is sad that Congress even needs to consider a bill to protect police officers, but let me be clear: Attacks against any law enforcement officers are no laughing matter. Congress must pass the Protect and Serve Act immediately and boldly say there is no es-

cape from justice for dangerous criminals who intentionally assault or kill a law enforcement officer.

Today, I call on every single Democrat to support this commonsense legislation. The question is simple: Do you support the men and women in blue who fight every day to keep our communities safe or do you support lawless, reckless, liberal mobs who want to defund the police?

It is a yes-or-no question. You either back the blue or you back anarchy.

As long as I am a U.S. Senator I will do everything I can to protect our men and women who protect our communities every single day. I expect and they deserve no less.

I hope my Democratic colleagues can stand up to AOC, the Squad, and their radical liberal base and do the same. It is time to back the blue. It is time to restore safety in our communities. It is time to end the killing of law enforcement officers and people just trying to protect us every single day.

I yield the floor.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LOEFFLER). The clerk will call the roll. The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I want to talk for a few minutes about securing our election process.

At various times, in the last 4 years, there have been different levels of reasons why the Federal Government needed to take over the election process. For a while, it was that the process was too easily infiltrated by outside influences, and then it was COVID-19, and it was important that everybody vote in different ways than they have ever voted before, and somehow only the Federal Government could manage that.

I would say that, in that, just as we look toward the 2020 elections, we have spent over \$1 billion. I think it is \$1.2 billion in funding from the Congress. We have had dozens of hearings in the Rules Committee, the Judiciary Committee, and the Homeland Security Committee. There was a 3½-year bipartisan investigation that I was part of as part of the Intelligence Committee, and we have looked at this about every way we can.

Right now, people across the country are beginning the process of casting their votes. This year, more than any other year up until now, we will have election day, but, really, we will have more like "election month," and, in some States, it is going to be "election 6 weeks" or "election 7 weeks."

So this process is starting right now. It is a process where people will decide who represents them in the White House and the Congress; or, in some

cases, in city hall; in many cases, the Governor's mansion; and in almost all cases, the general assembly; and in all cases, the U.S. House of Representatives.

Confidence in the voting process is the thread that holds the fabric of democracy together. Every time we needlessly get into a discussion about whether this process is fair or safe, I think it is harmful. Every time we need to have that discussion about whether it is fair or safe, it is, of course, not only helpful but totally appropriate.

This is the time when we need to be sure that our work has brought us to a good conclusion, rather than talking about the fact that the system is not going to work. The system is going to work. As the chairman of the Rules Committee, where we have the principal election jurisdiction, or as a member of the Intelligence Committee, I spent a lot of time looking at this. I think we have been very serious in the Senate, particularly, in considering these issues and at looking at the threats to our election system itself.

I am not going to talk much in the next few minutes about false information and other things. In my view, all you have to do is turn on the television to find some false information and watch the campaign commercials. There is a nugget of truth, perhaps, but most of them—many of them have little more than a nugget of truth in them.

Sure, I am concerned about false information. I am particularly concerned about it if it comes from foreign governments, from those who wish our country ill. But there is a lot of information out there—a lot more information than there has ever been before—and people should be very thoughtful about the information they take in.

I am not going to talk a lot about that. I want to talk about the election system itself because, in my view, the election-day system is as secure as it has ever been. The registration system is as secure as it has ever been.

Four years ago, the Obama administration—a little later than this—said: There is a big problem, and we are going to declare the election structure a structure of national significance, and we are going to play a different role than we have ever played before.

There was no anticipation that this was going to happen and not much discussion.

Election officials all over the country immediately said: Oh, no, you are not. You are not going to just decide in October of an election year that you are going to take over the election system and declare it a system of national significance, a system of critical significance to the future of the Nation.

Of course it is, but it didn't become that in October of 2016.

But the message was clear that we needed to build those stronger ties with local and State election authorities. We needed to do everything we